

Commodore Sir Edward W. C. R. Owen: Shaping the British Naval Establishment on the Great Lakes in the Wake of the War of 1812

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À la fin de 1814, le commodore Sir Edward W.C.R. Owen a été envoyé dans la région des Grands Lacs afin de continuer la guerre contre les Américains. Au lieu de cela, il s'est vu chargé de réduire les forces sur les lacs au lendemain de la guerre et d'établir la paix dans les mers intérieures. Au cours de l'année qu'il a passée au Canada, Sir Edward a aidé à retirer les troupes de la province du Haut-Canada, à résoudre les problèmes d'équipage des navires restés en service et à rédiger des rapports pour l'Amirauté sur les améliorations à apporter aux communications et à la défense le long des Grands Lacs.

At the end of 1814, Commodore Edward Owen was sent to North America to wage war against the Americans on the inland seas. Instead, he oversaw the shift from a war footing to a peace establishment.¹ He made a signal contribution in securing the tenuous new peace between Britain and the United States by rapidly reducing forces, while also reorganizing the naval establishments and placing ships, bound for ordinary, in a state of readiness that would enable a quick return to service if the delicate peace collapsed. These were enormous tasks in a vast and complex theatre during a time of continued border tensions, and yet have not been treated in either biographies of Owen or studies of peacemaking and defence preparations in the wake of the War of 1812.² This paper will examine the role

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2 Mentioned in passing in J MacKay Hitsman. *Safeguarding Canada 1763-1871* (Toronto, ON: