



# **Splintering the Wooden Wall: The British Blockade of the United States, 1812-1815**

*Wade G. Dudley*

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Most naval historians take their cue from the work of Alfred Thayer Mahan published a century ago and view the blockade of the United States during the War of 1812 as a highly effective wooden wall. But Wade Dudley challenges that prevailing interpretation and in the pages of this new study provides a bold new assessment. Rather than an impermeable wooden wall, he says the Royal Navy's blockade resembled a light picket fence that was easily splintered by aggressive American public and private navies preying on British merchantmen. The first book-length treatment of the 1812 blockade since Mahan's, his well-reasoned analysis is certain to influence future thinking about the most used tool in a sailing Navy's arsenal.

The work presents a useful overview of the history, theory, and practice of blockades during the age of fighting sail along with an evaluation of the naval capabilities of the belligerents, a comparison of the blockade of the United States to British blockades of Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, and a discussion of the importance of geography in the theater of conflict. Readers will be fascinated by the story that emerges of the modern world's first super power at war with a developing nation and of a conflict between civilized states that threatened to devolve into little more than a campaign of terror.

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