

## Commodore John Barry - Wexford

"Father of the American Navy" Born 1745 - Our Lady's Island, Co. Wexford.

Few people are well acquainted with the gallantry and heroic exploits of America's Wexford born naval commander, Commodore John Barry. Obscured by his contemporary, naval commander John Paul Jones, Barry remains to this day an unsung hero of the young American Republic.

John Barry was born in a modest thatched cottage in 1745 at Ballysampson, Our Lady's Island, County Wexford, an area with a strong maritime tradition. Yet Barry's father was a poor tenant farmer who was evicted by his British landlord. The family was then forced to relocate to the village of Rosslare.

At Rosslare, the youth's uncle, Nicholas Barry, was captain of a fishing skiff, and the young man determined at an early age to follow his uncle to sea.

Barry started out as a ship's cabin boy, and graduated from seaman to able seaman and ultimately achieved Mate's rating. Barry grew to become a tall, muscular, and well respected seaman.



Statue of Commodore John Barry  
Crescent Quay,  
Wexford.



In the space of 58 years, he rose from humble cabin boy to senior commander of the entire United States fleet.

Intrepid in battle, he was humane to his men as well as adversaries and prisoners.

Barry's war contributions are unparalleled.

He was the first to capture a British war vessel on the high seas, captured two British ships after being severely wounded in a ferocious sea battle, quelled three mutinies, fought on land at the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, captured over 20 ships including an armed British schooner in the

lowe Delaware, authored a Signal Book which established a set of signals used for effective communication between ships, and fought the last naval battle of the American Revolution aboard the frigate Alliance in 1783.

Barry's last day of active duty came on March 6th 1801, when he brought the USS United States into port.

He remained head of the American Navy until his death on September 12th 1803, from the complications of asthma.

On September 14th 1803, John Barry received his final salute in a full military burial in Philadelphia's Old St. Mary's Churchyard.

The John Barry Memorial at Crescent Quay, Wexford was erected to his memory, a gift from the people of the United States to Wexford.



Grave of Commodore John Barry  
in Saint Mary's Catholic Churchyard, Philadelphia, USA