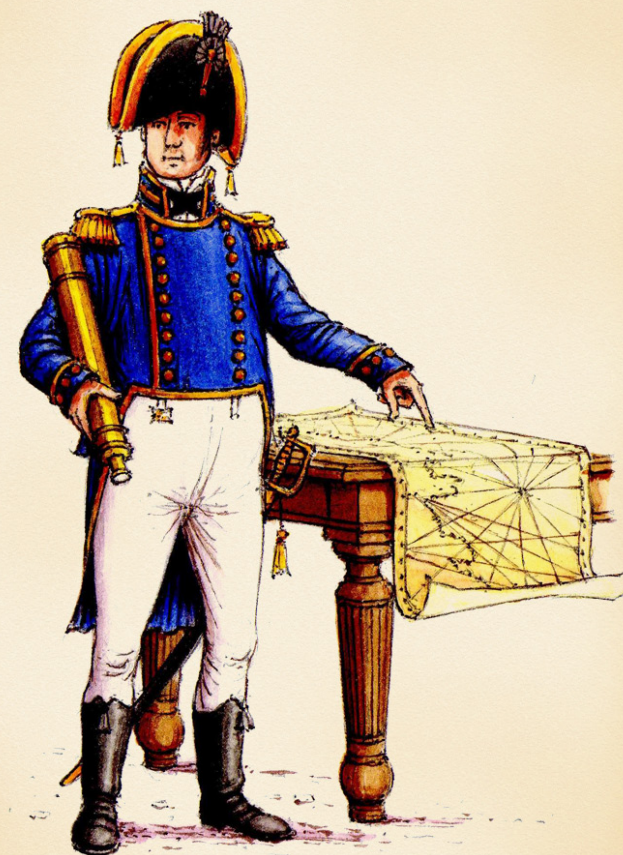


Sailor's Story

Captain Isaac Hull

Who am I?

I am called Isaac Hull, and I have the good fortune to be Captain of this magnificent frigate. I was born in Derby, Connecticut, 39 years ago. My Uncle Bill, who raised me, wanted me to go to college but my love of salt water thwarted him. At 14, I was a cabin boy; by 21, a captain. I served on *Constitution* as Lieutenant for six years until 1802, and returned as her Captain two years past.



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Sailor's Story

Captain Isaac Hull

My work may surprise you

A schoolboy will tell you a sea-captain's job is to sail, but sailing is the work of others. No, I *command* the ship and all in her. On a voyage, I decide where we shall go; in a battle, I choose whether 'tis wiser to fight or flee. If *Constitution* is victorious, then (whether I deserve it or not) people will praise me. If through my faults she is defeated, then I must take the blame!



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Sailor's Story
Captain Isaac Hull

Be careful what you wish for

To command a ship in our young nation's navy is perhaps the dream of every officer, but it is lonely work. When I walk the quarterdeck other officers move away, out of respect for my authority. For the same reason, I dine alone each night and can have no friends among the lieutenants. Sometimes when I hear their merry laughter, I miss the casual comradeship of the lower ranks.



Sailor's Story
Captain Isaac Hull

The British deserve to be taught a lesson

Like every American, I have been angered by the British actions that provoked this war. However, I have special reasons to plot their defeat. One is to avenge an insult: they described my ship as "a bundle of pine boards sailing under a bit of striped bunting." My other reason is personal: my father was sorely ill-treated on a British prison ship.

MIRROR-OFFICE, June 22, 1812.

WAR DECLARED!!

Extract of a Letter from Washington, received in this City, dated June 18, 1812.

"The injunction of secrecy is just removed. An act has passed, and been approved by the President, declaring —THAT WAR EXISTS BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF GREAT-BRITAIN AND IRELAND AND THEIR DEPENDENCIES, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; and also authorizing the President to employ the land and naval force to carry it on, and to issue Letters of Marque and Reprisal."

In the House of Representatives—Yeas 79, Nays 49, majority for War 30; Senate—Yeas 19, Nays 13, majority 6.

From the New-York Evening Post of Saturday last.

Brigadier-General BLOOMFIELD, commander of the United States' forces on this station, received a letter by a government Express from the Secretary at War, this morning, and immediately issued the following:—

(cont.)

"GENERAL ORDERS.

"HEAD-QUARTERS, 20th June, 1812.

"General Bloomfield announces to the troops that "WAR IS DECLARED BY THE UNITED STATES AGAINST GREAT-BRITAIN."

"BY ORDER,

"R. H. MACPHERSON, Aid-de-Camp."

Government Expresses passed through this city, about 10 o'clock for Albany and Boston, with the above intelligence.

USS Constitution Museum Collection

Sailor's Story

Captain Isaac Hull

Not as deaf as you think!

Our escape from the British Squadron off New Jersey in July 1812 drew my name to public attention. Our destruction of *Guerriere* the following month brought me fame and medals, and prize-money from the war enabled me to marry my beloved Ann. Later I commanded squadrons in the Pacific and Mediterranean but by 1841 it was time to retire, for I knew my ambitious, impatient Lieutenants called me their "short, fat, deaf captain."



Presented to Isaac Hull by the Merchant Bankers of New York, 1813.
USS Constitution Museum Collection, on loan from John P. Shonkwiler.

*Isaac Hull died at his home in
Philadelphia in 1843, aged 69.*