

THE WAR OF 1812 IN A NUTSHELL

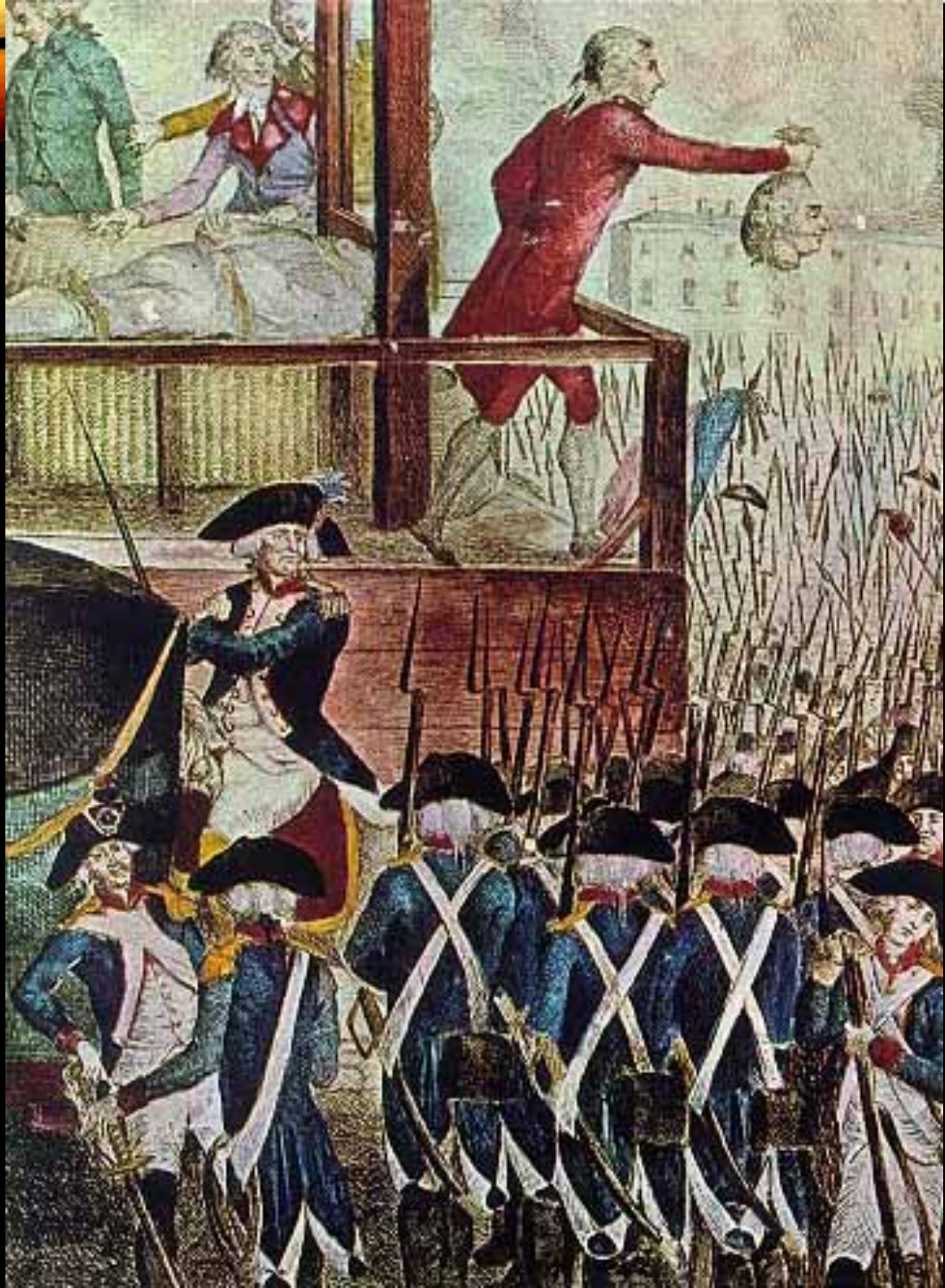


CANADA AND THE WAR OF 1812

- The War of 1812 was basically Canada's War of Independence
- For the Americans it was a war of conquest
- For Canadians it was a war of survival
- Between 1812 and 1814, Canada won the right to *not* be American

THE LEAD-UP TO WAR

- Louis XVI helped the Americans with their American Revolution was now in the middle of a revolution of his own.
- During the French Revolution Louis and his wife Marie Antoinette had their heads chopped off by a guillotine
- A ruthless little general named Napoleon seized power and launched France on a European war of conquest.



THE WAR OF 1812

- What is important to realize, from a Canadian perspective, is this:
 - The French Revolution led to the Napoleonic Wars of 1793-1815
 - The War of 1812 was the North American phase of this conflict
- With Britain bogged down in Europe fighting Napoleon, the Americans saw their chance at capturing Canada – and they took it.

A MERE MATTER OF MARCHING

- American history books usually portray the United States as the underdog in 1812. Why? Because they were up against the British Empire
- This isn't entirely accurate. Great Britain was tied up in Europe, and Canada lay poorly defended and exposed.
- Consider the real odds:
 - Population of the United States: 7.5 million
 - Population of Upper Canada: less than 80,000
 - The entire population of the British North American colonies combined was less than 1 million
- How could the Americans possibly lose?

WAR!

- On June 18, 1812 the United States of America declared war on Great Britain – and made immediate plans for the Conquest of Canada
- Remember Canada didn't exist as a separate country at this point

THE WAR IN UPPER CANADA (ONTARIO)

- The original Loyalist population of Upper Canada had been swamped by an influx of American settlers whose true loyalty remained in doubt
- Fortunately (for Canada) the U.S. forces were very poorly organized and launched scattered attacks rather than focusing their approach
- Most of the battles took place along the boarder between the United States and the British North American Colonies (Canada)

GENERAL ISAAC BROCK

- Brock was the man in charge of defending the colony from the American invaders
- He was a brilliant strategist and an inspiring leader
- Isaac Brock was long remembered as the fallen hero and saviour of Upper Canada



TECUMSEH

- Tecumseh was a Shawnee chief that was allied with the British
- His main goals were to
 - Stop American expansion into Native territory
 - To secure a sovereign First Nations Confederacy in the interior.
- He brought together dozens of different Nations and fought along side the British for tactical reasons, not loyalty.



BLUFFING THEIR WAY TO VICTORY

- The Americans were confident that the Canadians would flock over to the American side of the fight – but they didn't!
- Brock had an idea – there weren't very many British regular soldiers so he dressed Canadian militia in the red coats of the regular army to make them seem like they were professional soldiers
- He also knew that the Americans were terrified of the Natives and Brock and Tecumseh used this to their advantage
 - Tecumseh paraded his men in front of the American Garrison then led them through the woods to join the end of the line again. Then they marched past again. Tecumseh marched the same men by three times and the Americans never caught on
 - Their estimates of Tecumseh's forces ranged as high as 3000 warriors. In fact, Tecumseh had fewer than 600 men on hand.

THE CAPTURE OF DETROIT

- No attack was needed.
- General Hull was so scared of an Indian Massacre that he caved almost immediately
- All it took were a few cannon shots and a threatening ultimatum from Brock.



BURN, WASHINGTON! BURN!

- Why is the White House white? Because we burned it, that's why! Or at least, the British did. In August 1814, and in direct retaliation for what the Americans had done in York, the British captured and burned Washington D.C. The attack came as a complete surprise, and President Madison and most of his defending army ran away so fast the battle became known, sarcastically, as "a race". The British spent the next two days ransacking the U.S. capital and torching the public buildings. When the President's own residence was badly damaged and the walls scorched, the building was hastily rebuilt and the exterior painted over with whitewash. It became known as "the white house"