

George Armistead



Lt. Colonel GEORGE ARMISTEAD was born on April 10, 1780, in Caroline County, Virginia. He was one of five brothers, all of whom later served in the War of 1812. On May 18, 1813, while serving as an artillery officer at Fort Niagara, New York, he took an active part in the American attack on Fort George across the Niagara River in upper Canada and was accorded the honor of delivering the captured British flags to President James Madison.

On his taking command of Fort McHenry in June 1813, Armistead ordered a flag made "so large that the British will have no difficulty in seeing it from a distance." He earned his enduring place in American history under that flag at Fort McHenry whose stalwart defense of Baltimore against British attack in 1814 inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner." Armistead remained in command of the fort until his untimely death at age 38 on April 25, 1818. He is buried in Old St. Paul's Cemetery, Baltimore, Maryland.