



**Rodger's certifies that Captain of HM Mail Packet *Duke of Montrose*  
is blameless in its capture by USS *President***

*This is to certify that his Britannic Majesty's Packet Duke of Montrose was this day captured by the U. States Frigate President under my command and that her commander Mr. Aaron Groub Blewitt did everything that was possible to make his escape, consequently shall no degree of blame whatever be attributed to him.*

*Jna. Rodgers*

*Comd. USF Prest.*

*At Sea June 10th 1813*

On 10 June 1813, USS *President* captured the outward-bound Falmouth mail packet *Duke of Montrose*, Captain Aaron Blewett, which managed to throw her mails overboard before *President* could send a prize crew aboard. *President* made a cartel of *Duke of Montrose*, putting all of *President's* prisoners from three earlier captures, on board and then sending her into Falmouth under the command of an American officer. There the British government refused to recognize the cartel agreement that Blewett, his crew, and passengers had signed. Rather than turn *Duke of Montrose* over to the Agent for American Prisoners, the British government instructed Blewett to resume command of his ship and prepare her to sail again.

10 June 1813 certificate signed by John Rodgers, USS *President*, at sea, to Capt. Blewitt, retained copy\ endorsed on reverse "Certificate Commodore Rodgers President Frigate to Capt Blewitt"

# The Life and Times of John Rodgers

## The War of 1812

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Commodore Rogers treated his prisoners with very honourable forbearance and liberality. He would not permit them to be plundered of the least trifle, and informed Captain Blewitt that he proposed to send him, with all his crew and passengers, back to England in their own ship, on condition that they would enter into a contract to send the Packet back to America with an equal number of American prisoners in England. This agreement, drawn up in the most binding terms, was subscribed "upon our sacred honour" by all the persons concerned; and the "Duke of Montrose," having on board a single American officer, arrived at Falmouth towards the end of June. It then appeared that in the view of the British Government the agreement was contrary to law; and as it had been notified to the American Government that exchanges of prisoners on the high seas would not be recognized as valid, the whole transaction was declared void ; the " Duke of Montrose " was restored to the Post-Office, the officers and crew were told that they might resume their duties without being exchanged, and the American officer was sent back to his own country empty-handed.

The story is not a pleasant one ; and while the action of the Government may have been strictly warranted by the notification made to the United States, yet the transaction smacks overmuch of the methods of a sharp attorney, and one cannot but regret that the generous confidence of Commodore Rogers was not met in the same spirit. (from "History of the Post-office Packet Service Between the Years 1793-1815")



USS *President* circa 1813