

## Transcription

### **Captain Isaac Hull's Official Account** **USS *Constitution* Battles HMS *Guerriere***

From The *Connecticut Mirror* – September 21, 1812

Capt. HULL'S official Account.

*United States frigate Constitution, off Boston Light, Aug. 30, 1812.*

SIR—I have the honour to inform you that on the 19th inst. at 2 P.M. being in latitude 41, 42, and longitude 55, 48, with the Constitution under my command, a sail was discovered from the mast-head bearing E. by S. or E. S. E. but at such a distance we could not tell what she was. All sail was instantly made in chase, and soon found we came up with her. At 3 P.M. could plainly see that she was a ship on our starboard tack under easy sail, close on a wind; at half past 3 P.M. made her out to be a frigate; continued the chase until we were within about three miles, when I ordered the light sails taken in, the courses hauled up, and the ship cleared for action. At this time the chase had backed his maintopsail waiting for us to come down. As soon as the Constitution was ready for action, I bore down with an intention to bring him close to action immediately; but on our coming within gun shot she gave us a broadside and filled away, and wore, giving us a broadside on the other tack, but without effect; her shot falling short. She continued wearing and maneuvering for about 3 quarters of an hour, to get a raking position, but finding she could not, she bore up, and run under her top-sails and jib, with the wind on the quarter.

I immediately made sail to bring the ship up with her, and 5 minutes before 6 P.M. being alongside within half pistol shot, we commenced a heavy fire from all our guns, double shotted with round and grape, and so well directed were they, and so warmly kept up, that in 15 minutes his mizen mast went by the board and his main-yard in the slings, and the hull, rigging and sails very much torn to pieces. The fire was kept up with equal warmth for fifteen minutes longer, when his mainmast and foremast went, taking with them every spar, excepting the bowsprit; on seeing this we ceased firing, so that in thirty minutes after we got fairly along side the enemy she surrendered and had not a spar standing, and her hull below and above water so shattered that a few more broadsides must have carried her down.

After informing you that so fine a ship as the Guerrier(e), commanded by an able and experienced officer, had been totally dismasted, and otherwise cut to pieces so as to make her not worth towing into port, in the short space of thirty minutes, you can have no doubt of the gallantry, and good conduct of the officers and ship's company I have the honour to command; it only remains

therefore for me to assure you, that they all fought with great bravery; and it gives me great pleasure to say that from the smallest boy in the ship to the oldest seamen, not a look of fear was seen. They all went into action, giving three cheers, and requesting to be laid close alongside the enemy.

Enclosed I have the honour to send you a list of killed and wounded on board the Constitution, and a report of the damages she has sustained, also a list of killed and wounded on board the enemy, with his quarter bill, &c.

I have the honour to be,  
With very great respect,  
Sir, your obedient servant,  
ISAAC HULL.

The Hon. Paul Hamilton, &c.

Return of killed and wounded on board the United States frigate Constitution, Isaac Hull, Esq. Capt. In the action with H.M.S. Guerrier(e), James R. Dacres, Esq. Capt. on the 20th day of August, 1812.

*Killed*—Wm. S. Bush, 1st lieut. of marines; Jacob Sago, seaman; Robert Brice, do; John Brown, do; James Read, do; Caleb Smith, do; James Ashford, do.

*Wounded*—Charles Morris, 1st lieut. dangerously; John C. Aylwin, master, slightly; Richard Dunn, seaman, dangerously; George Reynolds, ordinary seaman, dangerously; Daniel Lewis, do. do; Owen Taylor, do. do; Francis Mullen, marine, slightly.

*Recapitulation*—Killed, one lieut. of marines and six seamen—total killed, 7.

*Wounded*—Two officers, four seamen and one marine—total wounded, 7.

Total killed and wounded, 14.

*United States frigate Constitution, August 21, 1812.*

ISAAC HULL, Captain.  
T.J. CHEW, Purser.

*Wounded*—On board of the Guerrier(e), 62.—*Killed*—15.—*Missing*—24.  
Total—Killed, Wounded, and Missing, 101.