

## READERS RESPOND

### Refighting the War of 1812

I write in response to some of the points raised by Paul J. O'Neil ("War of 1812: No historical revisionism, please," Readers Respond, July 15). I do not disagree with Mr. O'Neil's assessment that the U.S. suffered heavily during the War of 1812 and certainly did not win it. He is correct to state that America's soldiers experienced an embarrassing defeat in defense of Washington and that their skirmish at Bear Creek did not end well either.

Though Tidewater was only one of several theaters of this war, it had been the first to receive the full force of the Royal Navy's blockade in February 1813 as Britain endeavored to stifle Fells Point's production of Baltimore schooners that became by 1814 the most successful American cruiser of this war. America's private armed navy captured or destroyed over 1,300 British ships.

Mr. O'Neil misread the importance of the British defeat at the hands of Baltimoreans on Sept. 13 and 14, as it had been the British plan to retaliate against this city for the embarrassment our schooners brought upon the previously unchallenged Royal Navy. Baltimore executed a decisive victory that saved the city from Admiral Cochrane's orders to destroy it.

Finally, I remind Baltimoreans that Mr. O'Neil is totally wrong when he writes that "the British had no interest in conquering the U.S." The British tried to take control of the Great Lakes from the U.S. Navy and failed. When James Madison's ill-conceived plan to invade Canada failed, the British invaded New York and New England and were defeated.

As for conquering other parts of America, Mr. O'Neil must study up on the British plan to conquer New Orleans and gain control over the Mississippi River system. Had those three invasive campaigns not failed, Great Britain would have reestablished control over the United States of America.

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