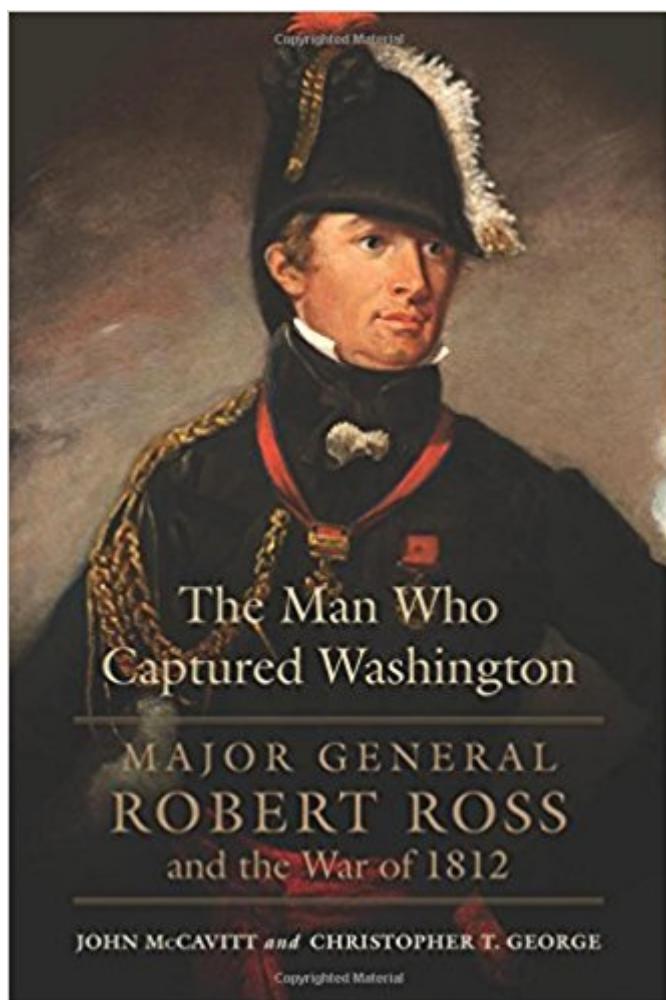


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# The Man Who Captured Washington: Major General Robert Ross And The War Of 1812 (Campaigns And Commanders Series)



## Synopsis

An Irish officer in the British Army, Major General Robert Ross (1766–1814) was a charismatic leader widely admired for his bravery in battle. Despite a military career that included distinguished service in Europe and North Africa, Ross is better known for his actions than his name: his 1814 campaign in the Chesapeake Bay resulted in the burning of the White House and Capitol and the unsuccessful assault on Baltimore, immortalized in “The Star Spangled Banner.” The Man Who Captured Washington is the first in-depth biography of this important but largely forgotten historical figure. Drawing from a broad range of sources, both British and American, military historians John McCavitt and Christopher T. George provide new insight into Ross’s career prior to his famous exploits at Washington, D.C. Educated in Dublin, Ross joined the British Army in 1789, earning steady promotion as he gained combat experience. The authors portray him as an ambitious but humane commanding officer who fought bravely against Napoleon’s forces on battlefields in Holland, southern Italy, Egypt, and the Iberian Peninsula. Following the end of the war in Europe, while still recovering from a near-fatal wound, Ross was designated to lead an “enterprise” to America, and in August 1814 he led a small army to victory in the Battle of Bladensburg. From there his forces moved to the city of Washington, where they burned public buildings. In detailing this campaign, McCavitt and George clear up a number of misconceptions, including the claim that the British burned the entire city of Washington. Finally, the authors shed new light on the long-debated circumstances surrounding Ross’s death on the eve of the Battle of North Point at Baltimore. Ross’s campaign on the shores of the Chesapeake lasted less than a month, but its military and political impact was enormous. Considered an officer and a gentleman by many on both sides of the Atlantic, the general who captured Washington would in time fade in public memory. Yet, as McCavitt and George show, Ross’s strategies and achievements during the final days of his career would shape American defense policy for decades to come.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Following distinguished commands in Iberia and France under the Duke of Wellington, Major General Robert Ross arrived in the Chesapeake in 1814 and quickly earned distinction as Ross of Bladensburg following his victory over American forces near Washington, D.C. But when he became known almost exclusively as the British commander who burned Washington, his reputation was eclipsed until now. John McCavitt and Christopher T. George have rescued Ross from obscurity to show what an effective commander he was in both the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812. John R. Grodzinski, author of *A Defender of Canada: Sir George Prevost and the War of 1812* "This superbly researched book will become the definitive history of the life of British Major General Robert Ross—a little-known and underappreciated figure of great importance to the War of 1812. Ross was not only a first-rate combat commander but also the only former subordinate of Wellington to succeed in independent command against the Americans on their home soil—most notably at the pivotal battle of Bladensburg and his subsequent capture of nearby Washington, D.C. Highly recommended." Charles P. Neimeyer, author of *War in the Chesapeake: The British Campaigns to Control the Bay, 1813–1814*

John McCavitt is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He is the author of *Sir Arthur Chichester: Lord Deputy of Ireland, 1605–1616* and *The Flight of the Earls*. Christopher T. George, an independent historian, is Vice President of the 1812 Consortium and founding editor of the *Journal of the War of 1812*. He is the author of *Terror on the Chesapeake: The War of 1812 on the Bay*.

This is a fascinating book about a long-neglected and somewhat forgotten British General. The authors have done a superb job researching and illuminating the life and wars of Major General Robert Ross. Ross was an outstanding officer whose victorious career in the Napoleonic Wars was tainted by the misfortune of being in command of a British Army tasked with fighting an unpopular,

frustrating, and ultimately futile war against the United States of America. The often-horrendous conduct of his troops, combined with Ross's death in combat outside Baltimore led to him being consigned to historical obscurity. This book brings to vivid life a man who almost (maybe) changed the course of the history of the United States - and the world. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812.

A summary of the review on StrategyPage.Com'Opening with an excellent overview of Ross's impressive career in the British Army. (he was almost almost continuously on campaign from 1799 through 1814), the bulk of the book to the general's operations in the Chesapeake Bay region in 1814., when he commanded the British column that fought at Bladensburg, burned Washington, and threatened Baltimore, giving us what is perhaps the best account of this episode from the British perspective. They discuss the background to the American defeat at Bladensburg, by no means as one-sided as is usually depicted, and provided considerable detail on the subsequent occupation of Washington, and the British attempt to take Baltimore, during which Ross was killed. This is well worth reading for anyone with an interest in the Napoleonic Wars or the War of 1812. For the full review, see StrategyPage.Com

Brilliantly written, excellent research and many fascinating facts and anecdotes from this most interesting of wars.

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