Mr. Madison’s War
That Incredible War of 1812

PLAY BOOK

1. Scenarios ................................................................. 2
2. Examples of Play .................................................... 4
3. Players’ Notes .......................................................... 10
4. Designer’s Notes ..................................................... 12
Although it is recommended that players play the full game, in order to get the full 1812 experience some players may not have the time to play out the whole war. The “Entire War Scenario” utilizes all three card decks while the two shorter scenarios do not. The 1813 scenario uses two decks, 1813 and 1814, allowing the players to experience a medium length game while the 1814 scenario utilizes the 1814 deck only and is considerably shorter in length.

**ENTIRE WAR SCENARIO (1812 Start)**

**Card Decks Used:** All three decks (1812, 1813, 1814)
**Start Turn:** Spring & Summer 1812
**Victory Point Marker:** 0
**British Lake Control Markers:** None
**American Lake Control Marker:** None
**Victory:** As per standard rules

**Set up**

For this scenario see each side’s individual Set Up card for the placement and arrival of all units for that side.

**1813-1814 SCENARIO**

**Card Decks Used:** 1813 & 1814
**Start Turn:** Spring & Summer 1813; game plays through 1814
**Victory Point Marker:** +2 British
**British Lake Control Markers:** Lake Huron, Lake Erie,
**American Lake Control Marker:** Lake Ontario
**Victory:** As per standard rules

**Set Up**

**BRITISH FORCES**

- **Quebec:** Leader Prevost, De Wattville, 4/R. Scotts, 13th, 2/41st, 70th, 89th, 19th Dragoons
- **Montreal:** Drummond, LC Militia
- **St. Jean:** 100th (2B)
- **Beaucharnois:** Caughnawaga (3B)
- **Cornwall:** Glengarry (3A)
- **Isle aux Noix:** Voltigeurs (3B), 103rd (5B); Vessels: Finch, Chubb
- **Prescott:** Canadian Fencibles (5B)
- **Kingston:** Leader Rottenburg, Frontenac Militia (3C), 10th R.V. (3B), 104th (4B), 1/R Scotts (5B) Leader Yeo, Vessels: Royal George, Wolfe, Melville, Beresford, Earl of Moira, Sydney Smith, Gloucester
- **York:** Fort York Marker, Leader Scheaffe, York Militia, R.N.R (2A); Vessel: Brock under construction*
- **Ft. George:** 49th (4A)
- **Queenston:** Lincoln Militia (3C)
- **Fort Erie:** 1/8th (5B), 49th det (1A)
- **Oxford:** Oxford Militia (1C)
- **London:** Middlesex Militia (1C)
- **Port Dover:** Norfolk Militia (1C)
- **Fort Malden:** Leader Proctor, Essex Militia, 10th R.V. (1B) Leader Barclay; Vessels: Queen Charlotte, Hunter, Little Belt, Chippawa, Lady Prevost, Detroit under construction*
- **Detroit:** 41st (1B) two units, 41st (2B) Town Destroyed marker (the town is actually intact—only the fort is destroyed; historically the British had removed all of the guns).
- **Brownstown:** Leader Tecumseh, Shawnee (2A)
- **Frenchtown:** Wya/Miami (3B)
Fort St. Joseph: NW/Ind (3C)
Fort Mackinaw: 10th R.V. (1B)

US FORCES
Burlington: Vessels: *Eagle, Growler,* Vermont Militia (3C)
Plattsburg: N.Y Militia 4 (4C), N.Y. Militia 5 (4C)
Albany: Leader Dearborn
Sackets Harbour: Leader Wilkinson, Leader Chauncey, 5th (4B), 6th (5B), 13th (4B), 15th (4B), 16th (4B), 20th (3B), 21st (4B), 25th (4A), Forsyth’s Rifles (3A), NY Militia 2 (4C), NY Militia 3 (4C); Vessels: *Conquest, Gen. Pike, Oneida, Gov. Tompkins, Julia, Hamilton, Scourge, Sylph, Fair American*
Fort Niagara: NY Militia 1 (4C), 14th (4B)
Lewiston: Leader Brown, 18th (3B)
Buffalo: Leader Van Rensselaer, 23rd (4B)
Erie: Leader Perry, 9th (3B); Vessels *Porcupine, Tigress, Scorpion*
Vessels Uncompleted: *Niagara, Lawrence, Somers, Ariel*
Cleveland: Ohio Militia (1C)
Sandusky: 1st Ohio (5C)
Lower Sandusky: Kentucky 3rd, Kentucky 5th (3C) reduced
Upper Sandusky: Ohio Detachment (2C)
Maumee Rapids: 1st and 2nd Kentucky (5C each) Fort Meigs marker
Ft. McArthur: Leader Harrison, 26th/27th (4B), 17th (4B)

1814 SCENARIO
Card Deck Used: 1814
Start Turn: Spring & Summer 1814
Victory Point Marker: +2 US
American Lake Control Markers: Lake Huron, Lake Erie
British Lake Control Markers: Lake Champlain
Victory: As per standard rules

Set Up
BRITISH
Quebec: Leader Prevost, 6th, 9th, 16th, 37th, 39th, 57th, 81st, 82nd, 90th, 97th, R. Marines
Montreal: Leader Rottenburg, 4/Royal Scots, De Wattville
Beauharnois: Caughnawaga Indians
Isle aux Noix: L.C. Militia, Votigeurs; Vessels: *Finch, Chubb, Linnet*
Cornwall: 70th
Long Sault: 2/41st (5B)
Prescott: 13th
Kingston: Leader Scheaffe, 104th (4B), Frontenac Militia, Leader Yeo; Vessels: *Royal George, Earl of Moira, Beresford, Sydney Smith, Gloucester, Wolfe, Melville, Prince Regent, Princess Charlotte*
York: Glenarry (3A), R.N.R (2A), Fencibles (5B)
Burlington: 49th, 89th

FT. GEORGE: Leader Drummond, 1/R. Scots (5B), 1/8th, York Militia, 19th Lt. Dragoons, Town Destroyed marker, Supply Depot
FT. NIAGARA: 41st (2B), 100th (2B)
Queenston: Lincoln Militia (3C)
Fort Erie: 41st (1B)
Beaverdams: Mohawk (2B)
Port Dover: 103rd (5B)
Oxford: Oxford Militia (1C)
London: Middlesex Militia (1C)
Port Rawn: Norfolk Militia (1C)
Fort St. Joseph: NW. Ind. (3C)
Fort Mackinaw: 10th R.V. (1B)

US FORCES
Burlington: Vermont Militia
Plattsburg: Leader Hampton, NY Militia 5, 33rd, 34th, 30th/31st, 11th/29th, Dragoons
Chateauguay: NY Militia 4
St. Regis: 12th
Malone: Leader Wilkinson, 21st, 25th
French Mills: 16th; the following units start reduced: 5th, 6th, 13th, 20th, Forsyths Rifles
Potsdam: 15th
Ogdensburg: 14th
Sackets Harbour: Leader Brown, NY Militia 3, 9th, 23rd Leader Chauncey; Vessels: *Oneida, General Pike, Sylph, Madison, Jefferson, Jones, Superior, Mohawk* under construction
Oswego: Leader Scott, 10th, 18th
Genesee: 4th
Batavia: Tuscarora Indians (2B)
Owasco: 5th Pa (4B)
Buffalo: Town Destroyed marker, Supply Depot, 5th Pa (4B)
Fort Malden: Leader Harrison, Leader Perry, 17th; Vessels: *Lawrence, Niagara, Scorpion, Tigress, Porcupine, Somers, Ariel*
Sandwich: 26th/27th (4B)
Detroit: Kentucky Militia 1 (5C)
Frenchtown: Ohio Detachment (2C)
Maumee Rapids: Fort Meigs Counter, Ohio Detachment (1C)

* Vessels under construction (underscored in text) are placed on the space specified but flipped to their reduced side. In order to become operational a card of any value must be played and then the vessel is flipped to its full strength side.
EXAMPLES OF PLAY

Play of a Campaign Card

A Campaign card is the only card in the game that allows a player to move two different land forces from two different spaces in the same turn.

In the example below the American player decides to use the Campaign card to activate two generals. He informs the British player that he is activating leader Hull and leader Van Rensselaer. The American player has the choice of which leader to activate first, and he chooses Hull. Hull must complete his move and fight any battles before Van Rensselaer moves his forces. (Note that due to the possibility of the opposing player being able to play a Reaction card, the player must state which two leaders or forces are being activated but does not have to state their exact move. The opposing player if he has a Reaction card may play it against one of the forces not both.)

Hull is stacked with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Ohio Militia regiments and the 4th Regular regiment. There are several different actions that Hull could take, which are numbered below.

1) Hull activates all of the forces in the space, and moves them to Detroit and stops. This would cost 6 MPs. (2 MPs for each space entered via a trail) Leaders have 10 MPs and therefore Hull could keep on moving after dropping off the forces at Detroit. In this instance Hull could move back to French Town.

2) Hull could move to Lower Sandusky, pick up the 2C Ohio detachment, and then move back to the Maumee Rapids, pick up all of the units there, and move on to Brownstown and stop. This is possible because activated leaders may pick up and drop off units, as long as no individual unit moves beyond its 6 MP allowance. In this example the 2C Ohio detachment would have consumed 6 MPs, while the forces at the Maumee Rapids consumed only 4 MPs.

3) Hull could have continued on to Detroit with the forces that began the turn at the Maumee Rapids after picking up the 2C at Lower Sandusky. The 2C detachment in this case would have to be left behind at Brownstown since it took six of its MPs to get there. Leader Hull would have consumed all of his 10 MPs to do this move.
Land Move that Results in Battle

The American player activates leader Van Rensselaer and the NY Militia 1 unit and moves to Lewiston, he picks up the NY Militia 2 unit, and moves across the Niagara River at the Major Invasion Route and must stop at Queenston. If the British do not exercise their option to retreat before combat, Van Rensselaer must now do battle with the British 41st Regular detachment and the Lincoln Militia.

Leader Van Rensselaer and the N.Y. militia 1 unit consumed 5 MPs, and the N.Y. militia 2 has consumed 3 MPs. If the British player decides to stand and fight, players then proceed to the land combat procedure.

If the British player had decided to retreat before combat he could have retreated to one of four different spaces. Ft. George, Burlington, Beaverdams or Ft. Erie. Van Rensselaer could keep on moving had the British player performed this retreat. In this case the NY militia 1 unit would have only 1 MP left, the NY 2 militia unit would have 3 MPs left, and Van Rensselaer would have 5 MPs left.

(Trails cost 2 MPs and Major Invasion Routes cost 3 MPs)

Therefore, Van Rensselaer could keep on moving with his entire force to either Ft. Erie, Ft. George or Burlington since they are only 1 MP away from Queenston. He would not be able to move to Beaverdams with his entire force, since to move there costs 2 MPs, which is more than the NY Militia 1 has left. However he could move to Beaverdams with the NY Militia 2 unit, leaving the NY Militia 1 unit behind at Queenston. He could even drop off the NY Militia 2 unit at Beaverdams, and move leader Van Rensselaer, back to Queenston, since after dropping off the unit Van Rensselaer still has 3 MPs left. For the purpose of understanding combat, let us assume the British player does not retreat, and therefore a battle must be fought at Queenston.

Battle

1) Both sides add up the Combat Factors for each of their units, and compare the attacker’s strength to the defender, adding a fort’s defense should there be one in the space. In this battle at Queenston there is no fort present, therefore the attacker’s combat strength is 8 (4 + 4), and the defender’s is 4 (3 + 1). The numerical results are expressed as a ratio rounded down. In this case the odds are 2:1. Players consult the Combat Modifiers Chart and there it is indicated that 2:1 odds give a +1 modifier to the die roll in favor of the attacker.

2) Now players take into account any further combat die roll modifiers for terrain. In this case Van Rensselaer’s army is crossing at a Major Invasion Route which causes a –1 modifier, effectively canceling out his 2:1 advantage. But, as this battle is taking place in 1812 if any British Regulars are involved, they cause a –1 die roll modifier to the attacker, if defending in a cleared space, which Queenston is. Had this battle taken place in a forested/green space there would be no further negative modifier because negative modifiers for terrain can never be greater than –1. (Thus performing an amphibious attack into a forested space causes a –1 modifier, not –2)

3) Players take into account any combat die roll modifiers for any leaders present. In this case Van Rensselaer is the only leader involved, but since his combat modifier is “0”, he does not alter the combat die roll which is presently calculated at –1.

4) The attacker now declares if he wants to use a Battle card in the combat and in this case the American player had in his hand the Tactical Maneuver card and he decides to play it. Play of this card allows a +2 modifier to the die roll, bringing the calculation to +1. The British player now has the opportunity to play a Battle card, but in this case the British player does not have one available, and thus has to be content with the modifiers as they are.

5) Finally, both players have to declare their Lead Unit in the combat. Although all units have already been calculated into the battle odds, it is the Lead Unit that will bear the brunt of any casualties, and also further modify the combat die roll. More often than not players will choose their best unit to be the Lead Unit. In this case the American player chooses the NY Militia 1 unit, which for all intents and purposes is the same as the NY Militia 2 unit. Both are class “C” units.

The British on the other hand have a “C” and “B” class unit and he decides to use his “B” class unit as his Lead Unit. This causes a –1 modifier to the die roll against the American player since “B” class units cause a –1 modifier against “C” class units. So the net modifier is once more back to “0”.

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6) The American player is now ready to roll two six sided dice and consult the Land Combat Results Table with no modifier to the die roll.

7) The American player rolls the dice and the result is “6”, which is an EX result. The attacker and defender each must reduce one unit, and it must be their chosen Lead Unit. Both units are turned over to their other side and combat is continued. (Not voluntary retreats are possible after a round of combat)

8) In this case, when the British player flips his 41st 1B unit it is permanently removed from the game, since this particular unit has no second step. The American player takes his NY Militia 1 unit and flips it to its reduced side, which indicates that the combat value is now a “2”. It has a light colored bar to remind players that it is on its reduced side.

9) The Battle card is now discarded, since Battle cards are only used in a single round of combat unless specifically stated to the contrary on the card. (Card #32 IMPROVED DEFENSE is an example of a card that can be used for all rounds)

10) Now the battle odds have to be recalculated because the situation has been altered. The American player goes into the second round of combat with only his NY 2 Militia unit, since no flipped unit can ever attack. (They can defend) The odds of the combat are now “4” to “3” which rounds off to 1:1. This is because the British now only have the Lincoln Militia unit to fight in the second round.

11) Not only have the combat odds changed but the relative quality of the units also. This is because the British no longer have their “B” class unit against the American “C” class. And they no longer have the British regular advantage in open terrain since the only remaining unit they have is militia, not a British regular.

12) The combat odds are now 1:1 and still with no modifier to the die roll. This is because terrain modifiers for Major River Crossing and forest only last for the first round.

13) The American player rolls the dice and gets an “8”, which is another EX result. In this case the British player flips his Lincoln Militia unit to the other side which makes it a “1C” unit. The American player must flip his NY Militia 2 unit to other side making it a “2C” unit.

14) In this case there can be no third round of combat because the American player has no more units with which he can attack. Remember no reduced unit can attack. Since he has not driven the defender from the space, his two units, plus leader Van Rensselaer must return to Lewiston which is adjacent to the combat space, and is where the attacker moved from. The Lincoln Militia (now reduced) remains in the Queenston space.

### Naval Transport by a Land Leader

Activating a leader is the most efficient way to move units both naval and land on the map. Below is an example of how a land leader can use naval transport to move land units from one lakeside town to another. Keep in mind that the naval transport move can only be undertaken if the enemy is not in control of the lake in question.

In this example Brock, the “1C” Norfolk Militia unit and the schooner Lady Prevost begin the turn at Port Dover. The British player plays card #21 CUTTING OUT THE CALEDONIA (1 OPV), activating Brock who can activate every unit in the space. Note that even though this is an American Event card the British player can play the card for operations to move his forces. (Only two cards in the game are mandatory events that must be played by both sides, the DECLARATION OF WAR card and the TREATY OF GHENT card.) Brock is a 2-star leader, and is capable of moving up to ten land units and any number of naval units for transport or amphibious moves.

The **Lady Prevost** naval unit expends 1 MP in order to pick up the Norfolk militia and Brock. Since the **Lady Prevost** is only a schooner type naval unit, this is the largest land unit that she can transport. (Leaders don’t count for naval carrying capacity.) The **Lady Prevost** now moves, carrying Brock and the 1C unit to Ft. Malden directly, expending another 1 MP. The vessel does not have to move to the Lake Control Box in order to move to another lakeside town. A vessel only enters the Lake Control Box in order to gain Lake Control or to do battle with enemy naval vessels. The **Lady Prevost** now expends another 1 MP in order to drop off the units. Brock and the 1C land unit cannot move any further because after an amphibious move or naval transport move land units can move no further. The **Lady Prevost**’s move is also over because she was activated by a land leader and can move no further because Brock is no longer accompanying her. (In addition a land leader cannot end its turn in a Lake Control Box)
Naval Transport without a leader

Naval transport is possible without a leader, but it is limited, and more costly since it requires a minimum 2 OPV card. To demonstrate the differences and costs, a similar example to the former. In the example below the Brigantine Hunter and the 5B Fencible unit begin their turn at Port Dover with no leader present. In order to utilize a naval transport move, the British player would have to expend a “2” or “3” value operations card because there are 2 units involved. The Brigantine Hunter is capable of carrying one land unit of any size, unlike the former example where the Lady Prevost could only carry units of size “1” or “2”. The British player utilizes card #25 Raid on Ogdensburg (2 OPV) to activate the Hunter in order to carry the 5B Fencible unit. (He decided to not hold this card back to wait for winter and play it as an event)

The Hunter expends 1 MP (of its available 6) to pick up the 5B unit, it expends another 1 MP to carry the unit to Ft. Malden, another 1 MP to drop the unit off and then decides to move to the Lake Control Box expending another 1 MP. The Hunter has expended 4 MPs of her total of 6. The 5B Fencible unit can move no further because any unit carried by naval transport must end its turn in the lakeside town where it was dropped off. Note, that since there is no American vessel in the Lake Erie Control Box, the British has control of Lake Erie and the Victory Point marker is advanced two spaces. A Lake Control marker is not placed in the box because it is the physical naval units that cause real lake control, not the marker. The marker is only used during the Winter turn when all vessels must return to a lakeside town and the marker is left in the box to remind players in the Spring turn who last controlled the lake.

Naval transport without a leader will tend to occur in 1812 only. Once naval leaders Chauncey, Perry, Yeo and Barclay arrive, it is more efficient to utilize them for naval transport. However a situation could occur where naval transport is absolutely necessary even without a naval leader.
**Amphibious Attack Utilizing a Naval Leader**

Naval leader Chauncey begins the turn at Sackets Harbour along with the brig Oneida and two land combat units, Forsyth’s Rifles, a “3A” unit, and the NY militia 4, a “4C” unit. The American player utilizes a 2-OPV card to activate Chauncey. This is the minimum card needed as Chauncey is rated as a “2” leader. A 1-OPV card cannot activate Chauncey. Chauncey with Oneida decides to pick up the Forsyth’s Rifle unit. He could not have picked up the NY Militia unit also because the carrying capacity of the Oneida is only one unit, and therefore he chooses to pick up his best unit. This costs him 1 MP.

He then moves the force to the lakeside town of Oswego which costs him another MP. He now picks up the four schooners lying there, the Hamilton, Scourge, Julia and Sylph. This costs him 0 MP because leaders can pick up and drop off units “free” along their movement path (just like land leaders can). Note that picking up land units by naval forces always incurs a 1-MP cost, but in this case Chauncey is picking up other naval units which costs him nothing.

Chauncey then decides to move all of his forces into the Lake Control Box which costs him another 1 MP. Here he drops off the two schooners he picked up in Oswego for “free” and moves with the rest of the force to York. It costs another 1 MP to move to York, another 1 MP to drop off the Forsyth Rifle unit and because the space is contested with an enemy unit this is now an amphibious attack which costs Chauncey another 1 MP. Chauncey has now expended all of his 6 MP’s.

A land combat is now mandatory at York, if the British decide to fight, and don’t retreat before combat. For our example the British decide to fight for York. Even though there are several British naval vessels at York they are completely ignored for the purpose of the land amphibious attack, as are the naval vessels that accompany Chauncey. The only naval combat that can ever occur is in the Lake Control Box, unless an Event card specifically says otherwise.

Defending in York is the single York Militia unit which is a “3C.” Chauncey has landed the Forsyth’s Rifle unit which is an elite “3A” unit. Both players in this case have no Battle cards to play and there are no leaders involved. The attack odds are 1:1 and thus there is no modifier for odds. However, Forsyth’s Rifles is two classes above the York militia and will be adding +2 to the combat die roll. This is offset to some degree by the fact that it is an amphibious Attack and happens to be taking place in a forested space. This gives the British two favorable modifiers for the first round of combat only (–1 for Amphibious attack and another –1 for defending in a forest). In this case, for the first round of combat the total modifier will be “0”.

The American player rolls the dice, consults the Land Combat Results Table and observes that is roll of “9” results in a DR, which means the defender must retreat. Note also, that the “9” result is important had York been fortified. The “9” result on the Land Combat Results Table is very important when attacking forts.

In this case the British are defeated, and the York Militia unit can retreat either to Burlington or the River Rouge space. The British player opts to retreat to the River Rouge space. The Victory Point marker is advanced three points in the American players favor because York is now captured and is worth 3 Victory Points. The American player scores the points because the Forsyth unit is at least the size of the VP value of York, which is “3”. Had an American “1” or “2” unit won the battle it could remain at York but would have no effect on the game for victory points and cutting off supply.
The British naval units at York now get a “free” retreat to any friendly lakeside town. If the case had been that there was no friendly space to retreat to, the naval vessels are considered destroyed and removed from the game. In this case the British player decides to retreat the naval vessels to Kingston, their main naval base on Lake Ontario.

As a result of this battle every British unit west of York is now out of supply, and spaces out of supply are cut in half for both offense and defense. The supply line is cut because an American unit of sufficient size is now blocking the British supply line to Quebec and the American player now controls Lake Ontario which means the British cannot use the lake as a supply line.

The British player in his turn will want to either regain control of Lake Ontario or cause the retreat of the American unit currently at York.

Utilizing a Reaction Card
There are several types of Reaction cards and the following illustration shows how the Heavy Rains card works in a complicated situation where the moving player has played a Campaign card.

1) The American player plays a Campaign card and announces that the two leaders who will be moving are Wilkinson at Sackets Harbour and Hampton at Plattsburg.

2) The British player decides to play his Heavy Rains card and he decides which single force is affected by the card. The card only affects one moving force, not both. He decides that he would rather slow down or halt Hampton’s force because he does not want to have Hampton enter Canadian territory and threaten the Indian unit there.

3) With the knowledge that Hampton’s force is now affected by the Heavy Rains card, the American player now has the choice of either moving Hampton and the units he commands only one space (as the Heavy Rains card specifies) to Four Corners, or canceling Hampton’s portion of the move entirely. The American player decides that he would rather have Hampton remain at Plattsburg and forgoes any movement of Hampton at all.

4) The American player now moves Wilkinson and the forces he commands to Hamilton’s. This costs Wilkinson’s land forces 6 MPs, but Wilkinson could leave these forces at Hamilton’s and move himself back to Alexandria (if he desired to do so).

The move is now over and play passes to the British.
PLAYERS’ NOTES

British

Contrary to Canadian mythology, it was not the militia that saved the Canada’s from American military forces in 1812. It was a small, well trained, cadre of British regulars led by competent officers. The British player will find that his army although small, is fairly good. Most of his units are “B” class but he starts with a couple of elite regiments that are “A” class. He also has two very good leaders in Isaac Brock and Tecumseh. Both lend good combat modifiers to any potential battles. The British also start the game with control of the Great lakes, here they outnumber American forces significantly.

The down side is that they have a lot of territory to cover, and the American player, if he gets the initiative, can dictate where the main action occurs. Another advantage/disadvantage is the Indian alliance. Tecumseh with his “A” class Shawnee unit, is a powerful combination, but fragile. If losses get out of hand the whole Indian confederacy can fall apart, so the Shawnee unit must be kept in the game as long as possible.

Another disadvantage is the long supply line to Quebec. Almost unique in history, the British player is in the embarrassing situation of having his front as the supply line! This must be protected at all costs, especially the vulnerable St. Lawrence River line between Montreal and Kingston. With respect to the latter, Kingston MUST NEVER FALL. If it does, it must be taken back as quickly as possible. If Kingston is held permanently by American forces, British victory would be remote unless they could counter invade significant portions of New York state. Historically, it was British strategic policy to hold the town at all costs. Had the British lost the town, with no chance of taking it back, the contingency plan was to fall back on Montreal and play for a late strategy of taking it back once Napoleon had been defeated. Rule of thumb written in stone—don’t lose Kingston.

Kingston has to be held for an entirely different reason also. It is because it’s the main naval base on Lake Ontario. All new construction of vessels takes place there, with the exception of only one vessel. This is the Brock which historically was never completed because the Americans burned it on the stocks during their raid there in 1813. I have allowed the possibility of this vessel to be constructed, but only if the Americans have not captured the town prior to its construction.

The naval war on the lakes is almost an entire game unto itself. Subtly in the background, it influences the main action on land in a very real way. Success or failure on the lakes can decide the outcome of the war one way or the other. The naval war cannot be ignored. It is just too important for ultimate success, to say nothing of eight victory points up for grabs.

For the first year of the war the British have to prevent the Americans from gaining any foothold in Upper or Lower Canada. If possible gaining some American towns would be a bonus. The latter though, is secondary to holding your own territory. In 1812 most of the Event card victory points are American, but it doesn’t mean the American player will necessarily get them. If he does, the British player has to try and keep the US player busy enough, or threaten enough places, to cause him to burn up these precious “free point cards” as operations to protect his own territory.

In 1813 the British will literally be fighting for their lives, because by that time the United States will have marshaled their forces and will certainly be going on the offensive. The British get significant reinforcements this year also, but the problem is their distance from the main theatres of the war. It takes precious card resources to move a force from Quebec to the Niagara frontier for example, and even more to the Detroit...
River. As a result, the British player will often find himself fighting for the defense of Western Upper Canada with the forces he began the war with. The counter point would be to move the new forces down into Northern New York, but if the US player is doing his job, he should be keeping you busy enough to stall this counter move.

The British player should capitalize on his initial advantages as much as possible. You have lake control. Use it. You must keep the US player off balance as much as possible.

If you can last until 1814 you should be able to bring considerable forces to bear against the United States. Most likely these will be used in the Lake Champlain corridor, but if the US player has made too many gains on the Niagara or in the west, some may have to be diverted there. This year also has some nice point cards, which is a counter point to the American naval cards in 1812. But, as in any card driven game, there is no guarantee you will get them. But if you do, they are an easy way of sliding the Victory Point marker in your favor.

Over all the game is very balanced. Don’t get too assured in 1814, the US player can still make a comeback, and one decisive naval battle can ruin your whole day.

**American**

Having declared the war, the United States was unprepared for it in 1812, and this is woefully evident in the game set up. For one thing the United States have only a single brigantine on each of the Great Lakes. Detroit is understrength, and historically Hull’s army had not reached the town by the time war was declared. On top of all that, the supply line from Detroit back to Ohio is open to attack from the British, who have virtual control of the lake.

So from the start, if the US player is going to take the offensive at all, he is going to have to be very careful. His first few card plays should be to try and correct the deficiencies of the set up. Sackets Harbour, like Kingston for the British, must be protected at all costs. This is the only naval base the Americans have on Lake Ontario, and to lose it would be to almost lose the war. Fortunately in the second half of 1812 the place is automatically fortified, and then becomes easier to defend. But never take the base for granted, it can still be attacked by an amphibious attack if you don’t control the lake.

Plattsburg is another embarrassment. It is much too close to the large British forces that pass through Montreal, and thus is vulnerable to attack from there. As a consequence it must be defended. The American player may find himself engaged in a delicate juggling act to send forces to Plattsburg and at the same time defend Sackets Harbour. There is a bluff element to the game to, for if you send too many forces to defend Plattsburg the British player may over react and send a large force in a counter move. This is not necessarily in your interests. The American player must always weigh the cost of sending troops to the Lake Champlain corridor against what should move further west. If you send too many troops to Plattsburg, it might very well tie down British troops that could be used against you on the Niagara. At the same time, it could also invite a counter invasion of the state later on in the year, or in 1814.

During the war both sides tried hard for naval control of the Great Lakes and this should also be a major American objective. On Lake Erie the Americans should be able to eventually out build the British, and when their fleet is completed the player will find that it is of very good quality. The two “A” class American brigs *Niagara* and *Lawrence* will make the US fleet difficult to defeat. Still, there are some naval card events that can alter the equation, and both players have to monitor the naval balance very carefully.

Depending on what has happened on the Detroit frontier, it may be necessary to use Perry’s fleet to transport Harrison’s large forces across the lake. Harrison’s army is often drawn into a campaign down the Thames Valley corridor, but if the US controls the lake, Perry’s fleet gives him the flexibility to invade at other points in Upper Canada.

On Lake Ontario things are a lot more balanced, if the British player has kept up his fleet, as he should, then the potential for battle there will be very equal. If the British have not, then the Americans should be able to seize lake control, and with it the ability to strike anywhere along the shore.

The town of York beckons like a magnet, and is easy to strike if you control the lake. Historically the town was hit twice by amphibious invasions. For game purposes the very act of going there prevents the building of the naval vessel “Brock”, which can further tip the naval balance in your favor. But be careful, if you lose control of the lake and you have land forces there, it is easy to get them cut off.

Another very desirable place to hit is Burlington at the head of Lake Ontario. If the Americans get possession of that space everything British to the west is un-supplied. Of course the British player should be aware of this, but if you get the chance to strike it, even only temporarily, it might well be worth it.

The other vulnerable supply route for the British is the St. Lawrence River line. For political reasons the Americans did not concentrate their main efforts on it and this aided the British immensely. In game terms it starts off very vulnerable, but is not easy to strike at. Once more, American forces are not in a position to take advantage of it. But if you can, a St. Lawrence Campaign is still a viable option should you wish to exploit it. If anything, a campaign there ties down British resources, and protects vulnerable northern New York at the same time.

In the way of momentum, the US player must keep up the pressure on the British at all times. Sometimes, even a lag of a card or two can be fatal, as the British gain the initiative and force you to react to their plans. If possible, try to make the British dance to your tune. In 1812 this is going to be difficult, but not impossible. In 1813 try to get as far ahead in points as you possibly can, because in 1814 it is now the British player’s turn to “make hay”. If you can get far enough ahead in points in 1813, and are able to hold your own in the last year of the war, you should be able to at least get the moral victory.
DESIGNER’S NOTES

Introduction

My introduction to the War of 1812 was Gamma Two’s War of 1812 game, produced in 1972 and—for its time—a very innovative design. It’s a tribute to its designer that it is still in print thirty-nine years later. Even though I considered it to be a great game, it didn’t have enough historical flavor for me. I wanted something a bit more. Where was General Brock, the great Indian leader Tecumseh, the Battle of Lake Erie, the Rocket’s Red Glare, the Battle of Lundy’s Lane? These historical personages and events were all missing, and these were all elements that I thought were crucial to doing a War of 1812 game that captured the spirit of the period.

Having worked for a time as a guide at the Crysler’s Farm Battlefield Park in 1974, I soon became bitten by the 1812 bug, and recognized early on, that it was a war quite like no other. Having visited and studied some of the battles with their lopsided combat results, 1812 seemed to defy all of my conventional precepts on combat odds in war games. The War of 1812 certainly had its fair share of bizarre combat results, with forces outnumbered sometime 8:1 and still managing to win the battle. After writing a guidebook to the historic sites of the War of 1812, I had at the back of my mind the desire to do a strategic game on the War of 1812 myself.

After Mark Herman’s We the People game came out in 1994 I knew that the card driven system was a system that could properly simulate the conflict in a way that had never been done before. The card driven games had raised the bar for doing historical board game simulations. Indeed, I find it difficult to return to the old-style games, where on turn one, and every turn after, a player is able to move every single unit on the map in perfect coordination and timing. Historical generals should be so lucky! What follows is some of the reasonings and justifications for doing things the way I did.

Why the War was Unique

In 1965 Jack Mackay Hitsman published his book which he aptly called The Incredible War of 1812. It was an appropriate title, for “this war that has no name” was actually a war within a war, an offshoot of the Napoleonic Wars. The war with no name had more than its fair share of strange, bizarre and unexpected results. I felt that a game on the subject had to be different from regular war games in the same way the real war had been from other wars. The War of 1812 was simply not like any other war fought in history. It is not possible to explain in a few words why this was so, and I would guide the reader to some of the great literature on the contest. In a nutshell some of the following factors made this war quite unique.

• The peculiar geography of the war, with the British supply line being the front.
• The composition of the opposing forces.
• The personalities of the contestants.
• The form of governments opposing each other.
• The importance of control of the Great Lakes.
• The fact that it was essentially a side show for Great Britain and yet a life and death struggle for the inhabitants of Canada.
• It was one of America’s most unpopular wars.
• Some areas refused to support the war even to the point of having local armistices.
• The fact that the British at one point were being supplied from the state of Vermont!
• The fact that the war should never have been fought, and if communication had been faster it might not have been.
I could name many more factors that made this war unique, but my purpose is to discuss factors in history that made the game develop the way it did.

**Geography 101**

In order to demonstrate the peculiar nature of the geography in Upper and Lower Canada the map had to accurately depict the way the armies moved, and could move. In a point-to-point system game it is an easy matter to merely place points on a map, but if the points don’t reflect the actual geography, or simplify the movement to the point of distortion, it has failed to depict history. The points have to reflect the way the real forces moved, and should demonstrate why some paths are more efficient than others.

The position of Fort Malden is a good example. In game terms as far as roads go it looks like a dead end. But if one takes into account the fact that the British had control of Lake Erie for nearly half a century prior to the war, the whole picture changes. Fort Malden is perfectly secure, and moving forces to and from it is easily accomplished from any lake towns. Viewing the map, it is easy to see why Brock moved forces to Port Dover, and thence by water to Fort Malden in 1812. This route saved his forces from the long march overland through London and the Thames Valley. On the other hand, it is easy to understand why the British gave up Malden immediately after the Americans won the Battle of Lake Erie. Without control of the lake, Malden is almost indefensible.

One of the first things I had to consider was the size and scope of the war. If you take into account the situation where every battle and skirmish was fought, the theater of operations stretches from the fortress citadel of Quebec to the cane brakes of Mississippi. A game designed on that scale would leave out nearly all of the operational maneuvering, and would not simulate very well the main theater of war—which was the Canadian front. So from the very start I set my sights on doing the war primarily in Upper and Lower Canada. At the same time I had always admired Steve Newberg’s treatment of the war in his *Rockets Red Glare*, published by *Simulations Canada* in 1981. In that game, Steve had included a map subsection, the entire eastern seaboard of the United States. This allowed players to fight out an entirely different kind of war on the eastern seaboard and simulate the effects of blockade, coastal raids and frigate actions. It was a great idea, and in my first attempts at the game I had included a second map also, although more limited than Steve’s depicting only the major cities of Washington, Baltimore, and New Orleans.

**What Had to Go**

With this second board I had amphibious movement boxes that allowed the British player to do coastal raids and thus tie up precious American resources that could not be sent to the Canadian front. It wasn’t too long before I had to completely re-tool the game and abandon the east coast map. For one thing the counter mix was becoming rather large, for I now had to include all kinds of regiments that were mustered into the War of 1812 but had played no part on the Canadian front.

The other thing that was working against the simulation was game length. The game was clocking in at a minimum of four hours, and with a second map any future rules enhancements could only add to this time. The original design also included the American ocean-going navy with all of the individual frigates that wreaked havoc in the early stages of the war against British shipping. The inclusion of those counters was causing another game to be developed, and I realized that some things had to go or else I would have a monster on my hands. It’s easy to add, it is a lot harder to subtract.

My final consideration for eliminating the second map was both physical and practical. It was getting very difficult to squeeze in an east coast map, and at the same time fit in Upper Canada in a way that demonstrated the terrain accurately. In particular the Niagara frontier, which I felt had to have a minimum of three points on each side of the border to simulate the salient points of that campaign. As the reader can see, squeezing in the Niagara frontier in the final map proved to be a daunting task.

If there was any other consideration about map inserts it was my experience with them in other games. For example *Paths of Glory* or *Spartacus: Crisis of the Roman Republic*. Both had utilized insert maps, and I had always found them distracting, taking players away from the main theatre of action. Therefore I made my mind up to eliminate such entirely from my design. Eliminating the insert map turned out to be the right decision, for it cut down immensely on the amount of counters the game required and also enabled me to introduce some neat historical Event cards that would mimic the same effects of the now-absent eastern seaboard map.

**The Order of Battle**

One feature I dearly wanted to have in the game was named *historical units*. Many of the card driven games have used generic strength points. In order to capture the flavor and feel of the War of 1812 I felt having named units would add a lot to the game. As I studied the Order of Battle (OoB), I realized that including an historical OoB was going to have its own set of challenges. One of the early difficulties in creating an historical OoB was the fact that the British units in particular were scattered all over the provinces at the commencement of the war. None of the regiments were intact, in particular the 41st Regiment which had been parcelled out all over Upper Canada in individual companies! Thus from the very outset, I had a situation where an individual company could make a difference, and yet the standard unit of the time was the battalion/regiment.

The American OoB proved to be a little easier for 1812 since they at least kept their regular regiments intact. But in the second year of the war with recruitment getting difficult they sometimes consolidated two-half-battalions into one until recruitment filled out the unit. In effect, there was a changing OoB throughout the war, and there are no exact figures for individual regiments at every time period in the war.

I’m reasonably satisfied with the OoB and in the studying of it I came to realize that the war on the Canadian front was a bit more evenly matched than I had been taught in school. As a resident of the province where the main battles were fought,
it was part of Canadian mythology that the militia of Upper Canada, along with some British regulars, fought back the American hordes that crossed into the province. The truth was far more interesting than the mythology.

In fact over 34 regiments served in Canada during the War of 1812 and if we count 4 regiments to a brigade that makes the equivalent of 8 brigades or 2 divisions that served. Fortunately for game purposes these were not all required, since many stayed on the east coast or did not serve in the Upper provinces. However in 1814, when many of the regiments do appear at Quebec, the contrast in the forces that begin in 1812 is readily apparent. In my early attempts at the game I had included brigade counters to replace the stacks of individual regiments, but that took away from the individuality and historicity so I abandoned it. The 1814 stacks are large but not unmanageable.

Beating the Odds

If any war demonstrated that “you just can’t count numbers”, it was 1812. As I hinted in the discussion on the OoB, a company-sized unit in the War of 1812 could make the difference in a battle, and at the same time a brigade could be useless. I wanted to move away from an odds-based Combat Results Table, and yet acknowledge that numbers did mean something! At this point it would be well to introduce Prince Andrei’s comments from Tolstoy’s classic War and Peace, for here it illustrates perfectly the war in North America. In speaking of the reality of war compared to a game of chess he says “a knight is always stronger than a pawn, and two pawns are always stronger than one, while in war a battalion is sometimes stronger than a division and sometimes weaker than a company. The relative strength of bodies of troops can never be known to anyone.”

For 1812, a different kind of Combat Results Table would be needed, an odds-based table, or a differential table would not work. 1812 had some absolutely bizarre and unexpected combat results that defied conventional military logic. How does one reconcile combat results such as occurred at the Battle of Chateuguay? An army that outnumbers its opponents by over 8:1 is defeated and performs an ignominious retreat. A battle for which one American commander stated “no officer that had any regard for his reputation would admit to having been engaged in it”.

If combat odds were a problem, then casualties was another. This was another area where the historical results of 1812 battles sometimes made no sense, and yet they occurred. Take for example the Battle of New Orleans. Over 9000 men were engaged, and the American forces lost less than 40 men killed! The British lost not only their general, but over 431 killed and had to retreat from the field. A loss ratio of over 10:1! On the other side of the coin is a battle like Lundy’s Lane where each side had about the same number of men engaged, about 4000, and yet tore each other apart.

It was not only in the area of field battles that such contrasted results occurred, it also extended to sieges and assaults on forts. At the battle of Fort Erie in 1814 the British columns assaulted the walls directly, and the Americans fought with such tenacity, that the assault ended in a bloody repulse. Yet, in 1812 General Hull surrendered the fortified position of Detroit to General Brock after sustaining almost no casualties, and outnumbering his opponent by nearly 2:1. This inexplicable result exasperated the Congress, and Hull was tried and condemned to be shot (although President Madison later pardoned the offense).

Losing the War in an Afternoon

In speaking of World War I the great Winston Churchill said that “Admiral Jellicoe was the only man that could lose the war in an afternoon”. He was speaking here of the British Grand Fleet whose loss would mean irreparable damage to the British war effort. The same could be said of Commodore Yeo or Chauncey on Lake Ontario. To understand the War of 1812 the reader has to have a full appreciation of the importance of naval control of the Great Lakes. The commanders of the time fully understood it, and this was exactly the reason why no major naval battle was fought on Lake Ontario. Naval battles by their very nature tend to be influenced by elements out of a commanders control, such as wind and weather. They also can be very decisive. Difficult as it is, an army’s manpower can be replaced, but to lose a fleet can cost a year in trying to build a new one. For either side to have lost Lake Ontario could mean loss of the entire war. The Battle of Lake Erie provides us with the best proof. When the Americans won the battle decisively in 1813, the entire British right division had to retreat and abandon all of western Upper Canada.

When I designed the Naval Combat Results Table I had to keep this in mind. I didn’t want a table where turn after turn players would engage in meaningless small battles. With this table, and a bad die roll, your entire fleet is at stake and you may only get one chance to fight the battle. Just looking at the table gives one an appreciation and an understanding of why Chauncey and Yeo did what they did.

How do You Feed an Army in Canada?

One of the simplest things that Gamma Two got absolutely right in their game on 1812 was the aspect of Winter Quartering. One may wonder why the British just didn’t march their huge influx of reinforcements to Western Upper Canada and free the province. If life could be so easy. The fact of the matter is that the thinness of the population of Upper Canada made the quartering of a large army almost impossible. That is one of the reasons the bulk of the 1814 reinforcements were kept in the Lower Province, and proceeded on their offensive against northern New York from bases where they could be more easily supplied.

The same could be said of northern Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania: with their scattered settlements it just wasn’t possible to maintain large armies there. Players will find that even if they can move a large army into the region they always have to be looking ahead to winter in order to quarter it properly with no loss of units.
Of Control Markers

Many games use control markers to indicate when an enemy town has become occupied, controlled, or gone over to the enemy. Washington's War utilized them, and for the American Revolution it was perfectly appropriate. But for 1812, it didn't seem right. There was no way that well-established towns like Montreal or Albany were ever going to go over to the enemy, and so from the outset I had decided that no special markers would be needed. American territory is always American territory and so is British. The only way a player can gain temporary control is in military occupation with physical land units of sufficient size. As mentioned in the rules, temporary control gives certain benefits to the occupier, and causes some grief to the defender, but in principal the place always remains hostile.

What does Lake Control Mean?

To understand lake control, and what it means in the game, an appreciation of what the navies did historically has to be understood. For the purposes of illustration I will confine myself to the situation on Lake Ontario, but this was equally true for the other lakes as well. Neither side controlled any lake as long as the other side had a fleet in being. Temporary control could be exercised if one side had a numerical advantage in vessels and lay off the enemy port cruising for a day or two. But, players must not think in terms of the British blockade of the French coast for instance. In that case, units of the British navy, usually frigates, kept a constant watch on French ports to signal the main fleet if the enemy fleet tried to break out. This kind of blockade was kept in all kinds of weather and a grueling duty it was.

Both Chauncey and Yeo did not perform this kind of blockade. For one thing it was not possible to maintain. The lake vessels were small, in some cases only 50-ton schooners, and they neither had the supply capacity, nor the endurance, to keep tacking and wearing off of an enemy harbor for days on end.

What would happen is, that if one side gained a slight advantage (let's say of one naval vessel), he would take the fleet and make a show outside of the enemy harbor. Daring him to come out and fight. Of course in such an instance, the blockading player would tend to have the weather gauge, and unless the blockaded squadron was feeling particularly lucky it would stay in port. Often times the purpose of showing up outside the enemy harbor was not necessarily to give battle, but to make sure the enemy fleet was still there. And this was done to make sure that a supply or troop convoy could proceed across the lake without enemy hindrance.

So, in game terms when we speak of a player having “lake control”, try to imagine a fleet that is not afraid to make its appearance on the lake, and is performing a multitude of duties as it did in real life. Reconnaissance, going after enemy merchant vessels, troop transport and maybe planning an amphibious assault. Players should not think of their fleets as just sitting in the middle of the lake, but engaged in a multitude of related activities.

Conclusions

My objective was to create a strategic game on the War of 1812 that could be played in under four hours. I didn’t want a monster game that had to be played in several sessions. As I found out, designing that type of game would have been easier, but it’s not what I wanted. The War of 1812 was unique, and I felt it needed a different set of rules in order to portray it properly. The Event cards that score points are every bit as important as moving military forces on the map. If players have to agonize on whether to play a card for straight points, or to move forces that may yield him points, the game will have succeeded as I intended. I hope I have created a game that is fun to play and has a respect for history.

Gilbert Collins, July, 2012
Sources

Although I consulted many more books and articles than listed here, below is a recommended basic reading list.


