

ART OF THE WAR OF 1812

AS WE CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY,
WE LOOK AT ART WORK DEPICTING THE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT WAR OF 1812 – A CONFLICT
THAT SAW THE US NAVY DEFEAT SUPERIOR BRITISH FORCES

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ART WORK COURTESY OF THE NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND



The War of 1812 is an important part of the US Navy's 250th anniversary. Since photography was not available, we need to rely on artists to interpret events from that traumatic period in our nation's history. Shortly after the conflict broke out, the USS *Constitution* did battle with HMS *Guerriere* off the coast of the USA on 19 August 1812. Upon entering range, *Guerriere* opened fire on *Constitution* but *Constitution* held back until the Royal Navy ship was within a range of just 25 yards. This oil on canvas painting was executed by Anton Otto Fisher during 1960.

The Navy's art collection holds many interpretations of the fight between *Constitution* and *Guerriere*. This 1813 engraving was done by Tiebout Cornelius after a painting by Thomas Birch and offers a different view of the battle. The two ships tried to outmaneuver each other for three hours. *Constitution* opened fire at just 25 yards and the results were devastating. Within an hour, the British ship lost its masts and was helpless in the water.

