

instantly obey the call of the chief magistrate. For the expense of this reserve one million of dollars were appropriated."

The act setting forth the beginning of hostilities received the signature of the president, James Madison, on the eighteenth of June. By it war was "declared to exist between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories; and that the president of the United States" was "authorized to use the whole land and naval force of the United States to carry the same into effect, and to issue to private armed vessels of the United States commissions, or letters of marque and general reprisal, in such form as he shall think proper, and under the seal of the United States, against the vessels, goods, and effects of the government of the said United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the subjects thereof."¹

On the nineteenth of June, President Madison issued a proclamation announcing the declaration of war. Brigadier-General Joseph Bloomfield, commanding the United States forces occupying the fortifications in the city of New York and its vicinity, on Saturday morning, the twentieth, published the fact in the general orders of that day:

"General Bloomfield announces to the troops that war is declared by the United States against Great Britain. By order, R. H. McPherson, aid-de-camp."

"At that time there were in the port of New York the most effective part of the United States navy: the *President*, 44 guns, Commodore Rodgers, commander; *Essex*, 32, Captain Porter; *Hornet*, 18, Captain Lawrence. During the day were added, but remained at Sandy Hook, the *United States*, 44, Captain Decatur; *Congress*, 38, Captain Smith; the *Argus*, 16, Captain Crane; all ready to sail on short notice, with the exception of the *Essex*, which was ostensibly repairing her rigging and restoring her hold."

On "Sunday morning, about nine o'clock, Commodore Rodgers received official orders from Washington putting him in command of the squadron, and orders to get under way at once. * * * *

"A midshipman on board the *Hornet*, in his diary says:

"Sunday.—This morning the declaration of war by the United States against Great Britain was read. * * * * At ten o'clock, a.m., Commodore Rodgers hove out the signal to weigh; never was anchor to the cat-head sooner, nor topsail sheeted to the masthead with more dispatch, than upon the present occasion. The smallest boy on board seemed anxious to meet what is now looked upon as the common tyrant of the ocean, for they had heard the woful tales of the older tars. * * * *

¹ Report of the committee on foreign relations, November 29, 1811. The pictorial field-book of the war of 1812. By Benson J. Lossing. 1869, pp. 217, 218; foot-note, p. 227.