



A Signal Victory: The Lake Erie Campaign, 1812-1813

David Curtis Skaggs, Gerard T. Altoff

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The Battle of Lake Erie on 10 September 1813 is considered by many to be the most important naval confrontation of the War of 1812. Made famous by the American fleet commander Oliver Hazard Perry's comment, "We have met the enemy and they are ours", the battle marked the U.S. Navy's first successful fleet action and one of the Royal Navy's rare surrenders of an entire squadron. This book builds up to a detailed examination of the battle by first evaluating the strategic background and tactical conduct of both the British and Americans in their efforts to control the critical Lake Erie frontier during the first year of the war. Not since James Fenimore Cooper's 1843 book on the subject has the battle been examined in such detail, and not since Alfred Thayer Mahan's 1905 study of the war has there been such a significant reinterpretation of the engagement.

Incorporating British, Canadian, and American archival and published documents, David Skaggs and Gerard Altoff provide a wealth of new insights while at the same time offering a totally impartial analysis of all sides of the struggle to control the lake. New diagrams of the battle are included that reflect the authors' modification of traditional positions of various vessels. A thorough discussion is also presented of the positive and negative aspects of the command leadership exercised by Perry and his British opponent, Robert H. Barclay. The authors also take a close look at the post-battle controversy between Perry and his second-in-command, Jesse Duncan Elliott.

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