Aerial view of Fort Henry shows strategic defence position in Kingston Harbor. Portion of Royal Military College is shown at lower left of the picture.

Old Fort Henry —
Citadel of Upper Canada

By Cst. D. A. Lehman

LOCATED on the eastern outskirts of the City of Kingston is Old Fort Henry. Today, even as 100 years ago, it dominates the city, sprawling across the crest of a commanding hill to the east of Kingston harbor. Originally it was designed to protect Canadian soil from our now friendly southern neighbors. Each year from May to September the Fort is invaded by increasing numbers of Canadian and American tourists. It is said that the clearest record of a nation's life lies in the structures it has built. If it is so then this grim reminder of our eventful past must have some deeper significance than its modern reputation as a premier tourist attraction.

Throughout the War of 1812, Kingston was the site of an important British naval establishment. It was, therefore, in a military, as well as a naval sense, the most important strategic position in Upper Canada. Any successful defence of Canada against United States invasion rested solely upon British assistance, the speedy and safe arrival of reinforcements and military stores. As long as Kingston was held securely and the communications with Montreal kept open, the materials of war could be forwarded and the supremacy of Lake Ontario contested with the Americans.

On June 18, 1812, the U.S. declared war against Great Britain. Both sides were unprepared for naval operations

Cover Picture—The official mascot of the Fort Henry Guard is "David", the snow white goat shown on this issue's cover with members of the Guard. He was presented by the St. David's Society of Toronto to commemorate the garrison services of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers at Fort Henry 1842-43.