

0. AMERICAN FIRSTS - Story Preface

1. A DIVINELY ORDAINED FIGHT

2. AMERICAN FIRSTS

3. DRAFTING THE DECLARATION

4. WE ARE FREE!

5. EVIDENCE OF FREEDOM



This image is a detail from "The Liberty Window" located at Christ Church in Philadelphia. It shows "The Prayer in the First Congress, A.D. 1774." The stained-glass-and-lead window is based on a painting by Harrison Tompkins Matteson, c. 1848. Online [via the Library of Congress](http://www.libraryofcongress.gov), courtesy of the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of Christ Church, Philadelphia.

Believing they could stand against the British, the Continental Congress established the U.S. Navy on November 28, 1775. [Admiral Esek Hopkins](#) was the first (and only) Commander-in-Chief of the American "fleet" (six war vessels).

The first battleship owned by America was the [U.S.S. Alfred](#) (formerly a 24-gun private vessel known as the *Black Prince*). Lt. [John Paul Jones](#) took command of the one-year-old *Alfred* on December 3, 1775, as he raised the first flag of the United States: the [Grand Union Flag](#).

With additional weapons and a new [Continental Navy](#) in place, the thirteen colonies ended 1775 in a way they would never end another year: British-owned.

Within months, the patriots would formally declare their independence from George III.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/AMERICAN-FIRSTS-American-Colonies>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/AMERICAN-FIRSTS-American-Colonies>

Media Stream

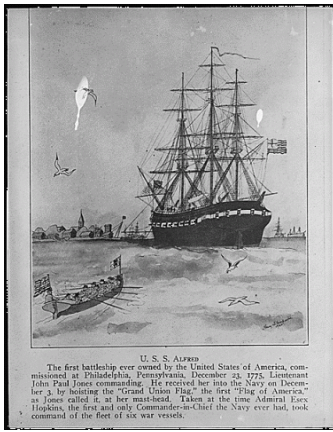


[Admiral Esek Hopkins - America's First Naval Commander](#)

Image online, courtesy U.S. Navy - "Naval Historical Center."

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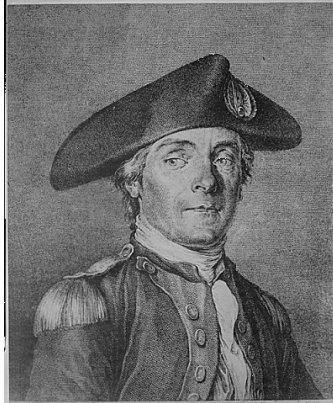
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Battleship U.S.S. Alfred

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

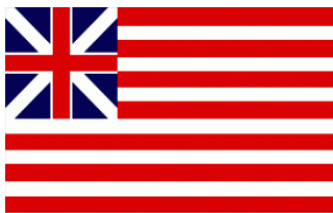
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Lieutenant John Paul Jones

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Grand Union Flag

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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