

CHAPTER HEADING  
SUMMER 1814: BLOOD ON THE NIAGARA BORDER

**NARRATION:** The improved American army would show its mettle in the summer of 1814. In July, Jacob Brown's troops battled British regulars twice on the Niagara peninsula. On July 5, in a field near the Chippawa River, Winfield Scott led his brigade right through a hail of artillery fire, causing the British to retreat. [Borneman 187-8] Three weeks later, by a Canadian cemetery within earshot of Niagara Falls, the two armies met again, this time in one of the bloodiest battles of the war – a desperate encounter at Lundy's Lane. [Hickey 73, Borneman 191-98]

**Don Graves:** It's the worst kind of battle you could want to fight. It's an unplanned meeting engagement with continuous reinforcements on both sides and highly unusual for the time it goes on into the night. One American participant called it a conflict obstinate beyond description. They got stuck into each other and they weren't gonna let go.

**Dale:** The soldiers were firing their muskets at each other at only a few feet away. The flash from the musket fire might scorch their clothes as the musket ball went flying by.

**Byfield:** Our bugle sounded for the company to drop. A volley was then fired upon us, which killed two corporals, and wounded a sergeant and several of the men. The company then arose, fired, and charged.

**Lambert:** The units of the American army are starting to perform very well at battles like Chippewa and Lundy's Lane. The British are grudgingly respecting of the American performance [Latimer 299]. They stand on the field of battle under gun fire and they don't flinch. At this point the British say that these guys have actually learned how to do this.

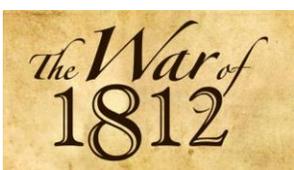
**Don Graves:** By the end of five and a half hours of fighting close to a third of both armies are dead or wounded or run off in the night. Brown was badly wounded during the battle, Scott was seriously wounded. [Borneman 194] On the British side General Drummond was wounded, Major General Real was not only badly wounded he was also captured [Borneman 192]. It was a bad night for generals, Lundy's Lane, that's a fact. It was a bad night for everybody.

**Byfield:** The 49th suffered severely in this engagement. In the morning, we collected the wounded and received orders to burn the dead.

**Narration:** Shadrach Byfield had escaped unscathed from what had been one of the bloodiest battles in the war. Two weeks later, in a much smaller battle, Byfield was hit by a musket ball below the elbow.

**Twist:** There was no ability to repair that kind of damage. So on any limb that was hit the typical treatment would be to amputate

**Decroix:** This is done without anesthetic. The surgeons were quite good at what they were doing and they were quick. You've got the, the so-called loblollies that are standing by with the surgeons, who are ready to hold you down as he takes off a limb with things that we would normally find at a hardware store.



Shadrach Byfield: Our doctor informed me that my arm must be taken off. They had men to hold me; but I told them there was no need of that. The operation was painful... and tedious.

Don Grave: Byfield has his forearm amputated and still had enough presence of mind after the operation was over, the attendant was gonna take it out and throw it in a pile of limbs. He's no, no, no bring that back. I wanna give that arm a decent burial and he did [Berton, *Flames* 347]. 18.06.10.09

Byfield: A few boards were nailed together for a coffin, my hand was put into it and buried on the ramparts. The stump of my arm soon healed, and three days after I was able to play a game of cards, for a quart of rum.

Narration: The Niagara theater was the setting for much of the bloodiest fighting of the war; over and over the Americans tried to push into Canada, the border changed hands multiple times – but these battles ended in stalemate. However the year 1814 did see one clear victory: the British and their allies defeated the French, marched into Paris, and captured Napoleon. A world war that had lasted nearly twenty years [EB v4 400] was apparently over.

Grodzinski: President Madison and his cabinet realized that the troops that were now fighting against Napoleon, upwards of sixty thousand, could be redirected elsewhere. If the world's largest power turned all their forces against the United States there could be serious territorial losses.

