Campaign

OSPREY PUBLISHING

Quebec 1759

The battle that won Canada

Stuart Reid • Illustrated by Gerry Embleton

First published in Great Britain in 2003 by Osprey Publishing, Elms Court, Chapel Way, Botley, Oxford 0X2 9LP, United Kingdom.
Email: info@ospreypublishing.com

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 1 85532 605 1

Editor: Lee Johnson
Design: The Black Spot
Index by David Worthington
Maps by The Map Studio
3D bird's-eye views by John Plumer
Battlescene artwork by Gerry Embleton

Originated by Grasmere Digital Imaging, Leeds, UK
Printed in China through World Print Ltd.

03 04 05 06 07 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

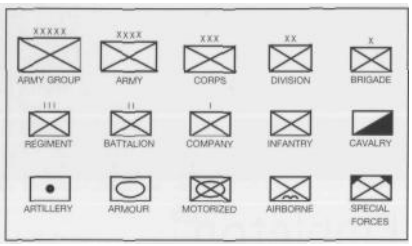
For a catalogue of all books published by Osprey Military and Aviation please contact:

Osprey Direct UK, P.O. Box 140, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 2FA, UK
E-mail: info@ospreydirect.co.uk

Osprey Direct USA, c/o MBI Publishing, P.O. Box 1, 729 Prospect Ave, Osceola, WI 54020, USA
E-mail: info@ospreydirectusa.com

www.ospreypublishing.com

KEY TO MILITARY SYMBOLS



Acknowledgements

Considerable thanks are due to Dr. John Houlding for his advice and comments, and above all to Rene Chartrand for his absolutely invaluable assistance with the illustrations; he will I trust forgive the Anglo-centric bias of the text.

Artist's note

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the Publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:

Scorpio Gallery,
PO Box 475,
Hailsham,
East Sussex
BN27 2SL
UK

The Publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.

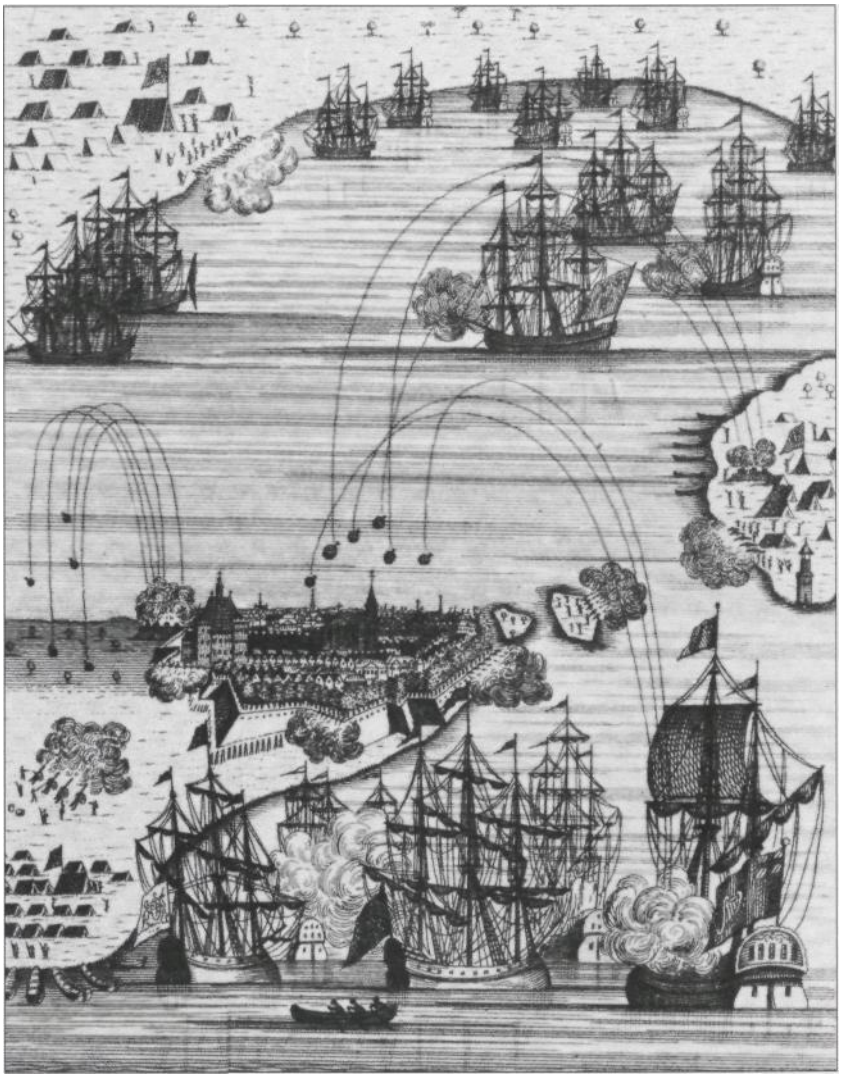
CONTENTS


THE CANADIAN THEATRE OF OPERATIONS, 1759
1. Amherst advances north from Fort Edward to take Ticonderoga and build a new fort at Crown Point.
2. Montcalm switches the French field army away from the New York frontier to Quebec, leaving Bourlemacque to hold the head of the Richelieu River at Ile aux Noix.
3. Wolfe sails up the St Lawrence to attack Quebec.
4. Colonel John Prideaux attacks Fort Niagara to sever French communications with the West and Louisiana.
Area of British control
Area of French control
Fort under British control
Fort under French control
Town under British control
Town under French control
St Lawrence
Louisburg
NOVA SCOTIA
Halifax
XXXX
WOLFE
Jacques Cartier
Montmorenci
Pt Levis
Quebec
Cap Rouge
Chaudière
Trois-Rivières
CANADA
Soral
Richelieu
Montreal
XXXX
MONTCALM
Ile aux Noix
MASSACHUSETTS
Captured by Col John Bradstreet, 27 Aug 1758
Lake Champlain
NEW HAMPSHIRE
Fort Frontenac
Crown Point
Ticonderoga
XXXX
AMHERST
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Fort George
Fort Edward
Lake Ontario
Fort Oswego
Albany
Boston
MASSACHUSETTS
Fort Niagara
NEW YORK
Lake Erie
XXX
PRIDEAUX
N
0 100 miles
0 200 km

INTRODUCTION

James Wolfe; this portrait by Joseph Highmore, which was probably painted to celebrate either his appointment as major in the 20th Foot or his promotion to lieutenant-colonel a year later, brilliantly captures his youthful self-confidence and also a certain dry humour. (National Archives of Canada C-003916)

Until the middle of the 18th century, the increasingly prosperous British colonies in North America were effectively confined to the eastern seaboard of the continent by the long Appalachian mountain chain. However, in the early 1750s an attempt by land speculators to move across the mountains and into the Ohio Valley brought the Virginian colonists into direct and disastrous conflict with their French neighbours. The twin French colonies of Canada and Louisiana were connected by a tenuous overland route down the Ohio and



At first sight rather fanciful, this is in fact a fairly accurate depiction of the siege of Louisburg. It was Wolfe who seized Lighthouse Point on the right of the picture and established batteries that fired directly into the town - a tactic he was to repeat at Quebec.

Mississippi valleys and the prospect of American settlers establishing themselves across it provoked an immediate response. When the American provincial troops, ineptly led by a young Virginian militia officer named George Washington, proved themselves quite incapable of fighting the French on anything approaching equal terms, British regulars were sent out for the first time under the unfortunate Major-General Edward Braddock. The French promptly responded by doing the same and what had begun as a boundary dispute initiated by land speculators rapidly escalated into a war to the death, in which British strategy aimed to seize the whole of French Canada.

Notwithstanding some serious setbacks, by the end of 1758 the British Army was some considerable way to achieving this aim. Badly outnumbered, the French were forced to abandon the strategically important Forks of the Ohio virtually without a fight. Although the main British offensive up the Hudson Valley under Major-General Abercromby had been stopped in its tracks at Ticonderoga at the foot of Lake George, the massive fortress of Louisburg at the mouth of the St Lawrence River was captured by Sir Jeffrey Amherst after a conventional European-style siege.

That winter Amherst went to New York to assume command of Abercromby's defeated army and with it the post of Commander in Chief North America. His rather difficult subordinate James Wolfe sneaked off home with a view to obtaining a command in Europe. Instead, however, Wolfe found that plans were being laid in London for the final destruction of French Canada, and promptly put himself forward for the command of what promised to be the most important of three quite separate operations.

Back in the Americas, the bloodless capture of Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio and Colonel Bradstreet's surprise seizure of Fort Frontenac during the previous summer was now to be followed up by an expedition against Fort Niagara under Colonel John Prideaux. Although the smallest of the three operations, it remained very important. Capture of the fort, lying at the mouth of the Niagara River, would not only completely seal off the overland route between Canada and Louisiana, preventing any retreat by the French Army in that direction, but it would also turn the flank of the defensive positions along the Upper New York frontier. It was here that Amherst, with a very substantial force of both regulars and provincials, aimed to succeed where Abercromby had failed, taking first Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) and Fort St Frederic (Crown Point) and then pushing northwards to Montreal.

With the French Army occupied in dealing with these twin offensives, James Wolfe was to sail up the St Lawrence River and launch a direct assault on the capital of French Canada itself, the mighty fortress city of Quebec.

Edward Braddock, the ill-fated commander of the first British regulars to confront the French, is commonly dismissed as an ignorant martinet. In fact he took very considerable pains to prepare his army for service in the woods and, with a little more luck, might well have won the battle on the Monongahela, with incalculable consequences for the future course of the war.

CHRONOLOGY

1748

Ohio Land Company formed to exploit trans-Allegheny country.

1754

July American expedition to Forks of the Ohio defeated by French at Great Meadows.

1755

April British regulars sent to North America.
June Unsuccessful attempt to intercept corresponding French reinforcements at sea off Grand Banks results in war.
9 July Major-General Braddock defeated and killed at Monongahela.

1756

11 **May** Marquis de Montcalm arrives in Canada with reinforcements.

1757

9 August Lieutenant-Colonel Monro surrenders Fort William Henry to Montcalm. As the garrison marches out, Indian allies of the French massacre between 80 and 200 before Montcalm restores order.

1758

27 July The British capture Louisburg.
8 July Abercrombie's attempts to capture Fort Ticonderoga are repulsed.
27 August Colonel John Bradstreet captures Fort Frontenac at the entrance to the St Lawrence on Lake Ontario.
24 November Faced with the advance of Brigadier-General John Forbes' expedition, the French blow up and abandon Fort Duquesne (present day Pittsburg).

1759

27 June Expedition arrives at lle d'Orleans, close to Quebec.
29 June Monckton's brigade landed at Beaumont.
9 July Grenadier companies and Townshend's brigade landed at Montmorency.
18 July Royal Navy penetrates the upper river.
25 July Having reoccupied Fort Oswego, Brigadier-General John Prideaux's expedition captures Fort Niagara. Prideaux is killed during the siege.
26 July Amherst's expedition captures Fort Ticonderoga.
31 July The battle of Montmorency.
Amherst's expedition captures Fort St Frederick, which had been blown up by the French. He builds the new fort of Crown Point on the site.
8 August Murray ambushed at Pointe aux Trembles.
18 August Murray's raid on Deschambault.
28 August Brigadiers' planning conference recommends landing at Pointe aux Trembles.
2 September Montmorency camp evacuated as whole army moves upstream.
9 September Wolfe decides to land at Foulon.
13 September Battle on the Plains of Abraham. The French are defeated and both Wolfe and Montcalm killed.
18 September The city of Quebec surrenders to Townshend.

1760

28 April The battle of St Foy.
9 **May** French siege of Quebec lifted.

OPPOSING COMMANDERS

BRITISH COMMANDERS

James Wolfe, the 32-year old Major-General commanding the British forces was by any standards a very professional soldier. The son, grandson and great grandson **of** professional soldiers, he had risen **very** quickly indeed through a combination of his own not inconsiderable talents, the assistance of an 'Old Army' mafia, and ultimately the patronage of the Duke of Cumberland. Commissioned a second lieutenant in the 1st Marines on 3 November 1741, he actually went to war as an ensign in the 12th Foot; by 1744 he was a captain in the 4th Foot and was serving on the staff in the following year. Promoted to major, he served as an aide-de-camp to Henry Hawley at Culloden in 1746. On 5 January 1749, after some very complicated manoeuvring, he was appointed major of the 20th Foot and then as a result of determined string-pulling became its lieutenant-colonel a year later. In 1757 he took part in the abortive Rochefort expedition and, despite being thoroughly disgusted by the fumbling of his superiors, he afterwards remarked that 'I am not sorry that I went ... one may always pick up something useful from amongst the most fatal errors.' He also emerged from the debacle with sufficient credit to win first a brevet promotion to full colonel and then, on 23 January 1758, an appointment as brigadier-general in North America for the expedition against Louisburg. Thus far he had had a 'good war', but there was no disguising his ruthlessness and naked ambition. First he attempted to hijack the Louisburg expeditionary force before its actual commander, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, arrived. He then engineered what was in effect a separate command during the siege and afterwards, in blatant defiance of orders, took himself home and engineered his appointment to command the Quebec expedition.

Notwithstanding some very real and unattractive flaws in his character, there is no doubt that Wolfe was the right man for the job. However, it was also his first independent command and, as is often the case, the unaccustomed responsibility sometimes had a paralysing effect on his decision-making. Furthermore, the ruthless way in which he habitually dealt with both superiors and rivals won him few real friends and ensured that relations with his colleagues would be far from easy.

On being appointed to the 'River Command' Wolfe rather pompously informed the commander-in-chief, Lord Ligonier, that unless *'he would give me the assistance of such officers as I should name to him he would do me a great kindness to appoint some other person to the chief direction. This I fear was not understood as it deserved to be ...'*

Robert Monckton, the senior of Wolfe's three brigadiers had been in Nova Scotia since 1752, had taken Fort Beausejour in 1755 and since then

James Wolfe at Quebec after a famous sketch by his ADC Captain Hervey Smyth. This is a particularly important illustration depicting Wolfe in the usual plain red working dress preferred by most British officers in the field - rather than the expensive gold-laced 'regimentals' seen in so many portraits. The black band on his left arm was a personal mark of mourning for his father, who died shortly after Wolfe sailed for Canada. The original sketch quite clearly reveals him to be wearing black gaiters with the tops turned down to reveal a brown linen lining, rather than brown-topped jockey boots.

OPPOSITE Robert Monckton, depicted here in a print after Thomas Hudson, wearing the richly laced regimentals of his own 17th Foot, was the senior of Wolfe's three brigadiers. Although an experienced professional soldier he tends to appear a rather colourless character by comparison with his fellow brigadiers, Murray and Townshend.

Brigadier-General George Townshend. An unflattering portrait of Wolfe's unwanted and most disloyal subordinate. With Wolfe dead and Monckton wounded he succeeded to the command of the army on the Plains and accepted the surrender of the city. However, he then took himself home with indecent haste in an unsuccessful attempt to reap the glory. (R. Chartrand)

served as lieutenant governor of the colony. He had not taken part in the Louisburg expedition, but he was generally regarded as a solid and dependable officer with considerable experience of North American conditions. Wolfe had no hesitation in asking for him.

James Murray, a prickly character who had first been commissioned as a second lieutenant in Wynyard's 4th Marines on 2 February 1740, at first seems an odder choice, for he and Wolfe did not get on from the outset. Although Wolfe had been impressed by his energy during the siege of Louisburg, he could not refrain from referring to him as 'my old adversary' - apparently recalling a clash during the inquest into the Rochefort fiasco. However, Murray was also lieutenant-colonel of Amherst's 15th Foot and, while he was therefore likely to display more loyalty towards his old colonel than to his present general, his name probably went forward as a diplomatic sop to the displaced commander-in-chief. Perhaps because of this, as his third choice Wolfe wanted an undoubted friend: Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Burton of the 48th Foot. Instead he had George Townshend forced on him.

George Townshend's only discernible qualifications for the job were his political connections. Although he subsequently rose to high rank, he was certainly not a professional soldier - quite the reverse. Born in 1724 he had joined the Army as a volunteer in 1742 and cheerfully occupied a succession of minor staff jobs. Latterly, he was one of the Duke of Cumberland's ADCs and by 1748 was a captain in the Footguards, the equivalent of a lieutenant-colonel in the army. At that point, however, he fell out with Cumberland, resigned from the Army and turned to politics until the Duke's fall re-opened the way to a military career. He returned to the Army with the brevet rank of colonel but no regimental commission and no job. On the other hand, Townshend was not only a nephew of the Duke of Newcastle but had also been William Pitt's closest ally in promoting and piloting an important Militia Bill through Parliament. He was thus in the happy situation of having powerful friends on both sides of the ruling coalition. Now he called in old favours and, as Horace Walpole put it, 'thrust himself again into the service'. Wolfe was unimpressed at this imposition and gave way with bad grace and a letter of welcome that whilst polite and conventionally effusive, also contained a barbed reference to his unwanted subordinate's lack of experience. It was hardly a good start, but at least relations between the French senior officers were no better and in some cases rather worse.

FRENCH COMMANDERS

Pierre de Rigaud, Marquis de Vaudreuil, the Canadian-born Governor General of the colony, was by convention and practise lieutenant-general of all the French forces serving in it. As such he was Montcalm's immediate superior. Nevertheless, although he had in his youth served as an officer in the colonial forces in Louisiana, he had never before commanded anything much bigger than a company and, so far as is known, had never even been shot at. Of itself this was not necessarily important for, although vain and pompous, he was on the whole a relatively good

Colonel Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Montcalm's former aide-de-camp and commander of the corps of observation at Cap Rouge. (R. Chartrand)

administrator, untiringly zealous in his efforts to defend his colony and, despite Montcalm's barely disguised contempt, sufficiently conscious of his limitations to defer to his professional colleague on purely military issues. In 1759, however, Montcalm was promoted to the army rank of lieutenant-general as a result of which he at last formally outranked Vaudreuil.

Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm, who was to be killed leading the French army on the Plains of Abraham, was in fact originally no more than the commander of all the *troupes de terre* or French Army regulars **in** Canada. The colonial troops and militia normally answered directly to the colonial governor, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, as did Montcalm himself since both he and the regulars had, after all, been sent out to Canada in order help Vaudreuil defend his colony. Indeed this subordination was very explicitly set out in Montcalm's original instructions. Unfortunately, Montcalm, like Wolfe, was a difficult character to deal with and his arrogance unnecessarily upset far too many of his colleagues. He had begun his career as a dashing cavalryman and whilst there was still no doubting his courage, the characteristic impatience of all good cavalrymen may well have been sharpened in his case by the effects of a bad head wound at Piacenza in 1746. As a professional soldier he also, rather too publicly, resented what he regarded as civilian primacy in determining operational matters and, by the end of 1758, he was feeling the strain of fighting a long drawn out losing battle that he was temperamentally unsuited for. His principal ADC, Captain de Bougainville, was sent home to France with what amounted to a wish-list of what he considered necessary for the defence of the colony and a resignation letter. If it was an ultimatum it failed, for Montcalm was confirmed in his command but received little or none of the material aid he required. Instead he was promoted to lieutenant-general and Vaudreuil was formally instructed to defer to him on all military matters. In reality nothing changed, for this merely reflected the existing position and all that the new orders really achieved was to further embitter an already sour relationship.

Francois-Gaston, Chevalier de Levis, was second in command of the *troupes de terre* and was not only reputed to be a skilled and determined officer, but a diplomatic one too, who managed to get **on** well with both his regular and his colonial colleagues. Unfortunately, when Fort Niagara fell in August he was sent upriver to take charge of operations in that area and so missed the climactic battle of the campaign. Fate was to give him a second chance, but his performance never quite matched his reputation.

Louis-Antoine de Bougainville was originally Montcalm's aide-de-camp, but at the end of 1758 was sent to France on what proved to be an unsuccessful mission to obtain reinforcements. Nevertheless the trip was a personal success for Bougainville himself since, perhaps as a consolation as well as a compliment to his general, he was promoted from captain to colonel. In the final stages of the campaign he was given an important independent command. How he fared in it had a crucial effect on the outcome and while his failure undoubtedly stemmed in the first instance from being over-promoted, he would later prove himself a much more able scientist and explorer than a soldier.

OPPOSING ARMIES

WOLFE'S ARMY

The British Army at Quebec was, rather unusually, almost wholly comprised of infantrymen with a few gunners. There were no cavalrymen and indeed there is no real evidence of even the staff officers being mounted. Even more unusually, with the exception of the Rangers, there were no provincial troops. Almost the entire force was regulars.

Brigade Structure

This is largely as described in Wolfe's orders of 4 May 1759. Under those orders, the 48th Foot were originally assigned to Murray's Brigade and the 58th were to have served in Monckton's. This arrangement is generally followed by secondary sources, but in fact they had evidently been exchanged by the time the army got into the river for the 48th went ashore with Monckton at Beaumont, and the 58th with Murray at Montmorency. Regimental strengths are as per the embarkation return of 6 June 1759 (CO5/51 f67) - these figures do include officers and NCOs, but not officers serving on the staff, or the drummers.

Brigadier-General Robert Monckton

Major of Brigade: Captain John Spital	
15th Foot (Amherst's)	34 officers, 560 rank & file
43rd Foot (Kennedy's)	29 officers, 686 rank & file
48th Foot (Webb's)	36 officers, 816 rank & file
78th Foot (Fraser's)	50 officers, 1,219 rank & file

Brigadier-General George Townshend

Major of Brigade: Captain Thomas Gwillim	
28th Foot (Bragg's)	26 officers, 565 rank & file
47th Foot (Lascelles')	36 officers, 643 rank & file
2/60th Foot (Monckton's)	27 officers, 554 rank & file

Brigadier-General James Murray

Major of Brigade: Captain Hon. Richard Maitland	
35th Foot (Otway's)	36 officers, 863 rank & file
58th Foot (Anstruther's)	27 officers, 589 rank & file
3/60th Foot (Lawrence's)	29 officers, 578 rank & file

Lieutenant Henry Dobson of Lascelles' 47th Foot was also appointed a major of brigade by Amherst on 17 May. This meant that for a time there were four brigade majors, though it is not clear how the extra man was employed. However, Captain Gwillim was subsequently appointed ADC

Reconstruction; the four movements required to fix bayonets, demonstrated by a re-enactor from Pulteney's 13th Foot. This particular regiment sat out the Seven Years War in garrison at Gibraltar, but the 15th and 28th Foot, who fought at Quebec, had the same yellow facings. Note the dirty smudge on the corporal's right knee, indicating that he has been kneeling to fire in the front rank - a practise abandoned in 1759.

to Wolfe after one of his original ADCs, Tom Bell, was wounded in a skirmish on the Montmorency on 26 July, so presumably Dobson replaced him.

Marines

Lieutenant-Colonel Hector Boisrond (27 January 1759)

Provisional Battalion from Portsmouth Division 25 Officers, 577 rank & file

In addition to Boisrond's battalion, a considerable number of marines were landed from the ships. In theory as many as 1,945 rank & file would have been carried as part of the various ships' complements at Quebec, although not all of them may have been available for service on land and none will have been commanded by anyone senior to Boisrond since field officers of marines did not serve afloat.

Included among the marines were a fair number of regular infantrymen. These included three companies of the 62nd Foot and at least two of the 69th. Originally raised as the 2/4th Foot, four companies of the 62nd had been embarked as marines on board the fleet in January 1758, and sailed with Boscawen for Halifax and Louisburg, where they took part in various actions usually ascribed to 'marines'. One company was carried home in September 1758 but the other three remained, together with the 69th Foot companies, and were with Durell's squadron in the Gulf of St Lawrence when joined by Wolfe's expedition in 1759. The 62nd companies were disembarked on the Isle de Orleans, played a part in various land operations during the siege and took part in the demonstration off Beauport on 13 September. Both

they and the 69th companies were eventually drafted into the ranks of the infantry when the fleet sailed for home before the winter.

Grenadiers

On 28 June Wolfe ordered that *'The grenadiers of Louisburg, and Major Dalling's light infantry are to receive orders from Colonel Carleton.'*

Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Murray

Louisburg Grenadiers 13 officers, 313 rank & file

Three companies of grenadiers taken from the garrison of Louisburg, viz. 22nd Foot (Whitmore's), 40th Foot (Hopson's), 45th Foot (Warburton's).

Grenadiers of the line

Wolfe's orders of 28 June 1759 stated that *'When the ten companies of the grenadiers of the line are collected as one corps, they are to be commanded by* [Lieutenant-] *Colonel* [Ralph] *Burton (48th Foot), and Major Roger Morris (35th Foot) to assist him.'*

Light Infantry

Major John Dalling

Light Infantry Battalion Approximately 200 rank & file

Major John Dalling (28th Foot), Captain William Delaune (67th Foot), Captain John Carden (60th Foot?).

Light Infantry of the line

Considerable confusion has arisen from the assumption that Major Dalling's little battalion was the only regular light infantry corps serving

with the army. However, Amherst had ordered on 14 April 1759 that each regular battalion serving in North America should form its own light company comprising one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign and 70 rank and file. Wolfe's own orders of 28 June therefore directed that: *'When the light infantry of the line are formed in one corps, they are to receive their orders from Colonel* [William] *Howe (58th Foot), who has Major* [John] *Hussey (4 7th Foot) to assist him.'*

Rnox noted in his journal on 16 May that Wolfe also confirmed Amherst's orders concerning their dress; '... *the sleeves of the coat are put on the waistcoat, and instead of coat-sleeves, he has two wings like the grenadiers, but fuller; and a round slope reaching about halfway down his arm; which makes his coal of no incumbrance to him, but can be slipt off with pleasure; he has no lace, but the lapels remain; besides the usual pockets he has two, not quite so high as his breast, made of leather, for ball and flints; and a flap of red cloth on the inside, which secures the ball from rolling out, if he should fall.*

'His knapsack is carried very high between his shoulders, as the Indians carry their pack. His cartouch-box hangs under his arm on the left side, slung with a leathern strap; and his horn under the other arm on the right, hanging by a narrower web than that used by his knapsack; his canteen down his back, under his knapack, and covered with cloth; he has a rough case for his tomahock, with a button; and it hangs in a leathern sling down his side, like a hanger, between his coat and waistcoat. No bayonet; his leggings have leathern straps under his shoes, like spatterdashes; his hat is made into a cap, with a flap and button, and with as much black cloth added as will come under his chin, and keep him warm, when he lies down; it hooks in the front, and is made like the old velvet caps in England.'

Subsequently, Wolfe rather sensibly modified these orders by ruling that *'The light infantry of this army are to have their bayonets, as the want of ammunition may at some times be supplied by that weapon, and because no man should leave his post, under pretence that all his cartridges were fired. In most attacks of the night it must be remembered that bayonets are preferable to fire.'*

Private, Norfolk Militia, with bayonet levelled in the manner introduced by Wolfe. Although this illustration is taken from the famous 'Norfolk Discipline', its author, William Windham, freely acknowledged that it was in turn derived from the teaching of officers of Wolfe's own 67th Foot.

Rangers

At Louisburg at the outset of the expedition Wolfe disparagingly dismissed his Rangers as 'six new raised companies of North American Rangers - not complete, and the worst soldiers in the universe'. While these comments have predictably enough been held against him, they were only too accurate, for while Captain Joseph Gorham had a solid core of veterans, the best of the available men were already serving on the New York frontier. All too many of the provincials who were now enlisting in the Ranger companies were the scrapings, attracted by the higher pay of the ranging service, the supposed easy discipline and the opportunities for plunder. Most of their service during the coming campaign against Quebec was to consist of plundering, burning and terrorising the Chilian population. Notwithstanding Gorham's long experience and solid ability, it is perhaps unsurprising that Wolfe insisted on placing the Rangers under the overall command of a regular officer.

Major George Scott, (40th Foot)

Captain Jonathan Brewer	3 officers, 82 rank & file
Captain Benonie Dank	3 officers, 90 rank & file
Captain Joseph Gorham	7 officers, 88 rank & file
Captain Moses Hazen	3 officers, 86 rank & file

Highland soldier of the Black Watch as depicted in the 1742 *Cloathing Book.* Fraser's 78th Highlanders appear to have been very similarly dressed except that the short jackets (and waistcoats) were single breasted and probably had small fold-down collars.

Captain James Rogers	4 officers, 108 rank & file
Captain William Stark	3 officers, 92 rank & file

The additional officers in Gorham's company will have been the various headquarters staff appointments such as adjutant, quartermaster and surgeon. He himself was the senior Ranger officer present and had commanded the Ranger 'battalion' during the Louisburg campaign the year before.

Capain Knox of the 43rd noted in his journal for 5 May 1759 that: *'The rangers have got a new uniform clothing; the ground is of black ratteen or frieze, lapelled and cuffed with blue; here follows a description of their dress; a waistcoat with sleeves; a short jacket without sleeves; only armholes and wings to the shoulders (in like manner as the Grenadiers and Drummers of the army) white metal buttons, linen or canvas drawers, with a blue skirt or petticoat of stuff, made with a waistband and one button; this is open before and does not quite extend to the knees; a pair of leggins of the same colour with their coat, which reach up to the middle of the thighs (without flaps) and from the calf of the leg downwards they button like spatter-dashes; and this active dress they wear blue bonnets, and, I think, in great measure like our Highlanders.'*

Royal Artillery

Lieutenant Colonel George Williamson

Three companies 21 officers, 309 rank & file

MONTCALM'S ARMY

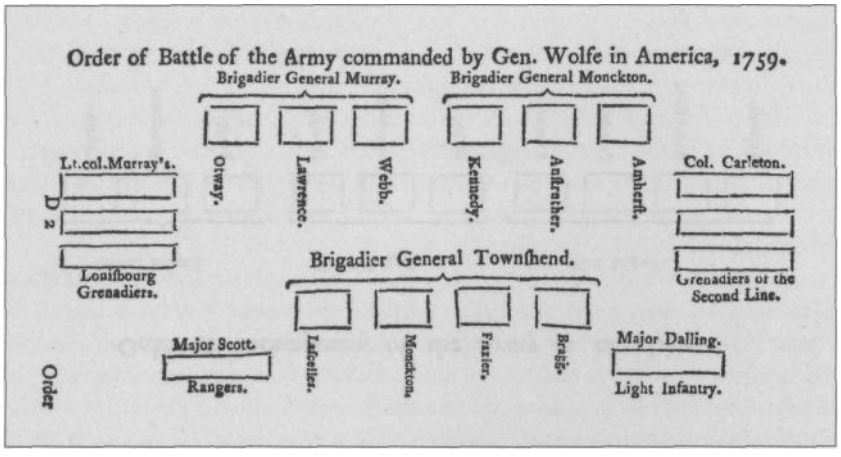
Troupes de Terre

The core of Montcalm's army was a force of eight regular infantry battalions (mostly the 2nd battalions of their regiments) from metropolitan France. Although well experienced, and with a good history of success, they were badly worn down by constant campaigning and through being milked of picquets - ad hoc detachments of 30-40 officers and men - to serve in various garrisons or even in provisional battalions for specific operations. They would also be further weakened by the ill-advised attempt to make up for these losses by drafting undisciplined militiamen into their ranks. As with the British forces, the numbers quoted below are those returned as present in May at the outset of the campaign.

2nd Battalion, Regiment *La Reine,* (LtCol de Roquemaure)	440 rank & file.
2nd Battalion, Regiment *Guyenne,* (LtCol de Fontbrune)	436 rank & file.
2nd Battalion, Regiment *Berry,* (LtCol de Trivio) }	
3rd Battalion, Regiment *Berry,* (LtCol de Trecesson)}	908 rank & file.
2nd Battalion, Regiment *Beam,* (LtCol d'Alquier)	454 rank & file.
2nd Battalion, Regiment *La Sarre,* (LtCol de Senezergues)	489 rank & file.
2nd Battalion, Regiment *Royal-Roussillon,* (LtCol Chevalier de Bernetz)	485 rank & file.
2nd Battalion, Regiment *Languedoc,* (LtCol de Privat)	473 rank & file.

Compagnies Franches de *la Marine*

In addition to the regular army troops, Montcalm also exercised operational control over the various *Compagnies Franches de la Marine* or Marine Independent Companies. Despite displaying the traditional



This order of battle sketched out for Wolfe's Army before leaving Louisburg has been followed by most historians of the campaign, but in fact by the time the army reached Quebec, Anstruther's 58th Foot had moved to Murray's Brigade, changing places with Webb's 48th Foot, and Fraser's 78th Highlanders had also been transferred from Townshend's to Monckton's Brigade.

anchor badge on their accoutrements these were not seaborne infantrymen in any sense of the word, but were merely raised under the auspices of the Ministry of Marine, which had responsibility for the administration and defence of France's overseas colonies. Although the rank and file were recruited in metropolitan France, the officers were almost invariably Canadians.

In 1757 the number of companies serving in Canada, as distinct from Louisiana and the maritime colonies of New France, was set at 40. For the most part they were scattered in far-flung garrisons, but eight of the companies were formed into a provisional marching battalion that year to serve alongside Montcalm's *troupes de terre*. The number of companies directly involved in the operations around Quebec two years later is rather obscure, but both Townshend in his official report and an 'intelligent Frenchman' who spoke with John Knox, agreed that there were in fact two provisional battalions in the battle on the Plains on 13 September. Variously labelling them as *'Troupes de Colonie* or simply 'La *Colonie'*, both sources were careful to distinguish them from the *Milice* or militia. Posted on either flank of Montcalm's battle-line they would return with the other regulars under Levis six months later.

La Milice

The militia played a very prominent role in the defence of the colony. They were primarily organised by parish on a regional basis under the auspices of the colony's three *'gouvernements*'; Quebec, Montreal and Trois-Rivieres, but actually were employed in a variety of ways. The older men served in transport brigades, usually as bateaux men or carters. In theory the younger men were then formed into battalions for fighting but in practise a further distinction was made whereby in June 1759 about 600 were drafted into the depleted ranks of the regulars. The criteria for deciding which men were to be drafted are unclear, but when the first of the provisional Marine battalions was formed back in 1757, it was supposed to be led by those officers 'least fit' for operations in the woods, and the same may well have been the case with the militia. In other words the regulars got the rubbish while the *coureur du bois* or bush-fighters remained in the ranks of the militia proper. At any rate those militiamen who were drafted gradually assumed an increasing importance as time went on and of the 1,297 men mustered in the Regiment *Berry* for Levis'

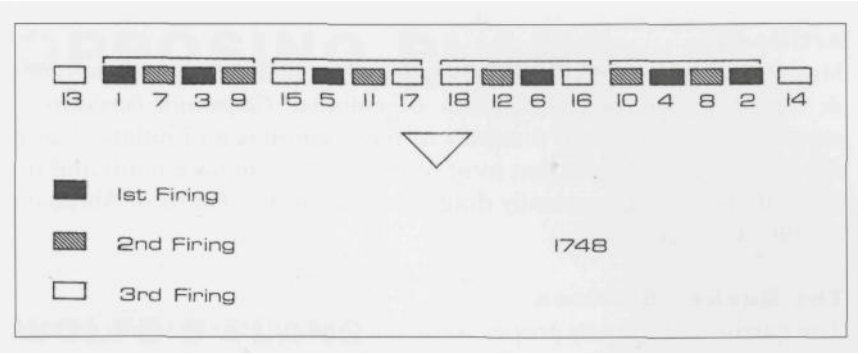


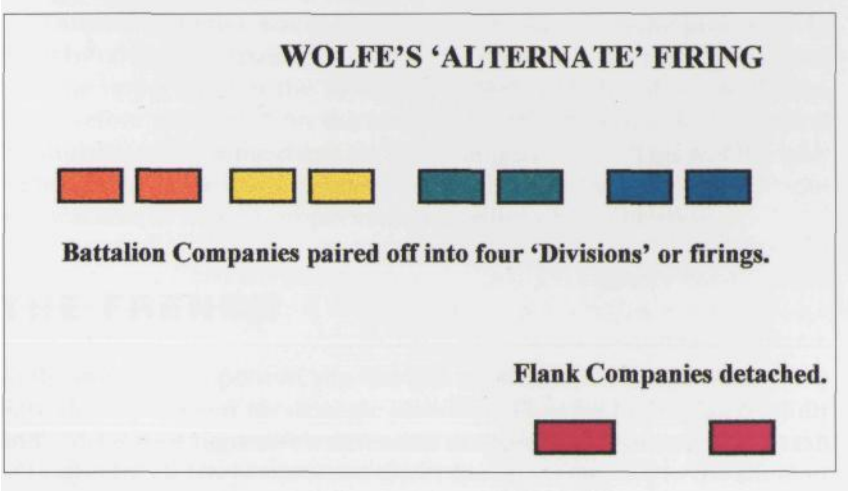
Diagram showing the complicated platoon firing sequences of the official British drill book. The two platoons on the flanks numbered 13 and 14 are the grenadiers. In theory platooning ensured that in a firefight a battalion could maintain a steady, rolling fire. In practise it tended to be stuttering, uncertain, unco-ordinated and far from effective. Most units in America were still adhering to this system until Wolfe arrived on the scene.

ill-fated attempt to recapture Quebec in April 1760, no fewer than 519 - very nearly half - were actually Canadian militia.

Those actually serving as militia soldiers took the field under the overall direction of professional officers such as Captain Louis de Vergor, seconded from the *compagnies/ranches*. Once again they were in theory organised in battalions corresponding to their government of origin; one each from Trois-Rivieres and Quebec and two from Montreal, plus another of refugee Acadians. They also appear to have followed the regular practise of forming picquets or ad hoc detachments for particular operations. In September 1759, for example, Vergor's men at the Foulon were apparently a mixture of militiamen from both Montreal and Quebec. Naturally enough, with the exception of some of the Quebec city militia, they had neither uniforms nor colours, although the militiamen of the three governments were distinguished at a very basic level by the issue of *tunques* or knitted woollen caps - white for Trois-Rivieres, red for Quebec and blue for Montreal.

Cavallerie

Uniquely in this campaign the French had the services of a *Corps de Cavallerie*, organised by Montcalm (who was of course a former cavalryman himself) in June 1759. Dressed in blue coats faced red, and bearskin caps 'to give them a martial look', the troopers, some 200 strong, were Canadian volunteers and the officers regulars. Their commander was in fact Captain de la Roche-Beaucourt, who had previously served in the *Montcalm* cavalry regiment.



Wolfe's much simpler 'Alternate' firing, based on Prussian drills and first introduced for the expedition against Rochefort in 1757. It officially replaced the old system of platooning in the 1764 regulations although by then it was already in widespread use.

Artillerie

Montcalm had one company of regulars belonging to the *Corps Royal de l 'Artillerie*, and two companies of colonial *Canonniers-Bombardiers*, supported by substantial numbers of naval gunners and militia. There was no shortage of guns, but most of them sat in emplacements and no more than four were actually dragged up on to the Plains of Abraham for the climactic battle.

The Quebec Garrison

The garrison of the city proper, as distinct from the field army covering it, comprised a disparate collection of units. In the first place there were picquets drawn from the *troupes de term* one each from *La Reine* (made up of recruits), *Guyenne, Berry* (recruits), *Beam, La Sarre, Royal-Roussillon* and *Languedoc* numbering about 250 in total. The Quebec City Militia had a theoretical strength of 840 men and there were about another 1,000 seamen, marines and naval gunners landed from the ships trapped in the river by Saunders' fleet, which with their officers made a total of some 2,200 combatants in September 1759.

OPPOSING PLANS

Major Robert Rogers, the celebrated Ranger officer served throughout the war on the New York frontier. Although he and his own men gained a fearsome reputation, not all Rangers were so effective and Wolfe had a very poor opinion of those enlisted for the Quebec expedition.

WOLFE'S PLANS

Unlike comparable European fortresses, Quebec was virtually unknown to the outside world. It occupied a triangular site on a high rock on the north or left bank of the St Lawrence River, more or less at the point at which the river widens dramatically into a great estuary still some 700 miles from the Atlantic. On one side of the city was the broad cliff-girt river itself, and on another was a much smaller tributary called the St Charles River. The only practicable avenue of approach was from the western or landward side, which was thought to be covered by a quite inadequate line of fortifications. This appreciation of the fortifications proved to be entirely wrong. British intelligence on this important point was seriously adrift; a notion that would not be disabused until Wolfe actually arrived in front of the walls on the morning of 13 September. In the meantime the trick was to get there.

From the very outset, Wolfe was certainly alive to the possibilities, and indeed the advantages, of landing a substantial force somewhere above the city. Shortly after arriving at Louisburg in May, he had discussed the likely options for attacking Quebec in a letter to his Uncle Walter. His initial assumption was that he would be able to establish a beachhead on the Beauport Shore, just downstream from Quebec, then fight his way across the St Charles River before swinging around to attack the city from the south. It did not bode well, however, that a force of New Englanders had tried and failed to take the city by this very same route in 1690. Wolfe anticipated 'a *smart action at the passage of the river St. Charles, unless we can steal a detachment up the river St. Lawrence, and land them three, four, five miles, or more, above the town, and get time to entrench so strongly that they won't care to attack.'*

This second option was obviously a much more attractive prospect, but it was by no means certain that it would be possible to get past Quebec and into the upper river in the first place. Notwithstanding his reservations he therefore proceeded on the assumption that he would have to effect his initial landing somewhere on the Beauport Shore. This was the only realistic plan Wolfe had to work with until he actually arrived on the spot and was able to make a proper reconnaissance of his objective.

THE FRENCH

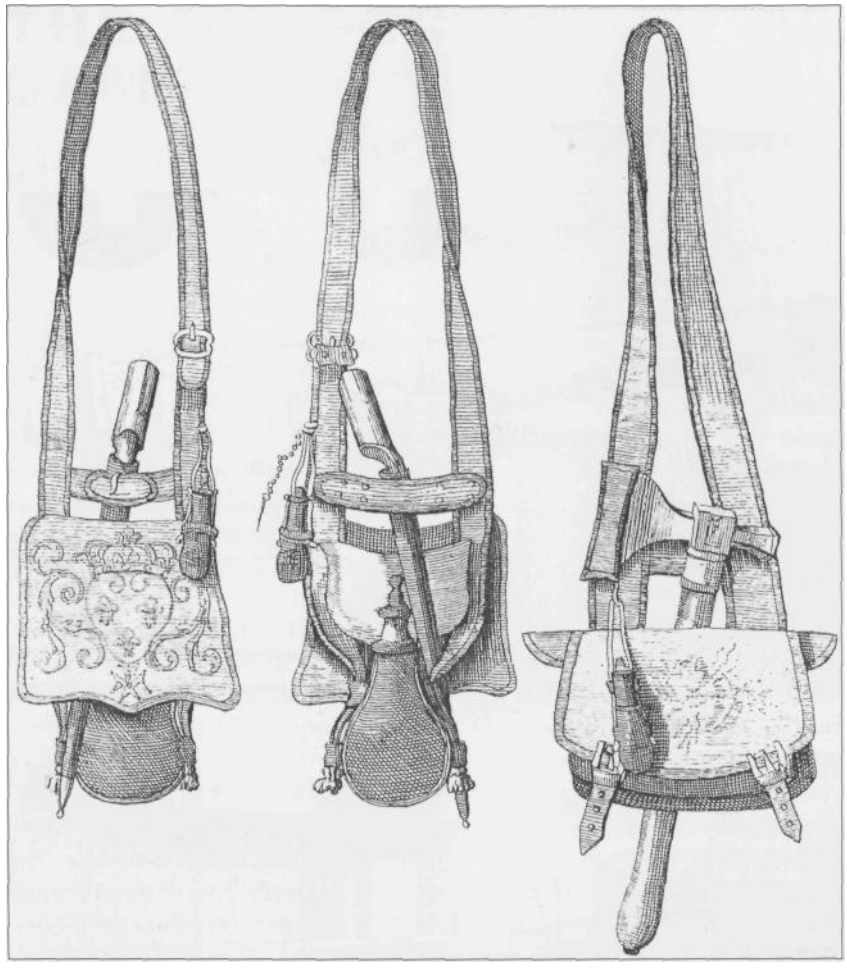
At the outset his opponent, the Marquis de Montcalm, had to make some hard decisions about his strategic priorities. Thus far he had successfully and indeed very aggressively defended the New York frontier, but the fall of Louisburg clearly pointed to a direct assault on Quebec in the summer

French infantry (of the Gardes *Frangais)* locked, cocked and ready to fire in a 1752 plate by Le Mire. Although the four ranks depicted here were officially reduced to three in 1754, this nevertheless provides a very clear picture of both infantry equipment and the way in which the ranks locked up closely to deliver a volley. Having fired the centre and rear ranks would step backwards to give themselves room to reload.

of 1759. Recognising its importance he marched the bulk of his *troupes de terre,* or metropolitan French regulars, north to defend the city. The remainder (the regiment *La Reine* and the two battalions of the regiment *Berry,* under Brigadier Bourlamaque) eventually evacuated Forts Carrillon and St Frederic under pressure from Amherst and retired to a new defensive position at Isle aux Noix at the bottom of Lake Champlain. In theory, by stripping the southern front Montcalm was leaving Montreal vulnerable to a determined offensive, but in the event he judged both the New York army and its commander, Amherst, correctly. Far from rolling straight over Bourlamaque, Amherst opted for a slow and methodical advance and wasted the summer in building a fleet and a new fort - Crown Point - on the site of the destroyed Fort St Frederic. With the approaches to Montreal not seriously threatened that year Montcalm was therefore free to concentrate on the defence of the city.

While not quite as inadequate as the British were optimistically expecting, the city's fortifications were nevertheless considered by Montcalm to be so decrepit as to render it quite indefensible. A relatively new stone trace, liberally sprinkled with the obligatory bastions, stretched from one side of the peninsula to the other. However, it was covered by neither a ditch nor a glacis. British engineers were later gready amused to find that because the soil was so thin, any ditch would have had to be blasted out of the rock. This in itself would not have been difficult; what amused them was that their French counterparts had built the walls before excavating the ditch and consequently could not blast it out without bringing the walls down. Moreover, the walls themselves were badly sited in that they were overlooked by the high ground of the Buttes a Neveu. To exacerbate the problem, the city's own guns were mounted *en barbette* (in

Charles Deschamps de Boishebert was a particularly effective officer from the *Compagnies tranches de la Marine* who led a force of some 150 Acadian volunteers at Quebec. (R. Chartrand)

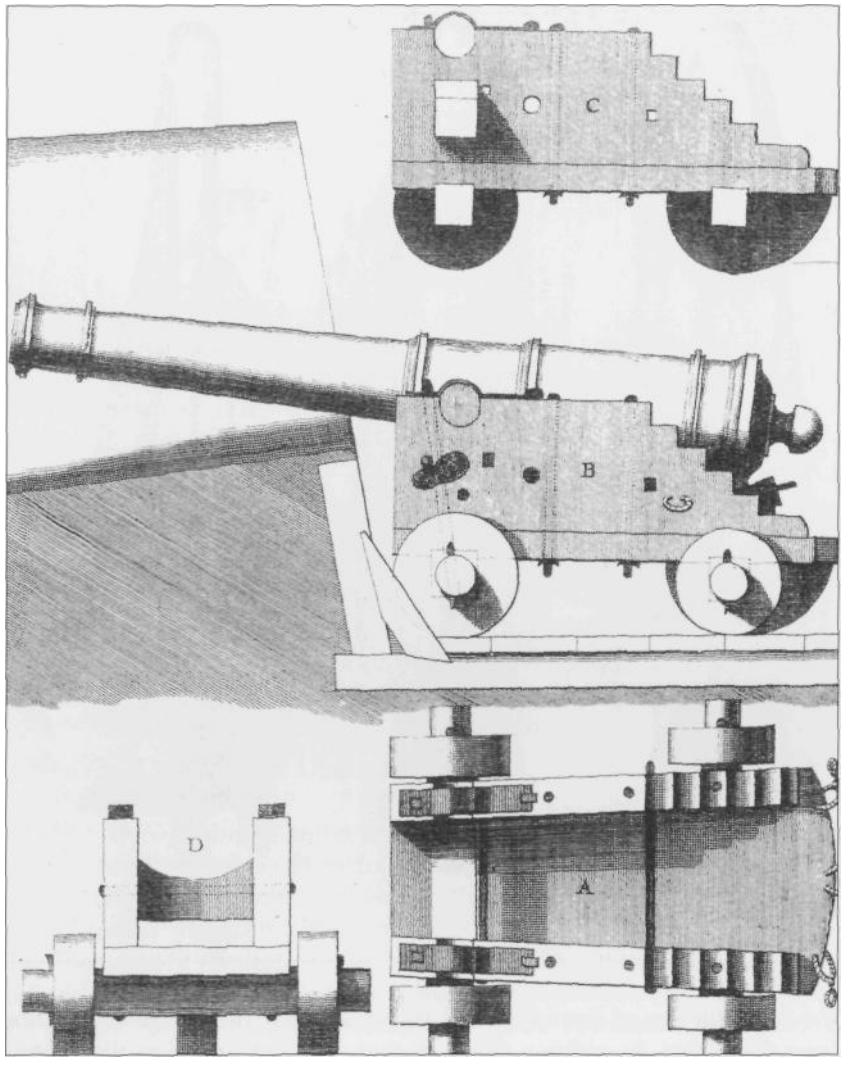


French infantry equipments early 18th century after St Remy; these should have been obsolete by the 1750s but may still have been carried by some units, including militia. Note that these *gibernes are* not cartridge boxes. Powder is carried in flasks and loose bullets in the pouches, which can hardly have helped reloading. The pouch on the right with a hatchet instead of a bayonet is a grenade satchel - the ammunition was actually carried in a *gargoussier* or belly-box.

the open on top of the walls) and thus extremely vulnerable to any fire from the Buttes. In addition although they were positioned to allow them to sweep the curtain wall, they could not reply to any besieger's batteries on the Buttes. Finally, as if all this were not enough, Montcalm grumbled that the gates could not be shut properly!

Consequently, Montcalm's aim was to stop the British long before they were close enough to attack these fortifications. Both precedent and common sense suggested that they would attempt a landing on the Beauport Shore. The cliffs along its whole length between the St Charles and the Montmorency were fortified with a series of no fewer than 18 batteries and 'redans', or earthwork forts, for the most part linked by entrenchments. The mouth of the St Charles River was blocked with a boom and covered with batteries, while other batteries and a number of naval vessels were available to prevent the British from sailing past the city.

Nevertheless, while at the end of the day Montcalm was blessed with a good defensive position, he suffered from the all too common problem of insufficient resources. The shortage of men was partially alleviated by calling out the militia and even incorporating some of them in the ranks of his own regular regiments, but as soon as the British did manage to force their way into the upper river he found himself overstretched. The second problem was a simple shortage of supplies. The war thus far had consumed



Whilst the stone walls covering the landward side of Quebec were a good deal more formidable than Beaucourt's 60-year-old earthworks they had a crucial defect in that the guns, such as this one depicted in St. Remy's *Memoires d'Artillerie,* were not only mounted en *barbette* - that is, in the open on top of the wall, as shown here - but so positioned as only to be able to sweep the front of the wall rather than fire outwards - a defect which British engineers very rapidly remedied after the capture of the city.

all the available food. Moreover, as the summer advanced this particular problem grew more acute as the flow of supplies from the settlements below Quebec had been stopped by the British. Of those farmers above the city, many were serving in the militia and were thus unable to raise crops. In the short term the army was able to cope; no-one was starving but they were very much living hand-to-mouth. As a result there was no surplus to allow any significant stockpile to be created. This would limit Montcalm's strategic options when the final crisis broke.

THE QUEBEC CAMPAIGN

Wolfe sailed from Spithead on 14 February, arrived at Halifax on 30 April and was at Louisburg two weeks later. There his troubles began with the news that his father had died on 26 March and the discovery that rather less troops than he had expected were waiting for him. A certain level of wastage had always been anticipated, but the assumption that this could be made good through local recruiting in North America had proved, according to Amherst at least, to be a mistake. Nor had any reinforcements come from the West Indies, quite the reverse as it happened since the available recruits were actually sent there, or to Germany, rather than to North America. Consequently, instead of the 12,000 men discussed in London, Wolfe found himself at the head of only around 400 officers and just over 7,000 regular infantry, besides 300 gunners and a battalion of marines.

Wolfe expected to supplement his force with an additional three companies of grenadiers and at least one company of light infantry from the Louisburg garrison. Unfortunately, the orders which the governor, Brigadier Whitmore, had received from London duly directed him to give up the three grenadier companies but made no mention of any other troops. Consequently when, on 19 May, Wolfe asked him for the grenadiers and for one or more of the companies of light infantry 'sleepy old Whitmore' (who was well aware of the contempt in which Wolfe held him) coldly advised the general that the grenadiers were at his disposal whenever he wanted them but that he had no orders concerning his light infantry. In short, he quite flatly refused to part with

A surviving stretch of the stone trace with which Wolfe was unexpectedly faced on mounting to the Plains of Abraham. (R. Chartrand)

any of them, despite Wolfe's hopeful offer of some of his New England Rangers in their place.

Wolfe's orders for May of 1759 are taken up with instructions for his officers to check the condition of both men and arms, and to ensure that each soldier was provided with 36 rounds of ammunition, besides a good reserve packed in casks on each transport. They were also to take the rather elementary step of checking 'the ammunition as is delivered to them, that they may be sure it fits their arms'. So bad was this particular problem that the Board of Ordnance had actually been forced to reduce bullets in size from 14 to 14 $^{1}/_{2}$ to the pound in order to ensure that they would fit. This had been done only as recently as 1752 so it was inevitable that considerable quantities of the larger size were still in store. There was also a further complication in that some of the light infantry and rangers were armed with carbines, which took a yet-smaller ball, as did the captured French fusils which Wolfe ordered issued to his officers. John Knox of the 43rd Foot was particularly pleased with this last measure as he and his fellow officers had hitherto been performing their duties with ordinary Land Pattern firelocks, having been ordered to lay aside their impractical spontoons, or half-pikes, the year before.

Just as importantly a large collection of flat-bottomed boats, whaleboats and cutters was also assembled and the troops then proceeded to practise landing from them, as Knox recorded on 30 May: *'The first brigade of the army, with the Louisbourg grenadiers, landed today for exercises; they performed several manoeuvres in presence of general officers, such as charging in line of battle, forming the line into columns and reducing them; dispersing, rallying and again forming in columns, and in line of battle alternately, with several other evolutions; which were all so well executed, as to afford the highest satisfaction to the generals ... The troops have been daily engaged in these exercises, whenever the weather permitted.'*

Such rehearsals obviously made sense, but just as revealing is another passage in Knox's invaluable journal, in which he wrote: *'I flattered myself that I should have seen the Grenadier companies of the garrison reviewed by General Wolfe, but it was over before I could get there. I was told they went through all their manoeuvres and evolutions with great exactness and spirit, according to a new system of discipline; and his Excellency was highly pleased with their performance. Some commanding officers of corps, who expected also to be reviewed in their turn, told the General by way of apology, that by their regiments having long been cantoned, they had not in their power to learn or practise this new exercise; to which he answered "Poh! poh! new exercise, - new fiddlestick! if they are otherwise well disciplined and will fight, that's all I require of them. "'*

The new exercise was presumably Wolfe's 'Alternate' firing, but whatever his personal views on the manifold shortcomings of the old-fashioned and impractical 'chequer' or platoon firing still being practised by some of his battalions, Wolfe obviously knew better than to follow Francis Grose's satirical advice and begin by 'overturning their whole routine of discipline' on the very eve of embarkation.

Embarkation finally got under way at the beginning of June and the senior naval officer, Vice Admiral Charles Saunders, initially had no fewer than 140 vessels under his command - 21 ship of the line varying in size from the 50-gun *Sutherland* to his own *Neptune* (90 guns), five frigates, 14 sloops, two bomb vessels, a single cutter and no less than 119 transports of varying shapes and sizes. All of them, moreover, were entirely at Wolfe's

TOP Regimental colour, 15th Foot; this was Amherst's own regiment and had fought at Louisburg in 1758. As its lieutenant-colonel, James Murray, was one of Wolfe's brigadiers it was actually commanded at Quebec by the improbably named Major Paulus Aemilius Irving.

ABOVE King's colour, 28th Foot; like Amherst's 15th Foot this regiment had yellow facings. For some years it had a poor reputation, but it was commanded with some distinction at Quebec by Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt Walsh.

TOP Regimental colour, 35th Foot; this regiment with orange-yellow facings had been in America since 1756 and was forced to surrender at Fort William Henry. Those who survived the subsequent massacre may well have felt they had scores to settle on the Plains of Abraham. The regiment was commanded there by Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Fletcher.

ABOVE Regimental colour, 43rd Foot. Regiments with white facings were ordered to place a red cross on their colours, not in order to avoid their being mistaken for flags of truce, but rather because white colours were associated with Bourbon France. This well-seasoned regiment had been serving in Nova Scotia for some time before being summoned to join the expedition against Quebec. It was commanded there by Major Robert Elliot.

disposal for as long as he had occasion for them, unlike some previous expeditions when the navy threatened to depart on another undertaking if military operations were not completed within a certain time-limit!

THE RIVER WAR

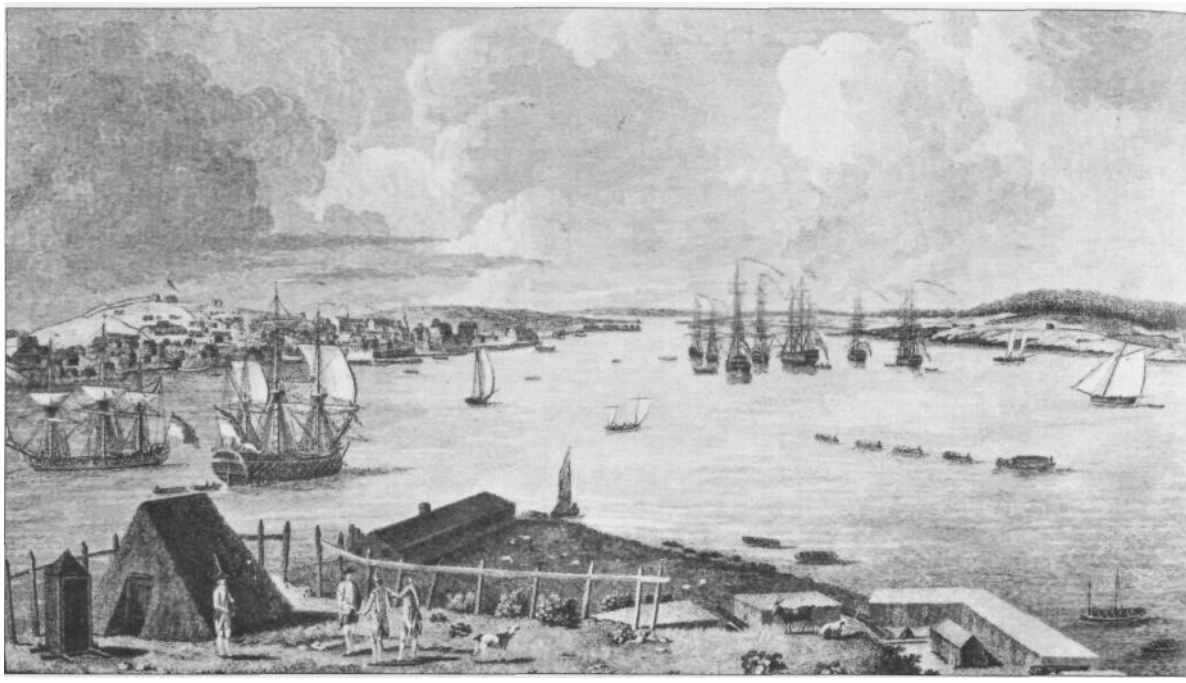
On 27 June 1759 the first British troops landed on the Isle de Orleans, in the very throat of the St Lawrence estuary. Quebec lay just four miles away across the water. Wolfe soon discovered that the French had anticipated his arrival and were busily digging in above the Beauport Shore in precisely the area where he had hoped to effect his landing. Nevertheless, he began landing his army in earnest unhindered by a poorly executed French attempt to destroy the fleet with fire-ships on the night of 28 June. The Ile d'Orleans, **served** as an admirable and reasonably secure base-camp, but he needed to bring his men much closer to their objective if they were to fight. Dalling's Light Infantry and the advance elements of Monckton's Brigade were therefore put ashore at Beaumont, on the undefended south shore of the St Lawrence, on the evening of 29 June. The rest of the brigade, comprising the 15th, 43rd, 48th and 78th Foot, also landed there next morning and despite some harassment from Canadian militia in the woods marched westwards to seize a useful position at Point Levis, almost opposite Quebec itself.

Initially this landing was no more than a pre-emptive move aimed at denying the French the opportunity to place a battery on the promontory and so prevent Saunders' ships from moving past the city and into the upper river. However, on 2 July, despite complaining of a painful bladder, Wolfe carried out a reconnaissance along the south shore and made the happy discovery that it would be possible to establish a battery of his own at Pointe aux Peres. This was just to the west of Point Levis and would allow the guns to fire directly into Quebec. This tactic had been used to good effect at Louisburg the year before.

While Wolfe was getting a feel for the lie of the land, Saunders was also carrying out a reconnaissance of his own and had some of his officers out charting the St Lawrence. As a result he had to advise the General of the previously unsuspected Beauport Bank. This was a wide expanse of rocky shallows that would prevent his ships coming in close enough to the Beauport shore to provide the necessary naval gunnery support for a landing there. Without that fire-support a landing would probably have little chance of success. Wolfe now turned his attention, as he had anticipated might be necessary, to the area above the city.

Major Scott's Rangers and some 270 men detached from Murray's Brigade (presumably his regimental light companies) were ordered to reconnoitre the north shore for a suitable landing place between Anse de Meres and St Michel, about three miles further upstream. At the same time, Townshend's Brigade was placed on standby to launch a diversionary attack on the eastern flank of the Beauport Lines at Montmorency.

Murray duly reported back that a landing at St Michel appeared practicable and so in the early hours of the morning of 9 July all of the army's grenadier companies were landed a short distance below the high falls at the mouth of the Montmorency River. As soon as the beachhead was secure Townshend's Brigade followed. With the diversionary force now in



Halifax, Nova Scotia, served as the British base for both the operations against Louisburg in 1758 and Quebec in the following year. Although Louisburg was closer to the mouth of the St Lawrence the harbour at Halifax as seen here was far superior and ideal for supporting a transatlantic expedition.

place the second phase of the operation had to be delayed. Saunders had yet to wrest control of the basin from the French gunboats and floating batteries, and so get his ships above the city. Unsurprisingly Wolfe was decidedly unimpressed and expressed himself accordingly: 'Amazing backwardness in these matters on the side of the fleet,' he wrote. In the meantime therefore two of Murray's battalions and the rest of the guns were also brought ashore at Montmorency.

On 15 July, two days after the bombardment of Quebec began, the grenadiers were again concentrated on the Isle de Orleans for an unspecified 'particular Purpose'. On the 16th Wolfe had a conference with Saunders 'concerning the projected Descent' and afterwards wrote an extremely interesting letter to Brigadier Monckton at Point Levis, which at a first glance appears to be discussing an attack that was to be launched straight across the basin: *'If the Rafts are found to answer, they will carry your attack directly across the River, opposite the right of the Enemy's encampment* [as viewed from Monckton's position at Beaumont]. *But if the Rafts are defective, we must make the best shift we can, wh. the long Boats of the Fleet. I only wait the naval preparations - everything is ready on our side; and I flatter myself, that the prodigious fire from hence* [the batteries at Montmorency] *will make the enterprise easy. There is a woody Gully upon the Right of the French Camp; The Highland Regt. might penetrate there & to the left of it & gain their Flank: the Redoubt must be vigorously attack 'd & kept, it is out of Musquet shot from their lines, & cou 'd not either be supported by them or retaken when in our possession. The Corps of Troops encamped above Beauport, will probably move towards the upper attack, or if they do not, the road is open to us, & we shall fall upon them behind ...'*

It is usually assumed by historians that both the 'projected Descent' discussed with Saunders and Monckton's amphibious attack across the basin were to have been one and the same. Upon closer consideration, however, this interpretation is extremely doubtful to say the least. Firstly

there is the casual reference in Monckton's instructions to 'the upper attack'. Moreover, on the night of 16 July the Admiral finally intended to run some of his ships past Quebec and into the upper river. It must, therefore, be this operation rather than Monckton's attack that Wolfe was referring to when he spoke in the letter of awaiting the completion of the 'naval preparations'. With the prospect of being able to effect a landing above the city at St Michel within a day or two at the most, it is quite inconceivable that he could have been planning to commit himself in the meantime to a costly frontal assault on the Beauport defences. Wolfe clearly intended that Monckton should instead launch nothing more than a brigade-sized diversionary attack against the Beauport position in order to distract attention away from that 'upper attack' at St Michel.

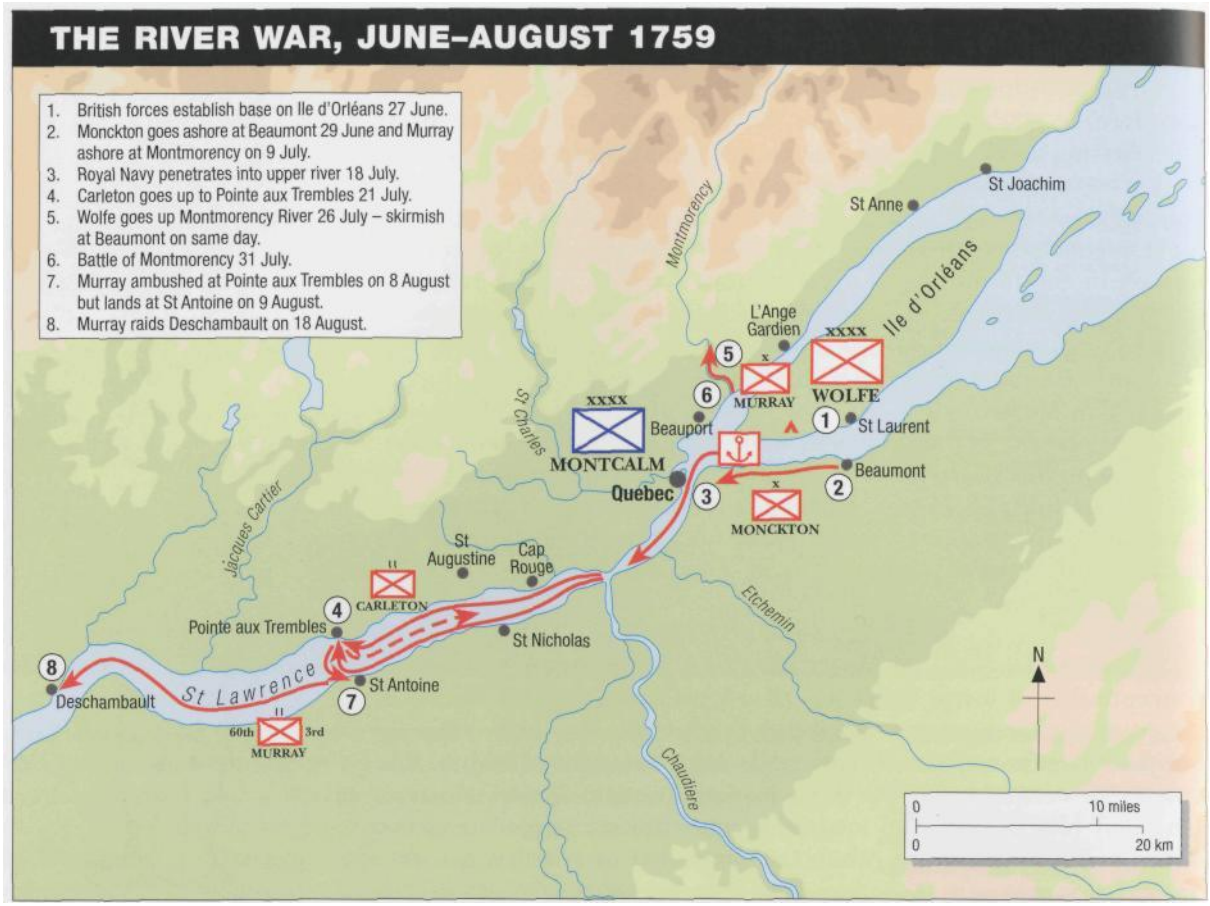
In the absence of this diversion, Wolfe quite reasonably assumed that the French reserves would be drawn away from above Beauport to deal with the landing at St Michel. However, should Monckton's diversion be successful in fixing their attention, Wolfe would be able to march across and attack the rear of the French army. Alternatively, if the French did rush to meet him Monckton then had the option of converting his diversion into an actual assault on the denuded Beauport lines.

Where Wolfe's plan fell down was that it violated the principle of concentration of force; Wolfe was clearly overstretching his forces. In the event the attempt to run ships past Quebec into the upper river was postponed again and not actually made until the night of 18 July. The *Diana* (36) went aground, but the *Sutherland* (50) and *Squirrel* (20) both ran safely past Quebec and into the upper river accompanied by two sloops and two transports. Wolfe later reported to Pitt that this now *'enabled me to reconnoitre the country above, where I found the same attention on the enemy's side, and great difficulties on ours, arising from the nature of the ground, and the obstacles to our communication with the fleet. But what I feared most, was, that if we should land between the town and the river Cape Rouge, the body first landed could not be reinforced before they were attacked by the enemy's whole army.*'

Notwithstanding the risks Wolfe decided to proceed with the St Michel landing anyway. On the morning of 20 July the consolidated grenadier companies, still waiting patiently at the Isle de Orleans, were once again ordered to hold themselves in readiness while Saunders busied himself in preparing boats for the artillery. As time was obviously going to be of the essence in successfully executing the operation, orders were sent for Monckton to embark part of his brigade and all his light infantry immediately. Instead of mounting an elaborate, and probably futile, diversionary attack at Beauport, they were to proceed directly upriver to secure the beachhead at St Michel. Fully committed to this project Wolfe also stressed to Monckton that 'If you cou'd be here, a little before high Water, we should have time to fetch another load of Troops, before the Tide ebbs ...'

Then, just as suddenly, the whole operation was cancelled and that afternoon Wolfe had to inform Monckton that 'Particular circumstances make it necessary to delay our attempt for a few days ...' This abrupt change of heart reflected badly on Wolfe and furnished his numerous critics, both contemporary and posthumous, with yet more ammunition. It is not difficult, however, to guess what these 'particular circumstances'

Officer, Norfolk Militia, with fusil. Ordinarily line officers were supposed to carry spontoons or half-pikes, but in America they were ordered to carry firelocks instead. According to John Knox of the 43rd Foot these were ordinary Land Pattern weapons, but Wolfe ordered them replaced with captured French fusils, which were much lighter.



were, for in a dispatch to the Prime Minister, William Pitt, Wolfe related that he called off the landing after finding that the French were moving guns into the area. The success of the operation would obviously hinge on his speedily establishing a beachhead at St Michel and his ability to concentrate all or most of his forces there before Montcalm and the French army turned up. Provided the timing was right, it should have been possible to do just that without a diversionary attack at Beauport. It depended on the ability to transport Townshend's and Murray's brigades upstream on the tide faster than the French could march overland. The unwelcome appearance of guns, which would presumably be accompanied by troops, altered the balance.

As Wolfe readily confessed, if the initial landing were to be seriously opposed or even heavily counter-attacked before the rest of the army could be brought up, then the whole operation would not only fail, but it would probably incur such heavy losses that the army would be forced to withdraw out of the St Lawrence altogether.

The guns emplaced in what became known as the Samos Batten- were, in fact, largely unsupported and there were only a few militia in the area at the time. Wolfe could not possibly know that, however. Indeed it is obvious that he was particularly uneasy about his lack of reliable knowledge on the French strength and dispositions.

So concerned was he at this lack of information that he next sent his quartermaster general, Lieutenant-Colonel Guy Carleton, even further up

the river with the grenadiers of Monckton's Brigade and some rangers 'for intelligence'. Carleton duly landed at Pointe aux Trembles, some 20 miles above Quebec, on the following day and daringly kidnapped a number of civilians - seemingly refugees from the city for the most part - who were questioned and subsequently returned to the city under a flag of truce. It is unlikely, however, that Carleton learned very much of any use and, after a planning conference on 23 July, Wolfe's attention turned in earnest to the Beauport Lines. Nevertheless, he was far from sanguine about the chances of achieving anything there. On 25 July he wrote to Monckton asking him to send two companies of Boisrond's Marines (perhaps those belonging to the 69th Foot) over to him at the Montmorency camp next day in order to 'mask our real intentions', and also ordered 'a Corps of Troops' to be ready to accompany him up the Montmorency River for a reconnaissance in force.

If a crossing point could be discovered higher up the Montmorency, it might allow the army to get into the rear of the Beauport Lines and thus avoid having to mount a costly frontal attack. In the meantime, he rather hopefully reasoned that his personal 'escort', consisting of a part

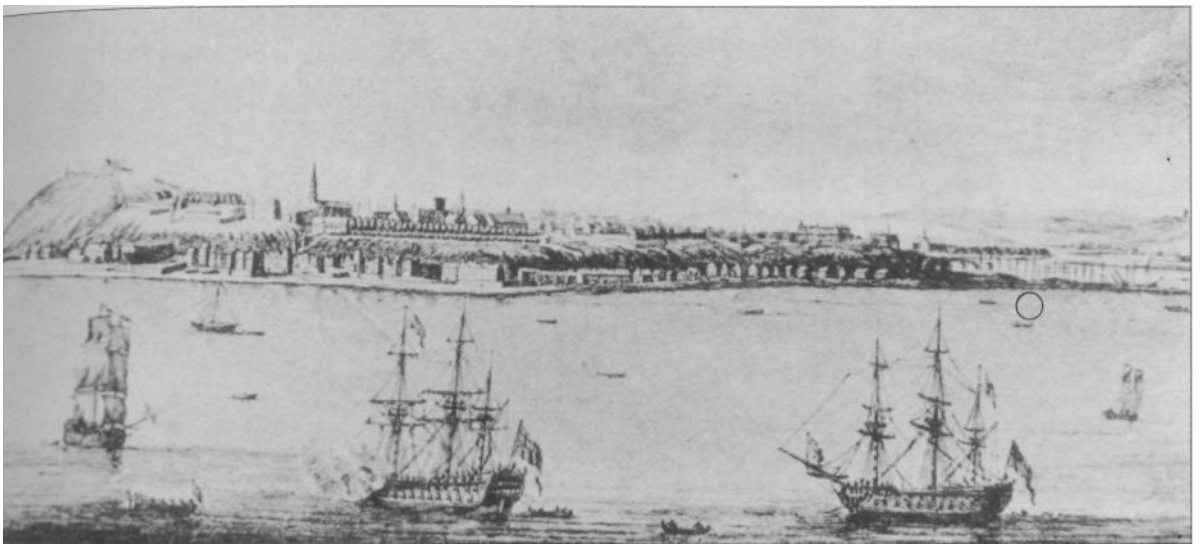
A three dimensional model of Quebec constructed by Royal Engineer officers c.1808, at which time the defences were still substantially those faced by Wolfe 50 years earlier. (R. Chartrand)

of Murray's Brigade and a composite light infantry battalion led by Lieutenant-Colonel William Howe, ought to be strong enough to seize and hold the ford until Townshend brought the rest of the troops up. Unfortunately, once again Wolfe found himself anticipated by Montcalm and as he related to Pitt: *'In reconnoitring the river Montmorenci, we found it fordable at a place about three miles up; but the opposite bank was entrenched, and so steep and so woody, that it was to no purpose to attempt a passage there.'*

Traditionally of course it is reckoned that a reconnaissance party had not probed far enough until it had been shot at, and by this criteria Wolfe's party performed their duties admirably as his men were heavily attacked twice: 'Early in the morning a Party of Indians crossed the ford & were beat back by our People. About noon they came over in greater numbers - drove two comps. of foot, who retired in great confusion & disordered the Battalion. Coll. Howe's Light infantry attacked their flank & endeavoured to surround them, & Br. Murray detached two Comp's of Otway's to get upon their right flank. The Enemy put into Disorder & defeated & driven over the water. In these two Skirmishes we had near 40 killed & wounded - chiefly from the opposite Bank of the River, by the indiscreet pursuit of some of our people.'

MONTMORENCY

Thus thwarted in his attempts to manoeuvre around the French army, both above and below Quebec, Wolfe was at last faced with the distinctly unpalatable prospect of tackling the Beauport defences head-on. For the most part the chain of redoubts and entrenchments was sited on top of the wooded cliffs overlooking the shore. Wolfe's attention was still drawn, however, to the seemingly isolated redoubt on the beach that was to have been Brigadier Monckton's objective if the diversionary attack across the basin had actually taken place. As Wolfe afterwards (and somewhat disingenuously) explained to Pitt: *1 proposed to make myself*



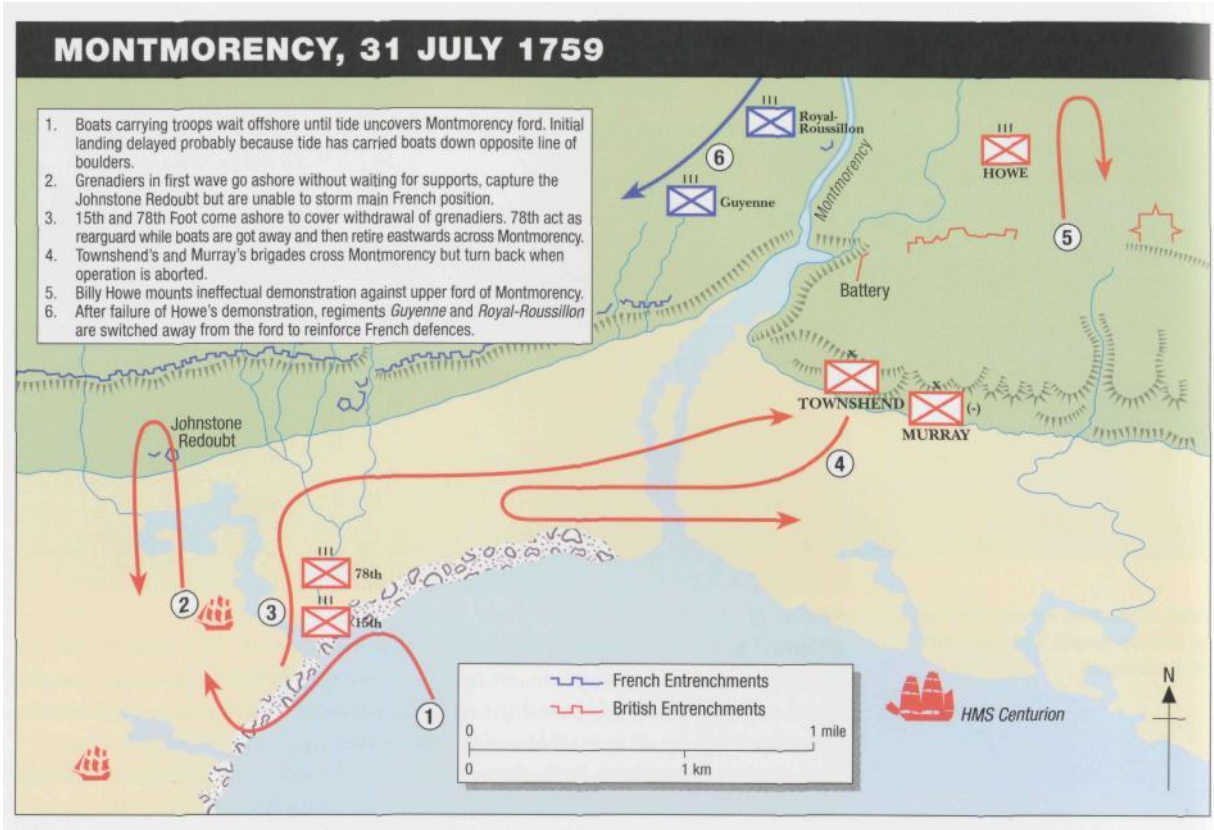
View of Quebec across the basin, by Hervey Smyth 1759 or 1760. (R. Chartrand)

master of a detach'd redoubt near to the water's edge, and whose situation appeared to be out of musket shot of the intenchment upon the hill; if the enemy supported this detached place, it would necessarily bring on an engagement, which we most wished for; and if not, I should have it in my power to examine their situation, so as to be able to determine where we could best attack them.'

Admiral Saunders had already prepared two 'cats' (Whitby colliers employed as transports) as landing vessels and now James Cook, the master or navigating officer of HMS *Pembroke,* who had of course learned his trade in cats, *'said he believed the cats could be carried within 40 or 50 yards of the redoubts. I told him at the time that I would readily compound for 150 or 200 yards, which would have been near enough had the upper redoubt been as far from the enemy's entrenchments as it appeared from our camp to be.'*

If we are to believe his story, therefore, at the outset Wolfe's intention was to do no more than run the cats ashore with four companies of grenadiers aboard under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Burton. They would then seize the redoubt and see what sort of reaction this produced. If Wolfe genuinely thought the French would come down and counter-attack him on the open beach, he was altogether too optimistic.

However, it is perhaps with that in mind that, according to John Knox's account, on the night of 27 July 'a verbal order was sent to each regiment to have an expert Officer, Serjeant, and twenty-five chosen men in readiness, at a moment's warning, for a very particular service ... this duty fell to my lot.' Once again the 'particular service' was never revealed. Wolfe's more formal orders for the operation, issued on 29 July (just after another failed French attempt to destroy the fleet with fire-rafts), are not without interest. As usual the drafting of them left something to be desired: *'Two hundred men of the Royal American battalion, with their blankets, and two days provision ready dressed, to be in readiness below the Cove at eight in the morning, to embark in four flat-bottom boats; this detachment is intended to reinforce the company of grenadiers, if there should be occasion: the boats are to row up with the flood, but out of cannon shot, till they are opposite the upper redoubt, when they must rest upon their arms, and wait for further orders.*



'Anstruther's regiment, the light infantry, and rangers, are to march at nine, under colonel Howe's command, about a mile into the woods, towards the ford where the Canadians and Indians are encamped; this body must skirt about within the wood from the camp of the light infantry to the road, but so as just to be seen from the opposite side of the river by the enemy. As major Hussey's corps will have been up most of the night, they are to be left to guard the camp of the light infantry: colonel Howe will lengthen his line of march, so as to appear numerous; the remaining battalion will get under arms when the water begins to ebb, in readiness to cross the ford, if there should be absolute necessity for so doing; in the mean time they will continue their work with all possible diligence and assiduity.

'If ships can be brought near enough to operate, and the wind is fair, an attack will be made upon one of the enemy's most detached works, in aid of which attack the artillery from hence must be employed. Brigadier general Townshend will be pleased to give such direction as he thinks most fit for service upon this head.

'In general the cannon can't be fired, nor even be brought up to fire, till it is visible that the attack will be made.

'If the day is over hot, and no wind, this operation can't take place.

'If the battalions should march, colonel Howe must return to his camp in the most secret manner. The marines must be brought into the two redoubts where Lascelles's regiment takes post; the remaining part of the Americans into the great redoubt, Hessen's company [sic] *into the fortified house; Anstruther's and the light infantry will be ready to join the army.'*

For all his many real military virtues, James Wolfe never did learn to draft a coherent dispatch or set of orders - or even to employ a competent adjutant general or a military secretary to do it for him. Equally

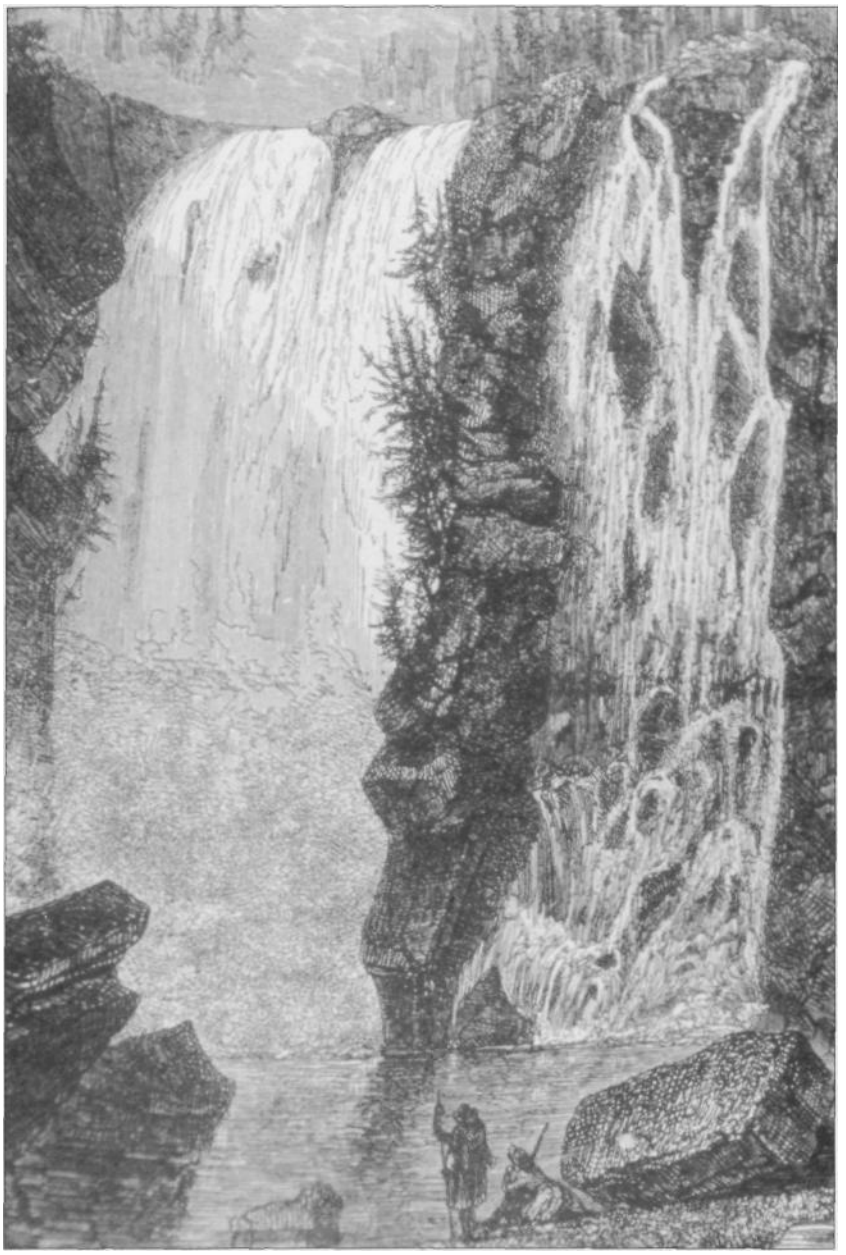
Lieutenant-Colonel Guy Carleton, depicted here in the uniform of his 72nd Foot, served at Quebec as Wolfe's Quartermaster General. (Private Collection; photo. R. Chartrand)

confusing is that these orders actually refer to two quite different fords. The first, where Billy Howe was to mount his demonstration, was in fact the one above the falls which Wolfe had reconnoitred on 26 July. The second lay on the shore immediately below the falls and was only usable at low tide. The latter was to assume some considerable importance once the operation got under way, but Wolfe's penultimate paragraph proved prophetic, for a flat-calm next morning meant that the attack had to be delayed until 31 July.

Although the brigadiers had been decidedly unenthusiastic about the operation beforehand, there was a palpable air of excitement amongst the troops themselves, captured by our friend John Knox of the 43rd Foot over at Point Levis. Hour by hour his journal records the steady escalation of the operation:

'At eight o'clock on the 31st the troops at Point Levy were ordered to be ready to imbark immediately, boats coming from the fleet for this purpose.

Nine o'clock. Ordered that the 15th and 78th regiments with Brigadier Monckton be ready to imbark: the 43rd and 48th, light infantry under Major Dalling, and the marines remain here to defend our batteries and redoubts.



The Montmorency Falls as somewhat romantically depicted in the 1880s.

Ten o'clock. The Louisburg grenadiers, with those of the 15th, 43rd, 48th and 78th, a detachment of the Royal Americans, the two regiments before-mentioned, and Brigadier Monckton, imbarked, redezvoused at the Point of Orleans, put off immediately, and remained half-channel over, waiting for farther orders.'

There it stalled. After waiting in mid-stream for high water, the two cats were duly run ashore off Pointe a Lessay at 11.00am only for Burton to realise that his objective was much higher up the beach than expected and so far from being isolated the redoubt was in fact adequately covered by the entrenchments above. Under a heavy fire Wolfe himself was duly summoned to have a look and as he afterwards told Saunders with a certain touch of pride, 'I was no less than three times struck with the splinters in that ship, and had my stick knocked out of my hand with

a cannon-ball while I was on board reconnoitring the position and movements of the enemy.' Those movements nevertheless appeared to indicate a certain disorder and confusion in the enemy ranks 'and remarking their situation much better than I ever could do before' Wolfe therefore took the fateful decision to mount a frontal assault on the lines. As he explained in rather spikey language to Pitt: *'The place where the attack was intended, has these advantages. Our artillery could be brought into use. The greatest part, or even the whole of the troops, might act at once; and the retreat (in case of a repulse) was secure - at least for a certain time of the tide. Neither one nor other of these advantages can any where else be found. The Enemy were indeed posted upon a commanding Eminence - The beach upon which the troops were drawn up, was of deep mud, with holes, and cut by several gullies - The hill to be ascended very steep, and not every where practicable - The enemy numerous in their intrenchments, and their fire hot - If the attack had succeeded, our loss must certainly have been very great, and theirs inconsiderable, from the shelter which the neighbouring woods afforded them - The river of St. Charles still remained to be passed, before the town was invested. All these circumstances I considered; but the desire to act in conformity to the King's intentions, induced me to make this trial, persuaded that a victorious army finds no difficulties.'*

It seems unlikely that Wolfe actually took very much persuading to reach this decision, for as he also admitted in the letter to Saunders he had always 'had it in view' and half of Monckton's Brigade was already at hand in boats to support the initial landing. Unfortunately, he reckoned without the tide.

Disaster at Pointe a Lessay

In order to run the cats as close inshore as possible, the first phase of the operation had been launched at or just after high water. Now, in order to bring Townshend's and Murray's brigades across the Montmorency it was necessary to wait for the tide to fall far enough to uncover the lower ford on the beach below the falls.

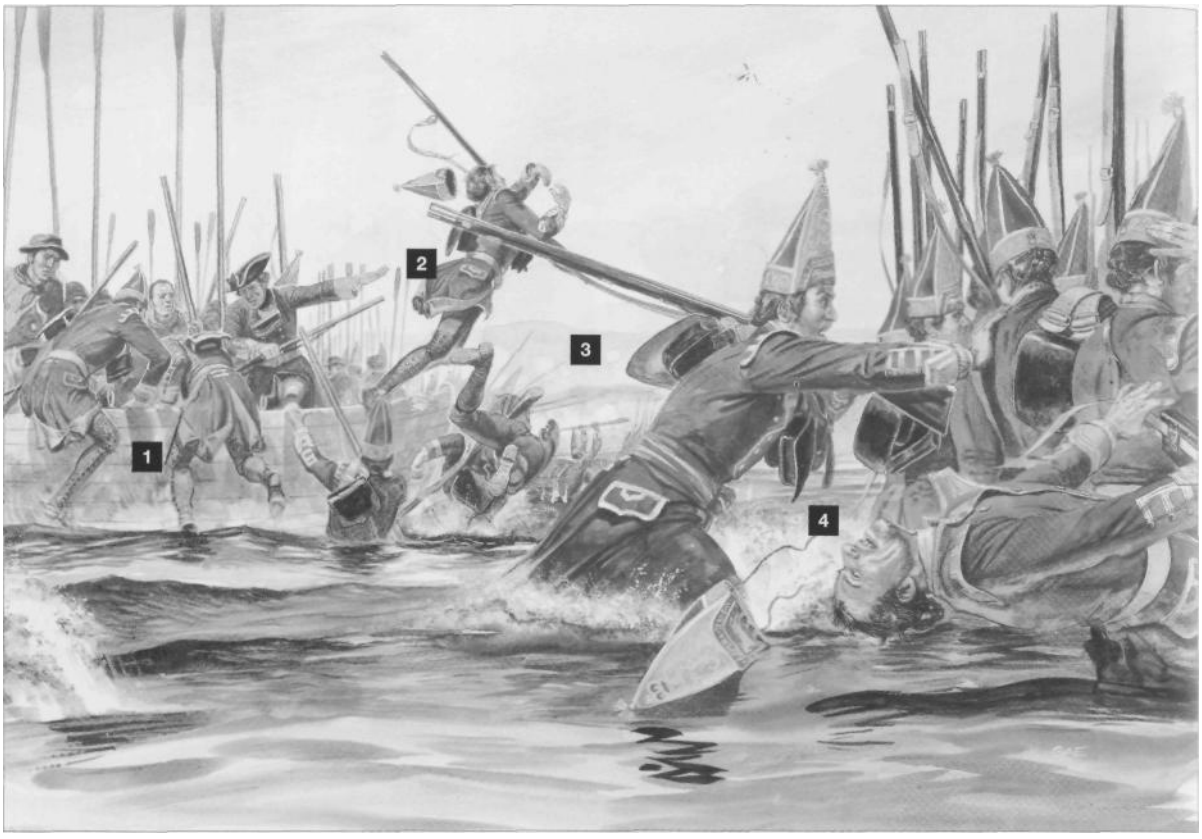
In the meantime, as Knox breathlessly jotted down: *'Twelve o'clock. The 43rd regiment ordered to be ready at a moment's warning. Colonel James and Major Elliot agreed and ordered that the regiment should embark, land, and fight by companies under their own Officers, which afforded the highest satisfaction to the soldiers; this method, on a service of this nature, does not admit of confusion. Weather extremely hot ...'*

Unfortunately this delay, while both the grenadiers and Monckton's men waited offshore, compromised Billy Howe's demonstration against the upper ford and gave the French time to shift two battalions of regulars (*Guyenne* and *Royal-Roussillon)* across from there to support the men in the threatened trenches, thickening the whole French line from their centre to their left.

At last, with the tide falling, at about 4.00pm the *Centurion* and the two armed cats renewed what Knox called 'a very brisk fire' and by half past four, he described a 'heavy cannonading now from every quarter'.

Unfortunately when the grenadiers were finally ordered in at about five, their boats promptly grounded on a previously unsuspected rocky ledge, which was now uncovered by the falling tide. There was therefore a further delay of about half an hour while an exasperated Wolfe went off in a boat with some naval officers to find a way through. Even then


ASPERN
ASPERN
GAE



MONTMORENCY (pages 38-39)

When the British assault force went ashore at Montmorency, the men of the first wave had been waiting in their boats in a sultry heat for about eight hours and it was not until around 4.00pm that the naval gunfire support opened up in earnest. Another hour later, as Knox recorded in his contemporaneous journal, the boats were ordered to go in but immediately ran into trouble: 'Very gloomy weather; some of the boats, in attempting to land, struck upon some ledges (1), which retarded our operations; and, by the enemy's shot and shells, the boats were a little confused (2); the enemy abandoned the right of their camp and, with their whole army, lined their intrenchments from the center to the left (3).

'Half past five o'clock. The first division of the troops, consisting of all the grenadiers of the army, made a second attempt, landed at the Pointe a Lessay, and obliged the enemy to abandon the detached battery and redoubt below the precipice; by this time the troops to the eastward of the fall were in motion to join and support the attack; but the grenadiers, impatient to acquire glory, would not wait for any reinforcements, but ran up the hill ...'

This undisciplined rush was in large part a near spontaneous explosion of energy and aggression after the long wait, as predicted in the famous doggerel by Sergeant Botwood of the 47th's grenadier company, who would himself be killed during the battle:

When the Forty-seventh Regiment is dashing ashore,
While bullets are whistling and cannons do roar,
Says Montcalm: 'Those are Shirley's - I know the lapels.'
'You lie,' says Ned Botwood, 'for we are with Lascelles
Tho' our cloathing is changed, yet we scorn a powder-puff;
So at you, ye bitches, here's give you Hot Stuff.'

However, there were other factors operating as well. According to one of the officers involved, they had in fact to get out of their boats well short of the beach and formed 'as well as we could' in waist-deep water (4). He then wrongly ascribed the attack which followed to Wolfe ordering the Grenadiers' March to beat, 'which animated our Men so much that we could scarce restrain them'.' In fact a quite different account specifically blamed Captain David Ochterlony, the commander of 2/60th for triggering the rush. When he and his men landed, he called out to Captain Gustavus Wetterstrom, who commanded the 2/60th grenadier company, that although his men were not grenadiers, they would be the first to storm the redoubt. Not surprisingly with the grenadiers 'taking fire' at this taunt, both they and the battalion companies dashed forward in a race for the redoubt and were quickly followed by the rest. (Gerry Embleton)

The Montmorency Falls today as seen from the other side of the St Lawrence. (R. Chartrand)

they declined to beach the boats for fear of stranding them and being unable to return for the next wave. Consequently the men had to go over the side into deep water, and having once landed, their orders were to form up in four bodies, which, according to one of their officers they did as well as they could standing in waist-deep water!

They were then supposed to wait for Monckton's Brigade to land and for Townshend to bring the other two brigades across the Montmorency ford. HMS *Centurion*, meanwhile, had successfully suppressed the fire of the French battery above the Montmorency, but the 'upper' battery was still very much in action. This was unfortunate for as soon as the grenadiers landed they came under fire from the battery and impetuously ran 'like blockheads up to it' long before Monckton and his men could get ashore. Unsurprisingly, the French gunners took to their heels in the opposite direction, but such a storm of fire then came down on the grenadiers from the trenches above that they themselves were forced to take shelter in or behind the redoubt. Moreover, according to Knox, they now discovered that the hillside to their front was not only very steep, but the lower slopes were covered with an abatis - a precursor of barbed wire entanglements made of felled trees and shrubs laid with their branches in the direction of an attacker. Unable to get forward and unwilling to fall back, the grenadiers started to take heavy casualties, especially amongst the officers. Providentially, however, at this point the weather intervened. The extremely hot weather noted by Knox at 12.00pm had turned 'very gloomy' by 5.00pm and now a sudden and extremely violent thunderstorm burst over the battlefield, reducing visibility to a few yards and stopping all the firing.

It has sometimes been suggested that had they not been so disorganised and poorly controlled by this time, the grenadiers might have been able to take advantage of this downpour to get up the cliffs and take the French position with the bayonet. Instead, Wolfe very sensibly and not a

little courageously seized the opportunity to shut down the operation. He had already sent orders for the grenadiers to fall back on Monckton's battalions, which had finally landed, but being uneasily aware that the tide had already turned, 'I thought it most advisable, not to persevere in so difficult an attack, lest (in case of a repulse) the retreat of Brigadier Townshend's corps might be hazardous and uncertain.' Under cover of the torrential rain, therefore, the available boats were hastily loaded with as many wounded and unwounded men as they could stow and sent off, while Wolfe and the greater part of the 78th Highlanders marched along the beach and crossed to safety by the Montmorency ford.

It had been an expensive exercise that Wolfe reckoned had cost 210 killed and 230 wounded (or 443 killed and wounded according to Knox) including four officers killed on the spot and 29 wounded. The high proportion of killed to wounded was a result of a number of wounded being abandoned on the beach and subsequently murdered by Montcalm's Indians. Next day Wolfe minced few words in an order that managed to rebuke the grenadiers and yet at the same time encourage both them and the rest of the army to do better next time:

'The check which the grenadiers met with yesterday will, it is hoped, be a lesson to them for the future. They ought to know that such impetuous, irregular, and unsoldier-like proceeding destroys all order, and makes it impossible for the commander to form any disposition for an attack, and puts it out of the general's power to execute his plan. The grenadiers could not suppose that they alone could beat the French army, and therefore it was necessary that the corps under brigadiers Monckton and Townshend should have lime to join, that the attack might be general. The very first fire of the enemy was sufficient to repulse men who had last allsense of order and military discipline. Amherst's [15th Foot] *and the Highland regiment alone, by the soldier-like and cool manner in which they formed, would undoubtedly have beat back the whole Canadian army, if they had ventured to attack them; the loss however is inconsiderable; and may, if the men shew a proper attention to their officers, be easily repaired when a favourable opportunity offers.'*

Lieutenant-Colonel John Hale of the 47th Foot, depicted c.1756 in what appears to be a simple undress uniform, which rather unusually displays his regiment's facing colour on its collar. (R. Chartrand)

INTO THE UPPER RIVER

Wolfe, as usual, displayed a much less certain touch in dealing with his higher-ranking colleagues in the recriminations that followed. It is unlikely that he had ever got on with George Townshend and there is ample evidence of their having seriously clashed on at least two occasions since landing. Wolfe's journal for 7 July records, for example, *'Some difference of opinion upon a point termed slight & insignificant & the Commander in Chief is threatened wth Parliamentary Inquiry into his Conduct for not consulting an inferior Officer & seeming to disregard his Sentiments!'Just* what this refers to remains obscure, but it most likely had something to do with the arrangements for landing Townshend's brigade below the Montmorency, for the aristocratic amateur was certainly the most likely of the brigadiers to have recourse to threats of Parliamentary action. Townshend himself records another heated difference of opinion on the 13th. The most ominous sign of growing tension, however, again appears in Wolfe's journal. In a note concerning the Montmorency operation he disdainfully mentions: *'Dislike of the Genl. Officers and others to this Business - but nothing better propos'd by them.'*

A View of the Falls of Montmorenci [sic] and the Attack made by General Wolfe July 31 1759 - print after Hervey Smyth. (National Archives of Canada C782)

In the meantime the regular business of the siege had to go on as before. Lieutenant-Colonel Burton's grenadier companies were for the moment returned to their parent units and the 78th Highlanders shipped back across to Point Levis. Then on 3 August Murray went back up the river to Batiscan with 3/60th Foot, Dalling's light infantry and some rangers - the rest of his brigade being left at Montmorency in the charge of the senior officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Fletcher of the 35th Foot. Murray's primary mission on this occasion was to assist Rear Admiral Holmes in destroying the remaining French warships, which had taken refuge upriver, and above all to try to open a line of communication with General Amherst. Like Carleton, Murray first attempted a landing at Pointe aux Trembles on 8 August, but by this time the French had moved some regular troops into the area. Colonel de Bougainville had been put in charge of a flying column comprising picquets drawn from all five of Montcalm's regular battalions, together with the blue-coated *Corps de Cavallerie* and some of the ubiquitous Canadian militia. Consequently, when Murray attempted to land he met with a rather hotter reception than Carleton had done and drew off again in short order after Dalling and his light infantry were ambushed. At least one report put his losses at 140 killed and wounded, including 30 seamen, but this seems rather too high, particularly since the 3/60th only lost a total of two killed and 29 wounded of all ranks in the period up to 2 September. However, Dalling's losses are hard to quantify since they were not separately returned.

OPPOSITE Private, 60th Foot 1758. This print by P.W. Reynolds provides a good impression of the rather plain and serviceable uniform worn by the Royal Americans, although it is most unlikely that any of them wore white gaiters at Quebec. (R. Chartrand)

Next day Murray tried again and this time landed on the south shore at St Antoine. From there he reported to Wolfe that the river was now too low for the Navy to penetrate high enough to find the French ships. Nevertheless, nothing if determined, on the 18th he had his men rowed further upstream under cover of darkness to Deschambault, where he successfully landed and destroyed a depot containing the spare kit of

A typical Canadian village on the south shore of the St Lawrence above Quebec. The bright tin roofs were particularly remarked by a number of British observers - before they were burned by Wolfe's Rangers. (R. Chartrand)

Montcalm's regular battalions. Some of Bougainville's men eventually turned up but, perhaps realising it was too late to save anything, they merely contented themselves with an ineffectual harassing fire until Murray re-embarked. By now Wolfe had grown impatient and not a little anxious about the large number of boats which Murray had taken with him. Orders were therefore sent recalling him and, leaving the 3/60th Foot and the ships above Quebec, he eventually returned to Point Levis on 25 August with decidedly mixed news.

Captured prisoners had given him the welcome news of the fall of Fort Niagara to a provincial officer, Colonel William Johnson, on 25 July. The expedition's original regular commander, Colonel Prideaux, had been killed when he carelessly walked in front of a mortar just as it was fired! Even more encouragingly, Forts Carrillon and St Frederic had also been abandoned and the French commander, Brigadier Bourlamaque, had apparently retired to Isle aux Noix with just 3,000 men. Otherwise there was no word from Amherst and certainly no sign of him breaking through.

Away back in May, Wolfe had written to his Uncle Walter that *'If I find that the enemy is strong, audacious, and well commanded, I shall proceed with the utmost caution and circumspection, giving Mr Amherst time to use his superiority*. 'Thwarted in all his attempts to outmanoeuvre or to bludgeon his way through the French defences, Wolfe had indeed turned to a more cautious and circumspect policy in August. Unable to bring the French Army to battle in the open, he took on the civilian population instead. To his prolonged bombardment of the near-defenceless city was now added a series of destructive raids by the rangers up and down the shores of the St Lawrence, burning village after village. At the time Wolfe publicly justified this policy as being in retaliation for attacks on sentries and foraging parties by local militia, but he had already anticipated it in a letter sent to Amherst on 6 March: *'If by accident in the River, by the Enemy's resistance, by sickness, or slaughter in the Army, or,*

from any other cause, we find, that Quebec is not likely to fall into our hands (persevering however to the last moment), I propose to set the Town on fire with Shells, to destroy the Harvest, Houses, & Cattle both above and below, to send off as many Canadians as possible to Europe, & to leave famine and desolation behind me; belle resolution, & tres chretienne! but we must teach these Scoundrels to make war in a more gentlemanlike manner.'

He also justified the policy to Pitt as having in part been carried out in the hope that it might provoke Montcalm into coming out to fight, but in reality there can have been little hope of that. All that can be said in Wolfe's defence is that destroying the Canadian settlements did at least have some military justification, but it cannot disguise an abiding impression that these punitive raids were born of frustration as much as policy. Another pointer to this may be a temporary collapse in Wolfe's health at this time and his confinement to bed on 19 August.

Throughout his life he complained constantly of the state of his health and he is often portrayed as a man strong in spirit but cursed with a weak and sickly constitution. Yet physically, there may not in reality have been so very much wrong with him. Whilst the symptoms and their debilitating effects may well have seemed real enough, there must also

Unconvincingly depicted in full armour, which conventionally denoted a warrior, Amherst was the British Commander in Chief North America. As such he was Wolfe's immediate superior but there was no love lost between them and to all intents and purposes their operations were carried out entirely independent of each other. In the background Amherst's army can be seen running the Long Sault rapids above Montreal.

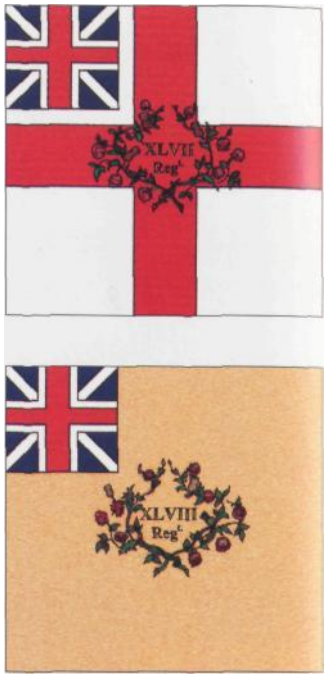
be a very strong suspicion that the real causes were psychological rather than pathological. It is certainly worth emphasising that all three of the best known of his recorded periods of illness coincided with periods of acute personal stress. He fell ill immediately after his first battle, at Dettingen in 1743, and there seems little doubt that he was suffering from post traumatic stress and exhaustion. Significantly, he was also **ill** while serving in Scotland with the 20th Foot, **not** as a result of any one dramatic event this time but during a period of acute frustration when he felt himself an exile on a foreign shore. Now he was **ill** again, and just as his first battle may not have matched his youthful expectations, his first truly independent command was also going wrong.

In all conscience Wolfe certainly had reason enough to be depressed. In his dispatch to Pitt written at the end of the month he admitted to the loss often officers and 173 men killed and a further 43 officers and 603 men wounded since arriving in the river. Yet all that he had to show for these losses was a devastated countryside and the partial destruction of the city by constant bombardment. As he grumbled in his last letter to his mother, *'My antagonist has wisely shut himself up in inaccessible entrenchments, so that I can't get at him without spilling a torrent of blood, and that perhaps to little purpose.*' Moreover, he was well and truly at odds with his brigadiers and increasingly, it seems, with individual members of his personal staff as well. In fact relations with some of them were so bad that he subsequently destroyed that part of his journal written after 16 August that, according to Tom Bell, 'contained a careful account of the officers' ignoble conduct towards him in case of a Parliamentary enquiry.' He was now just as isolated as he had felt himself in Scotland, and perhaps even more so - for at least there his enemies were all in front.

In these circumstances it is perhaps not so very surprising that his physical health once more gave way under the strain, or that he should go on to despondently refer to, 'my plan of quitting the service which I am determined to do the first opportunity'.

At any rate, notwithstanding the gloomy pessimism of both this letter and his more formal report to Pitt drawn up two days later, Wolfe was about to rouse himself for one more attack. He knew only too well that if the city was not taken before the end of September, the fleet and most (if not all) of the army would have to withdraw from the river before the advancing pack-ice sealed its mouth - long before the proper advent of winter further south at Quebec. He actually seems to have been turning the matter of another attack over in his mind as early as 11 August and a week later was impatient for Murray to return in order to put it into operation. Perhaps it may even have been his anxiety at Murray's non-appearance that finally triggered his collapse on 19 August, if its real causes were indeed nervous rather than physical.

Ordinarily Wolfe was a very firm believer in the advice that would later be offered by Francis Grose, to General Officers, Gommanding-in-Chief, that: *'As no other person in your army is allowed to be possessed of a single idea, it would be ridiculous, on any occasion, to assemble a council of war, or, at least, to be guided by their opinion: for, in opposition to yours, they must not trust to the most evident perception of their senses. It would be equally absurd and unmilitary to consult their convenience; even when it may be done without any detriment to the service: that would be taking away the most effectual method of exercising their obedience ...*'



TOP Regimental colour, 47th Foot. Although they normally had white facings, the 47th went through the Quebec campaign wearing clothing originally destined for Shirley's disbanded 50th Foot - with red facings. Oddly enough regiments with red facings were also supposed to carry white colours with red crosses, seemingly because red colours were reserved for the Footguards. The 47th were commanded at Quebec by Lieutenant-Colonel John Hale.

BOTTOM Regimental colour, 48th Foot. This was one of the regiments involved in Braddock's disaster on the Monongahela. At Quebec it was initially placed in reserve under its lieutenant-colonel, Ralph Burton.

TOP Regimental colour, 58th Foot. Regiments with black facings were also ordered to place a red cross on their colours. In this case no doubt because a black flag was traditionally flown to show that quarter would neither be given nor taken. As Lieutenant-Colonel William Howe was commanding Wolfe's Light infantry the regiment was led by Major James Agnew in the battle on the Plains.

BOTTOM King's colour 60th Foot. The regimental colour was blue with the same central device and a crowned cypher in each of the three outer corners. The 2nd Battalion's colours were distinguished by a gold pile wavy in the canton, and the 3rd Battalion's by two piles. The 2nd Battalion was commanded at Quebec by Captain Ralph Harding, and the 3rd Battalion by Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John St Clair.

Nevertheless, despite his unhappy experience of such councils at **Rochefort,** Wolfe (still bedridden) formally asked on 28 August for his brigadiers' written opinion on three different options:

1st. - in dry Weather a large Detachment may march in a day & a night so as to arrive at Beauport (fording the Montmorency 8 or 9 miles up) before day in the morning - it is likely they wou 'd be discovered upon their march on both sides the River - If such a Detacht. penetrates on their entrenchments & the rest of the Troops are ready, the consequence is plain.

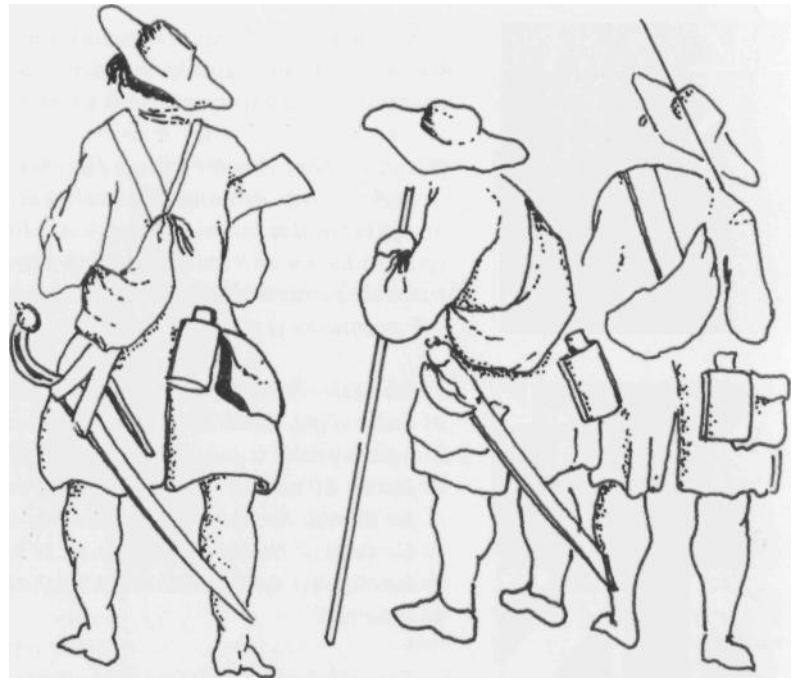
2d. If the Troops encamped here pass'd the Ford nr. the falling Water, & in the night march on directly towards the Point of Beauport - the light infantry have a good chance to get up the woody Hill, trying different places; & moving quick to the right, wou 'd soon discover a proper place for the rest: the upper redoubt must be attack'd, & kept by a Company of Grenadr. — Brigr. Monckton must be ready off the Point of Beauport, to land when our People have got up the Hill —for which Signals may be appointed.

3dy. All the chosen Troops of the Army attack at the Beauport at Low Water - a Division across the Ford an hour before, the other attack. —

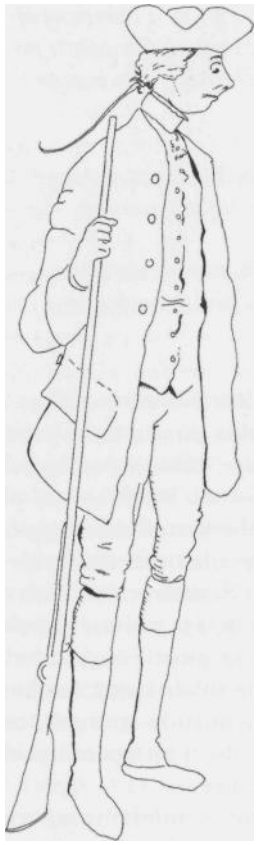
NB for the first - it is enough if the Water begins to fall a little before day light or about it. For the other two, it wou 'd be best to have it low water - about half an hour before day - ...

In a letter to Admiral Saunders two days later Wolfe observed that: *'My ill state of health hinders me from executing my own plan; it is of too desperate a nature to order others to execute.'* There has of course been a considerable amount of speculation by historians as to just what Wolfe's own plan entailed, but there can be little doubt that it was the first of these options, for the other two were merely variations upon the plan that had gone so badly wrong on 31 July. Wolfe readily admitted to Saunders that both the planning and the execution had been at fault on that occasion, but while propositions 2 and 3 now addressed those faults to some extent, neither of them required his personal leadership. On the other hand, leading a considerable detachment, presumably of at least brigade strength, on a desperate night march through the woods was indeed an operation that only he personally could, in all conscience, undertake.

His brigadiers certainly thought so too. After conferring at some length in the comfort of the Admiral's cabin, they firmly responded that *'that part of the Army which is proposed to march through the Woods nine miles up the Montmorenci to surprize their Camp is exposed to certain discovery, and to the disadvantage of a continual Wood fight.'* No one, of course, needed any reminding what had happened to Braddock in the woods by the Monongahela River back in 1755. Nor were they particularly keen on the idea of another attempt on the Beauport Lines, whether at dawn or at any other time, for even if they should by some miracle break through the lines, there was still of course the infinitely depressing prospect of then having to fight their way across the St Charles, before finally being in a position to besiege the city itself.



Although these shabby looking British regulars were actually sketched by an unknown artist in Edinburgh in 1746 they still provide an unparalleled picture of what 18th-century soldiers actually looked like on active service.



Wolfe after one of Townshend's often vicious caricatures. This one is particularly interesting in confirming a number of the features depicted in Smyth's portrait, including the long Prussian-style pigtail and the otherwise very casual appearance with a very plain hat and coat, turned-down gaiters, and a fusil but no sword.

Instead, they respectfully advocated evacuating the Montmorency camp and effecting a landing somewhere above the city, for *'When we establish ourselves on the North Shore, the French General must fight us on our own Terms; We shall be betwixt him and his provisions, and betwixt him and their Army opposing General Amherst.'*

This paper was presented to Wolfe on 29 August and next day, in his letter to Saunders, he conceded that *'The generals seem to think alike as to the operations; I, therefore, join with them, and perhaps we may find some opportunity to strike a blow.'* It is clear that he was not very optimistic about the outcome of the proposed move, which may account at least in part for his declared intention to quit the service. If so, however, his spirits were about to lift dramatically once the operation actually got under way, which it did with surprising rapidity.

In accordance with a plan drafted by the brigadiers, the guns were withdrawn from the Montmorency position on 1 September and most of the troops followed next day. A substantial rearguard remained in position until the 3rd in the vain hope that Montcalm might be tempted to come out and fight, but as usual he failed to oblige. Apart from a 600-strong detachment (comprising the 2/60th Foot and a battalion of marines) left to guard the stores and hospitals on the Isle de Orleans, the army was then concentrated at Point Levis, on the south shore. Once that had been done, the batteries there were left in charge of Lieutenant-Colonel Burton with his own 48th Foot and some more marines, while everybody else marched upstream as far as the Etchemin river and embarked on the ships waiting there.

As a result of these detachments, Monckton's First Brigade was now to comprise the 15th, 43rd and 3/60th Foot with a total of 1,009 rank and file, while Townshend's Second Brigade, comprising the 28th, 47th and 78th Foot mustered 1,028 men, and Murray ended up with the 918 bayonets of the 35th, 58th Foot and Louisburg Grenadiers.

Quebec; even in this modern photograph the dominant position of the city is all too apparent. (R. Chartrand)

Although the ships were by that time anchored off Cap Rouge, some 13 miles above Quebec, orders for a landing still further upriver, just a little below Pointe aux Trembles, were issued on 8 September. However, as it was by then raining very heavily, the operation was first deferred in the hope of an improvement in the weather, and then at 1.30am the following morning it was postponed indefinitely. Notwithstanding Saunders had all the while steadily been passing more and more ships up the river, the troops were wretchedly overcrowded on the few available transports and so about half of them were set ashore until operations got under way again. According to an ambiguous entry in Townshend's journal, Wolfe went down the river in the rain 'reconnoitering'. The journal appears to imply that he went off on 8 September but if so he saw little if anything to encourage him, for next day, presumably just after calling off the landing, he wrote another despondent report, this time to the Earl of Holderness. In it he described the brigadiers' conference and the move upriver, but again expressed considerable pessimism as to the outcome. It is unfortunate that we do not know more about the next few hours for this was the crucial point in the campaign. Sick and dispirited, Wolfe's role had lately been an entirely passive one - the brigadiers were very much in charge and they had prevailed upon him to adopt a plan in which he had absolutely no confidence.

Decision

Now, to the brigadiers' scarcely disguised consternation, his old spirit suddenly reasserted itself. Having unburdened himself to Holderness, Wolfe went off down the river again later that day and finally pitched upon a suitable landing place at the Anse au Foulon, only a short distance away from his earlier objective, St Michel (the two may indeed have been one and the same). Since he neither revealed his intentions beforehand, nor lived to justify himself afterwards, all manner of lurid speculation has grown up over the years as to just why Wolfe picked the Foulon, including fanciful stories of treacherous French officers, but mere is in reality no mystery at all, for it was in just the right place.

Construction of the Citadel shown here was not actually begun until 1820 but this photograph nevertheless illustrates just how difficult it was for Wolfe and his officers to gain any useful information on the landward defences of the city. (R. Chartrand)

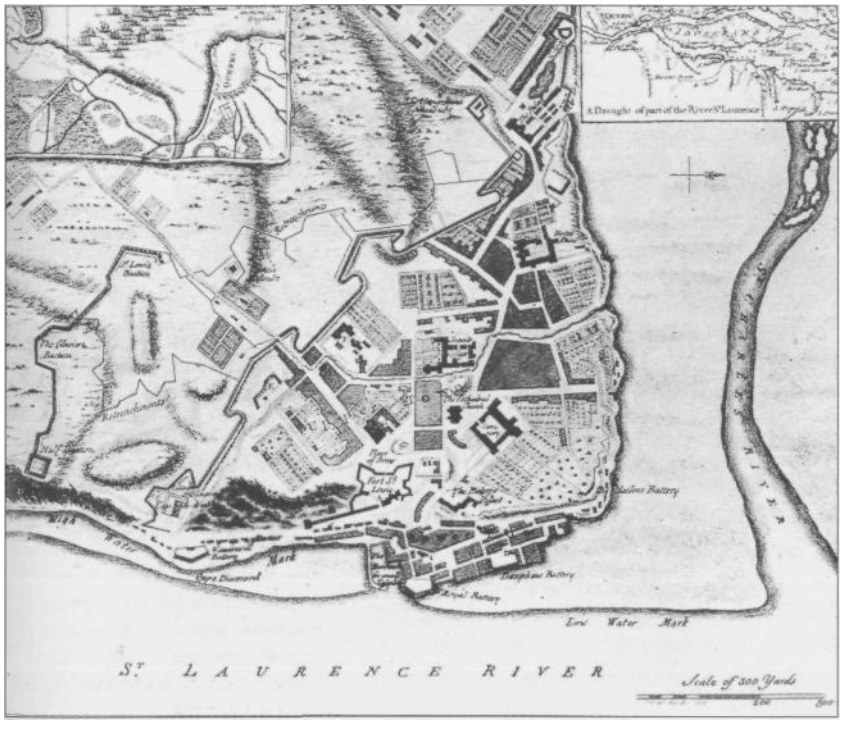
According to Patrick Mackellar's survey of Quebec, which was of course all Wolfe and his officers had to go on up to this point, the landward defences of the city were incomplete and quite inadequate. Mackellar, who had been a prisoner in the city after being captured at Fort Oswego, was under the impression that it was still covered primarily by an old line of palisaded earthworks thrown up by an engineer named Beaucourt as long ago as 1693. He was seemingly aware that construction had begun of a new stone-faced *enciente* further out - indeed the eastern end of these new defences could be seen from the British observation posts on the other side of the St Lawrence - but he had never been allowed beyond Beaucourt's crumbling palisades and was quite unaware that it had in fact been completed. Instead his plan depicts a huge gap in the city's defences quite inadequately covered by 'retrenchments' which in all probability comprised nothing more formidable than some shallow ditches and picket fences.

Back at the outset of the war in 1757 Wolfe had taken part in an abortive expedition against Rochefort on the French coast. The engineer on that occasion, who had thoroughly (and quite openly) examined the fortifications just before the outbreak of hostilities, reported correctly enough that they were so inadequate that the town could be stormed with no difficulty. Yet the expedition's commander, Sir John Mordaunt, took counsel of his fears and after a week of dithering and pointless skirmishing around the periphery - while avoiding the primary objective entirely - the Royal Navy refused to land the soldiers and instead sailed for home. As Wolfe disgustedly wrote to his uncle at the time: *'Admirals and Generals consult together, and resolve upon nothing between them but to hold a council of war ... this famous council sat from morning till late at night, and the result of the debates was unanimously not to attack the place they were ordered to attack, and for reasons that no soldier will allow to be sufficient.'*

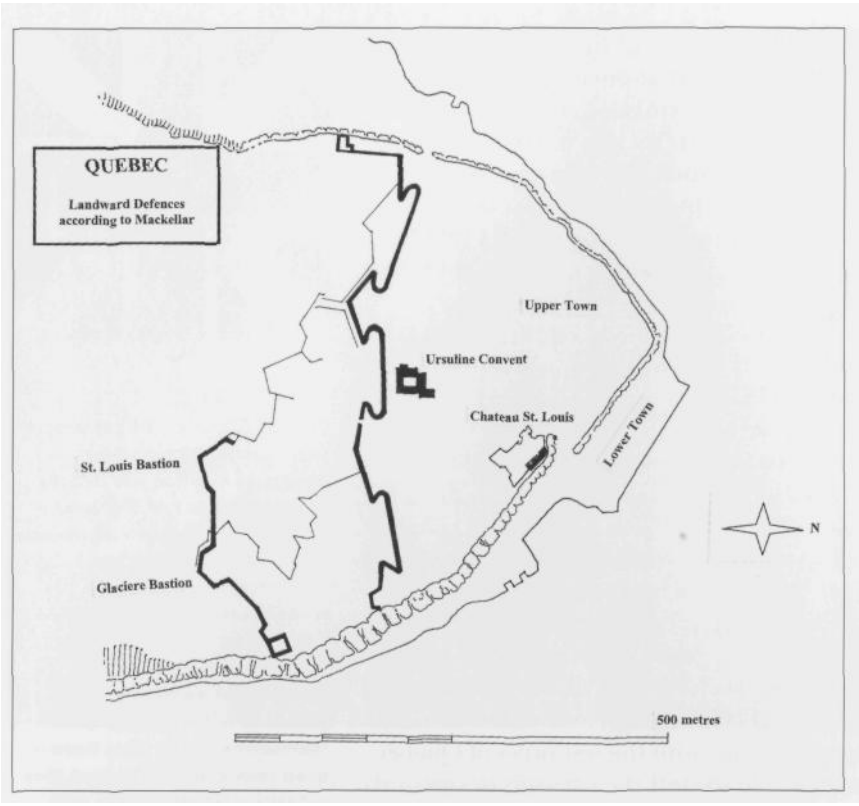
OPPOSITE Patrick Mackellar's map of Quebec was itself based upon a French one published in 1746. Although it was printed after the battle on the Plains and the capture of the city, it oddly enough has not been corrected and thus very usefully reveals a crucial intelligence failure that had considerable bearing on British planning.

Now he must have been uncomfortably aware of the parallels with his present situation. His objective was a fortress that once again, according to the best advice of the engineers, could be stormed without difficulty - if he could only place his army in front of it. Yet this is what he had so far signally failed to do. Thus far his operations, like those of Mordaunt before him, had not only been ineffective, but they had not even been directed against the place he had been ordered to attack. Also like Mordaunt, he too was now in some danger of sailing home in disgrace with nothing accomplished.

His brigadiers were now in favour of marching on the city from the south, and a landing could certainly be effected further upstream, near Pointe aux Trembles, with little difficulty. After all, both Carleton and Murray had been sent up with raiding parties in July and August, but at no time did Wolfe ever contemplate taking the whole army there, for once ashore he would then be nearly 20 miles away from Quebec. With the best will in the world that would allow the French at least a day, and probably closer to two, in order to prepare for his arrival before the city, particularly if the local commander, Colonel de Bougainville, did his duty and imposed ever)' possible delay upon the British advance. The consequences of this would almost certainly have been fatal. Just a year before, Montcalm had required only 24 hours to construct the line of fortifications at Ticonderoga, on which Abercromby had obligingly wrecked his army. There was no reason for him to suppose that, with the resources of Quebec at his back, Montcalm should not be able to stuff the city with troops and handsomely fill that supposed yawning gap in its defences with an equally formidable line of fieldworks. Then, with little or no room for manoeuvre, Wolfe's only remaining options would have been an ignominious retreat or a near suicidal frontal assault.



TOP King's colour 78th Highlanders. This regiment was specifically raised for service in America and initially designated the 2nd Highland Battalion. It was soon afterwards taken into the line as the 63rd Foot, and then again re-designated as the 78th. It is possible that it bore the new number on its colours at Quebec, but as its officers persisted in referring to themselves as the 63rd there is good reason to believe that they actually went into action with LXIII still emblazoned on them. Although commanded in the early stages of the campaign by its lieutenant-colonel commandant, Simon Fraser, he was wounded in a skirmish and, with Major Clephane off commanding a detachment at Fort Stanwix, it was actually led on the Plains of Abraham by its senior captain, James Campbell.



The extent of the British intelligence failure is readily apparent from this simplified plan and the following one. This one depicts the landward defences of Quebec according to Mackellar. The outer, stone trace is incomplete and the city covered only by old and dilapidated earthworks, which might easily be stormed if the British Army could be placed in front of them.

Conversely, landing at the Foulon would quite literally deposit the army on the enemy's doorstep and at long last permit him to 'attack the place he was ordered to attack' - and with the benefit of surprise at that! In order to better accomplish that aim, Wolfe could also achieve a more effective concentration of his own forces at the Foulon, by bringing the 48th and 2/60th Foot across from Point Levis and the Isle de Orleans respectively and, moreover, the Foulon also offered yet another and, as it turned out, quite crucial advantage - there was a narrow road traversing the cliff. It was steep, and it was apparendy at least partially blocked by an abatis. Were this to be cleared, however, Wolfe would have the means to pass his troops up from the river very quickly indeed, and to get his guns up as well.

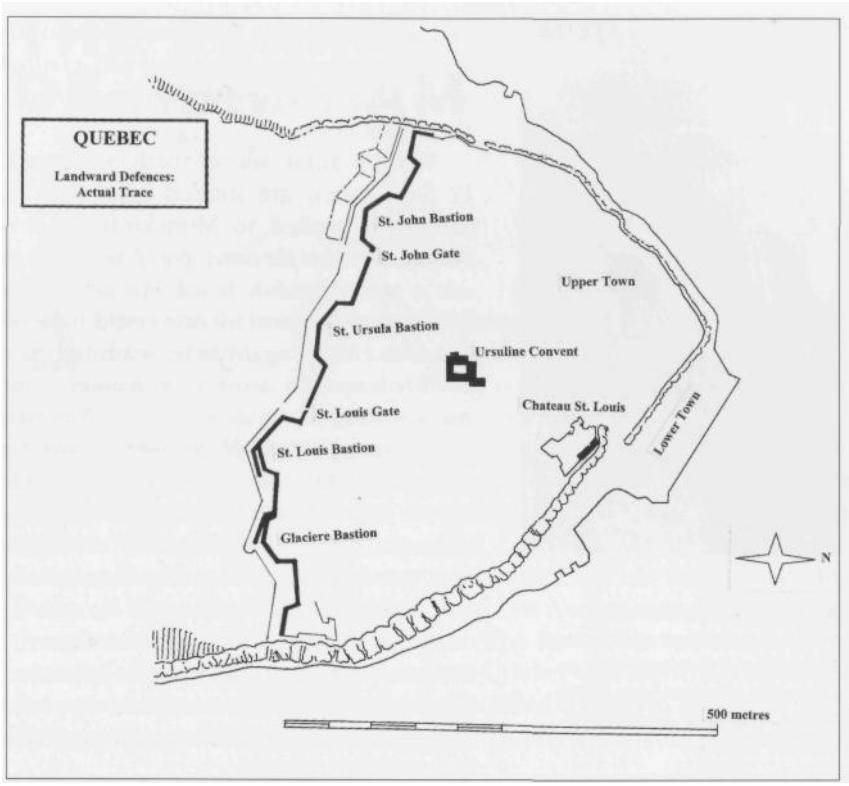
On the assumption that the troops immediately available (i.e. the city's dedicated garrison) would be wholly inadequate, he could then either seize Quebec by a *coup de main* or engage Montcalm in the open as he hurried to its rescue.

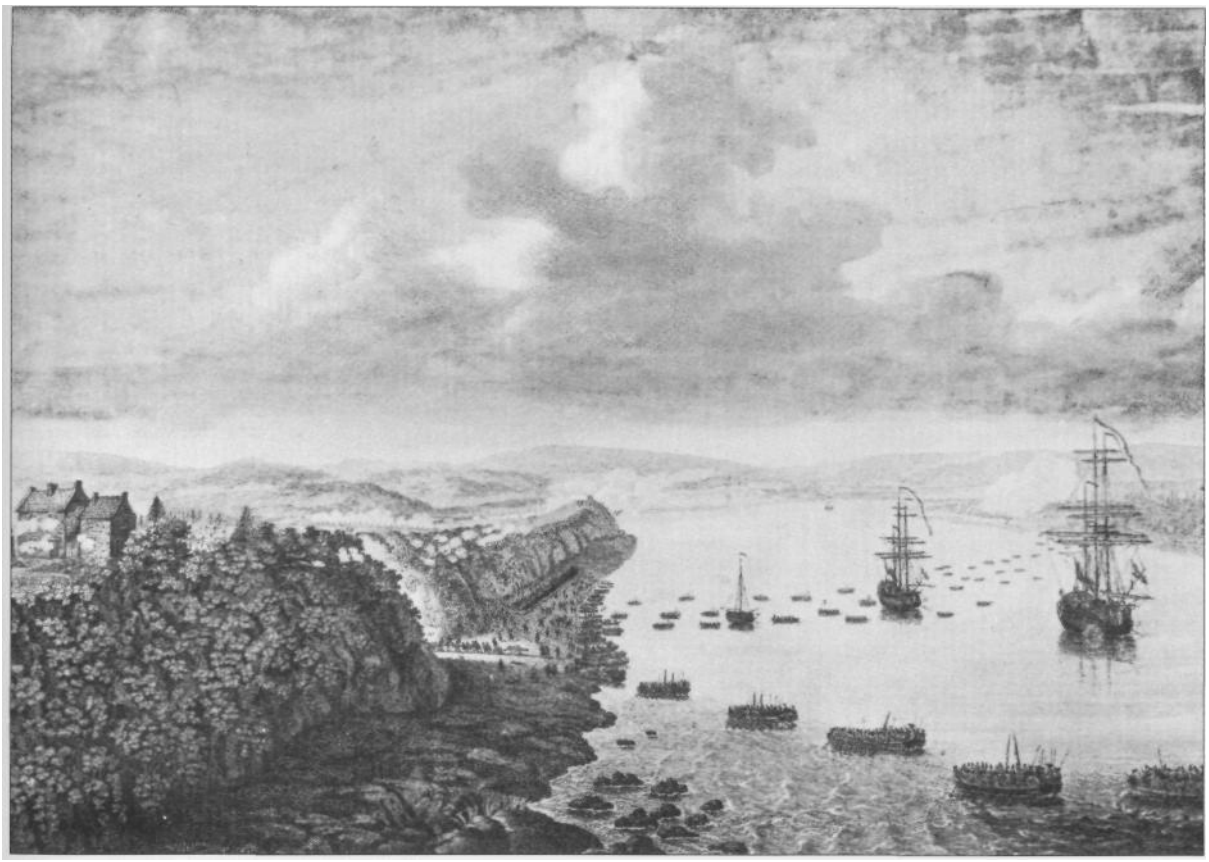
Next day, therefore, Wolfe went back downriver again, this time taking his senior officers - rather unconvincingly disguised in grenadiers' coats and 'coloured [i.e. civilian] cloaths' with him. He took them to a little outpost, known as Gorham's Post No.l, which lay approximately halfway between Point Levis and the mouth of the Etchemin River. From there he pointed out to the officers the salient features of his new objective and baldly announced his intention of landing the army at the Foulon in the early hours of 13 September.

This abrupt turnaround in Wolfe's spirits and no doubt the fact that he was no longer willing to be 'guided by their opinion' undoubtedly upset the brigadiers. Only a few hours before the operation was due to be launched they addressed a rather petulant letter to him, asking that

OPPOSITE This well-known print after a sketch by Hervey Smyth gives a very good impression of the difficulties facing Wolfe's men when they landed at the Foulon - although the road by which the majority of the troops actually got up is clearly visible. Only the light infantry companies went up the naked cliff-face.

This plan, on the same topographical base, shows the very different and at first sight far more formidable defences which faced Wolfe when he actually got his army up on to the Plains. Nevertheless, although the sight of the unbroken trace of stone walls must have come as a shock, there were still some serious deficiencies. Except for a short stretch by the St John Bastion there was no ditch and no protecting glacis. It is also possible that the gates could still not be closed properly.





A somewhat unconvincing 18th-century 'View of the Siege of Quebec' which manages to place the city upstream of the Foulon. (National Archives of Canada C34211)

he take them more fully into his confidence and requesting *'as distinct orders as the nature of the thing will admit of, particularly to the place or places we are to attack; This circumstance, perhaps very decisive, we cannot learn from the publick orders ...'*

Wolfe's final set of orders, issued on board the *Sutherland* on 12 September, are indeed brief and uninformative, but as he rather caustically replied to Monckton: *'It is not a usual thing to point out in the publick orders the direct spot of an attack, nor for any inferior officer not charg'd wh: a particular duty to ask instructions upon that point.'* Here was the **old** Wolfe speaking, and no one could have been in any doubt that he was very much in charge again as he scathingly condescended to explain.

'My reason for desiring the honour of your Company with me to Goreham's post yesterday, was to shew you, as well as the distance wou 'd permit, the situation of the Enemy, & the place where I mean't they shou 'd be attack 'd; as you are charged with that duty, I should be glad to give you all further light, & assistance in my power — the Place is called the Foulon ... where you remarked an encampment of 12 or 13 Tents & an Abbatis, below it — you mention 'd today, that you had perceived a breast-work there, which made me imagine you as well acquainted wh. the Place, as the nature of things will admit of.'

Beyond that he refused to be drawn, but it is his very reticence upon the question of exactly what he intended to do after he had secured the head of the Foulon road that is perhaps the clearest pointer to his having something rather more ambitious in mind than simply finding and fighting the French.

THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM

At the time the man ultimately responsible for ensuring the security of the Foulon, Colonel Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, was at Cap Rouge with the bulk of his flying column, which had now been reinforced by the grenadier companies belonging to Montcalm's five regular battalions. He was supposedly watching the British ships, but at the critical moment was for some reason quite oblivious to the departure of the heavily laden boats, which began dropping down the river with the tide at about 2.00am on the morning of 13 September. While Colonel de Bougainville slept, the unfortunate officer actually on the spot at the Foulon, a Canadian named Captain Louis de Vergor, was dealing as he thought with an entirely different matter. The French had planned to run a convoy of supply boats down the river to Quebec that night, but although the operation was cancelled Bougainville failed to inform de Vergor and his approximately 100 militia of the fact. Consequently, the Captain and

William Howe, seen here as Commander in Chief North America during the Revolution, served at Quebec as a very capable lieutenant-colonel in command of Wolfe's light infantry at the Foulon. He personally led the scramble up the cliff to secure the top of the road.

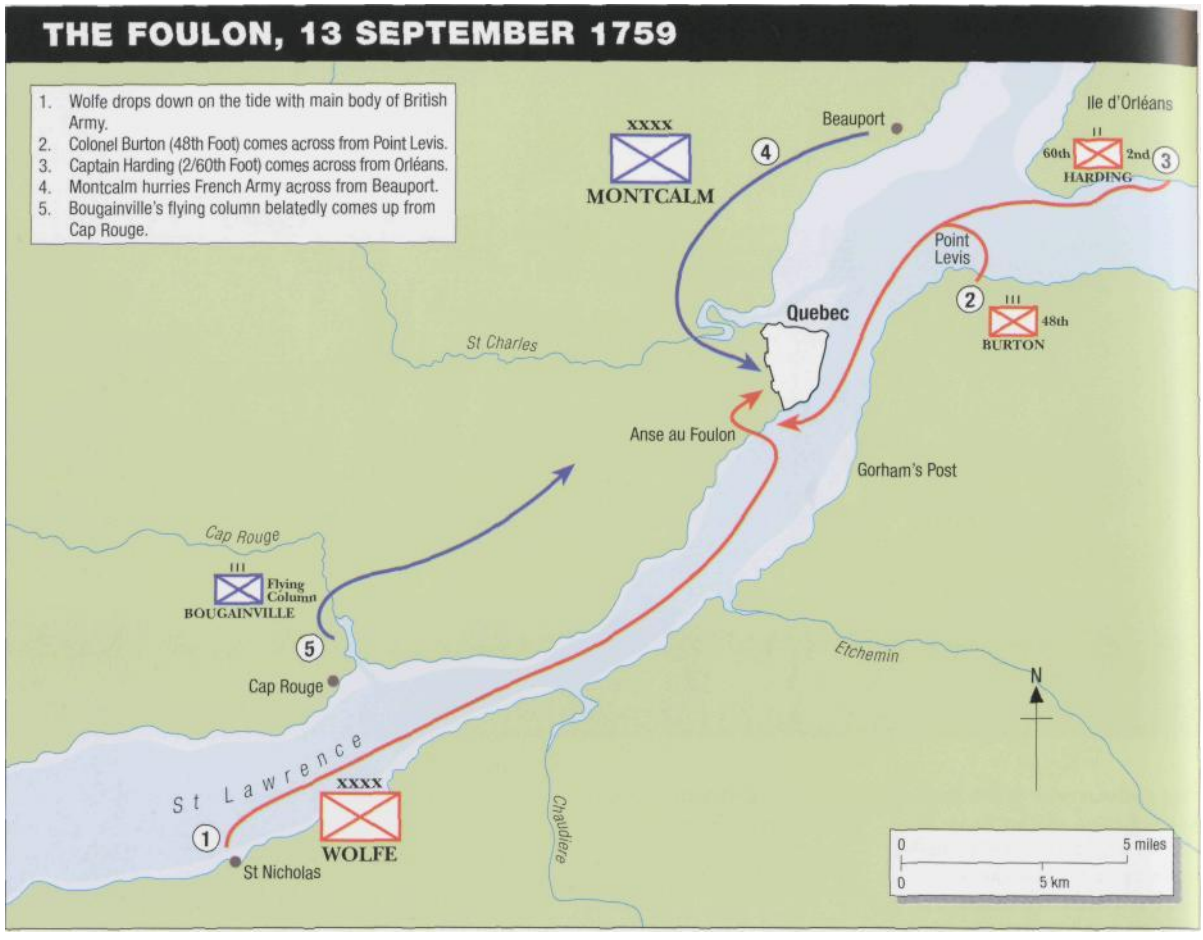
This popular print of the landing at the Foulon and battle on the Plains, based on Hervey Smyth's painting, is actually quite accurate in depicting both the road from the Foulon and the way in which the city was itself dominated by the high ground of the Plains. (R. Chartrand)

OPPOSITE 'Wolfe and his army scaling the heights to the Plains of Abraham'. Although the cliffs appear more Alpine than convincing, this modern print does at least correctly depict most of the troops ascending by means of the narrow road. (National Archives of Canada C1079)

some of his men stationed along the shore mistook the British boats for their own and were encouraged in this happy belief by a French-speaking officer, Captain Donald MacDonald of the 78th Highlanders.

MacDonald was in one of the first of eight flat-bottomed boats allocated to Howe's light infantry. A total of 30 was available, each capable of loading 50 men, besides officers. Under the original arrangements for landing the army near Pointe aux Trembles, it had been intended that they should carry all three battalions of Murray's Brigade, and thee 15th and 43rd Foot from Monckton's Brigade. Instead, as Wolfe's orders issued on 11 September noted: *'As the Leostoff* [sic] *and Squirrel frigates are ordered to follow the flat-bottom boats, the troops belonging to these ships are to remain on board, and the boats intended for these corps are to take in others ...'* Consequently, the first eight boats carried Howe's light infantry, while the others carried the 28th, 43rd, 47th, 58th Foot and the Louisburg Grenadiers. In addition, some 350 men of the 78th Highlanders were packed into the ships' longboats. Half an hour behind them the remainder of the army came down on thee transports, ready to be landed as soon as the boats had discharged the first lift or 'flight'.

Wolfe's intention, as he had explained to Monckton on the 12th, was to land just to the west of the Foulon. Once ashore, a forlorn hope of volunteers under Captain Delaune was tasked with seizing control of that vital road. Although it was at least partially blocked by an abatis, the French were evidently still using the road to relieve their piquets along the shore, so it had to still be useable. It would certainly be guarded, but as events proved Wolfe was quite justified in anticipating that 24 determined regulars with fixed bayonets would be able to seize it from a handful of militiamen. As he himself had written in 1757: *'nothing is to be reckoned an obstacle to your undertaking which is not found really so upon tryal; that in war*



something must be allowed to chance and fortune, seeing it is in its nature hazardous, and an option of difficulties; that the greatness of an object should come under consideration, opposed to the impediments that lie in the way.'

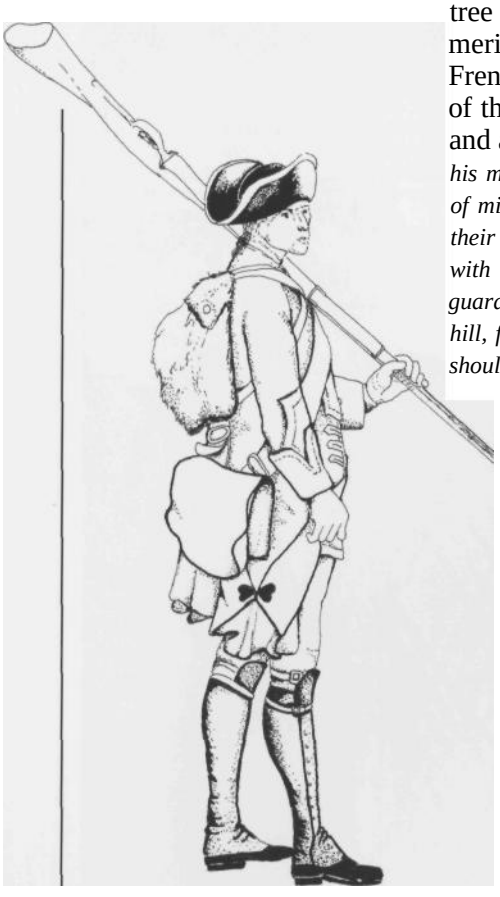
What neither he, nor Captain Chads the Naval beachmaster, counted upon, however, was the strength of the ebbing tide. It is more than likely that they were relying on it to carry them out of Bougainville's reach and ensure that they could all get safely ashore before he came marching down from Cap Rouge, but it had also carried the boats much too far downstream.

THE FOULON

When Billy Howe and his light infantry came ashore in the grey pre-dawn light at about four in the morning, he very soon realised that, he was in the wrong place. With every passing minute increasing the likelihood of the French discovering what was going on, he took a famous decision. Delaune and his forlorn hope were quickly sent off back along the beach to find the road, while Howe himself led three companies directly up the face of the cliff. This had formed no part of Wolfe's original plan, for it involved a hazardous climb as the men laboriously dragged themselves up the treacherous loose shale slope by

Highlanders after Van Gucht. Most British infantry were ordered to leave their swords in store when serving in North America, but Highlanders were granted a dispensation and their commanding officers allowed to retain them if they wished. The 78th had broadswords at Quebec and used them with some effect in the early stages of the pursuit. However, when they came under fire from Canadienne militia in the bushes they were unable to reply and had to retire in their turn.

tree roots and branches. On the other hand, it did at least have the merit of surprise, for they eventually scrambled to the top behind the French piquet posted at the head of the road. Equally fortunately, one of the first on the spot was again the resourceful Captain MacDonald, and as Knox gratefully remembered: '... *as soon as he* [MacDonald] *and his men gained the height, he was challenged by a centry, and, with great presence of mind, from his knowledge of the French service, answered him according to their manner: it being yet dark, he came up to him, told him he was sent there, with a large command, to take post, and desired him to go with all speed to his guard, and to call off all the other men of his party who were ranged along the hill, for that he would take care to give a good account of the B... Anglois, if they should persist; this finesse had the desired effect, and saved us many lives, &c.'*



ABOVE The real conqueror of Quebec; a superb study after Paul Sandby depicting a very competent and professional-looking British infantryman in full marching order with an American-style knapsack worn square on his back.

RIGHT Highland soldier as depicted in George Grant's *New Highland Military Discipline.* Grant had been a major in the Black Watch until cashiered for surrendering Inverness to the Jacobites in 1746. His drill-book was a speculative affair aimed at the new regiments raised in 1757, but although founded on good sense, its instructions were far from clear and in some respects more complicated than the official drill book.

The French did not remain deceived for long, of course. In the growing light the British boats became clearly visible and a battery at Samos, a short way above the Foulon, briefly opened fire before being dealt with by Billy Howe's light infantry. In the meantime, Wolfe was pushing his men up the road as fast as they landed. Montcalm had earlier sworn that '100 men, well posted, could stop the whole army and give us time to wait for daylight', which was perhaps true enough, but only up to a point. In the first place, Vergor's 100 men were scattered in small piquets up and down the shore, rather than concentrated at the Foulon. Secondly Montcalm had certainly reckoned without the British seizing control of the road. Its capture was crucial to the success of the whole enterprise for it enabled Wolfe to establish his army on top of the cliff far more quickly and easily than Montcalm, or anyone else, could ever have anticipated.

Unfortunately, once Wolfe had his men atop the cliffs any thoughts he may have had of an immediate assault on the city had to be abandoned as he now saw for the first time that the new, stone-faced *enciente* stretched right across the peninsula. An assault might, nevertheless, be possible as there was neither ditch nor glacis in front of the walls. First, however, he was going to have to fight a battle.

Early Skirmishing

The situation at this point was very fluid indeed and in consequence no doubt rather tense. Wolfe was now finally in a position to assault the city, but he could not do so immediately. As a result he would undoubtedly have to first face a counter-attack by Montcalm, and precedence suggested his response would be swift. Eventually, Bougainville's men would also doubtless arrive from Cap Rouge. Yet it was an encounter that to all appearances Wolfe and everyone else in the British army awaited with some confidence.

Initially, Wolfe formed his men with their backs to the river, in order to be able to deal with a French counter-attack from any direction, but finding no opposition he faced them to the right by files and marched out on to the Plains of Abraham. The weather was showery when he finally halted at about 6.00am and wheeled into a new position, described by Knox: '*Quebec was then to the eastward of us in front, with the enemy under its watts. Our right flank was flanked by the declivity and the main river to the southward, and what is called the lower road hading (westward) from the town, with the river Charles and the north country, were on our left. If the reader will attend to this description, observing the cardinal points, he may thereby form as lively an idea of the field of battle as if a plan were laid before him ...*'

While the area had originally been no more than grazing land, Knox mentions patches of corn and there also seems to have been a lot of scrub around its fringes. Nevertheless, it was to all intents and purposes an open field rising very gently towards the Buttes a Neveu, which presently sheltered the city, and in which neither side could subsequently claim any advantage from the terrain.

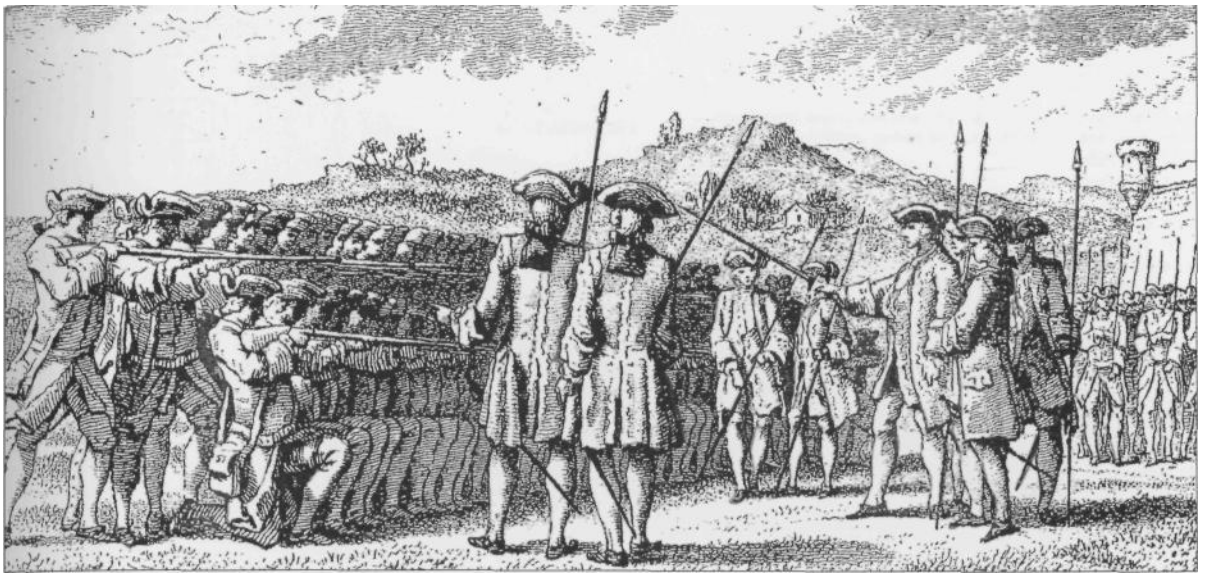
On first taking up this position, Wolfe still only had the battalions that comprised the first flight, drawn up in a single line, but once the rest of the army came up he re-deployed his forces in a shallow horseshoe formation. The brigade organisation having been abandoned, Monckton as senior brigadier was given charge of the right, while Murray had the notional centre.

This British soldier, after a sketch by Paul Sandby, appears to be 'securing' his firelock. Note that although none of the lace has been stripped off his coat and waistcoat - a common enough practice in America - he has discarded his sword and carries only a bayonet on his belt.


GAE

DIRTY DEEDS ON THE FOULON (pages 62-63)

The success of Wolfe's plan to take Quebec rested from the outset on his being able to get the army up the cliffs from the landing place at the Foulon. Indeed the landing place was chosen precisely because there was a narrow but useable road there. Naturally enough it was covered by picquets drawn from the Canadian militia (1) but Wolfe counted on seizing it by a coup de main. However when the tide carried his boats too far downstream and he began to fear discovery in the growing light, he modified the plan slightly. Three companies of Billy Howe's light infantry were sent straight up the cliff with orders to attack the picquet at the top of the road from behind. That would then be the signal for the rest to rush straight up the road with the bayonet (2). In the event the whole operation went even more smoothly than intended due to the initiative of a French-speaking light infantry officer. He had already successfully bluffed the army past one of the posts down on the shore, by calling out to the sentry in French. Now, he repeated the ruse to even greater effect, this time pretending to be a French officer hurrying up with reinforcements. By the time the unfortunate sentry realised that he was lying, it was too late... (3). Referring to the earlier incident Townshend names him as a Captain Fraser who had been in the Dutch service. This might suggest he was a Captain Simon Fraser of the 78th Highlanders, who had indeed served in the Dutch Army and would later die as a brigadier at Saratoga. On balance, however, it must in fact be a mistake for 'a Captain of Fraser's' since, in describing the very similar encounter with the picquet above the Foulon, Knox rather more convincingly identifies the officer concerned as Captain Donald MacDonald and ascribes his success to 'his knowledge of the French service' (4). Stewart of Garth, in his monumental Sketches of the Highlanders of Scotland categorically states that the captain, who came from Benbecula, was a brother of MacDonald of Clanranald. He can thus be identified as the officer of that name who served in the French Army from 1742 to 1746, first as a cadet in the Irish regiment Rooth, and latterly during the Jacobite Rising of 1745-46 as a lieutenant in the Royal Eccossois (see Campaign 106 Culloden Moor 1746 p.82-84). It is hardly surprising therefore that he should speak good French and be familiar with French military procedures. Taken prisoner after Culloden, he was released in 1748 and like a number of other former Jacobites joined Fraser's 63rd/78th Highlanders in 1757. Sadly he was subsequently killed in action at the battle of St Foy on 28 April 1760. (Gerry Embleton)

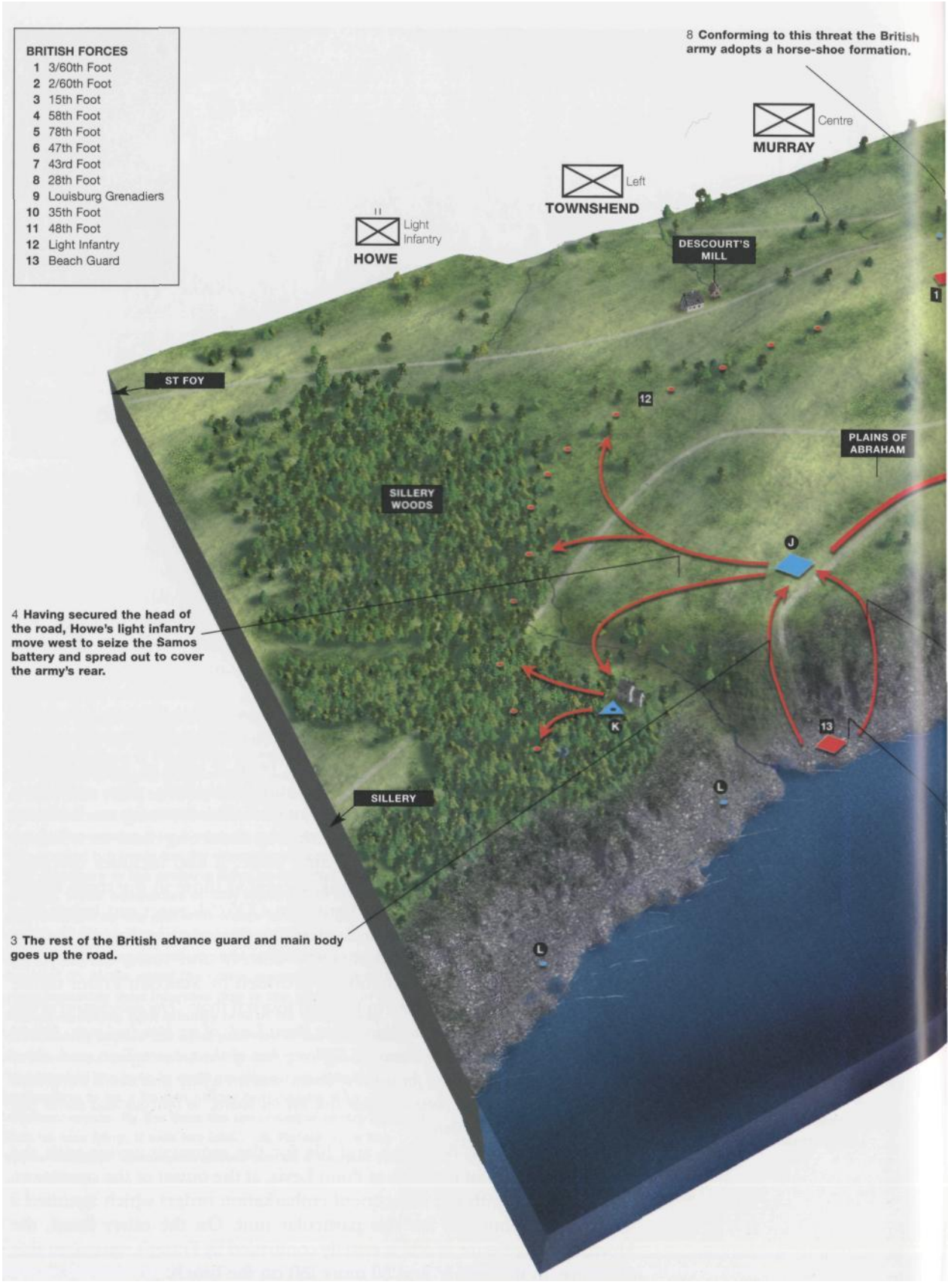


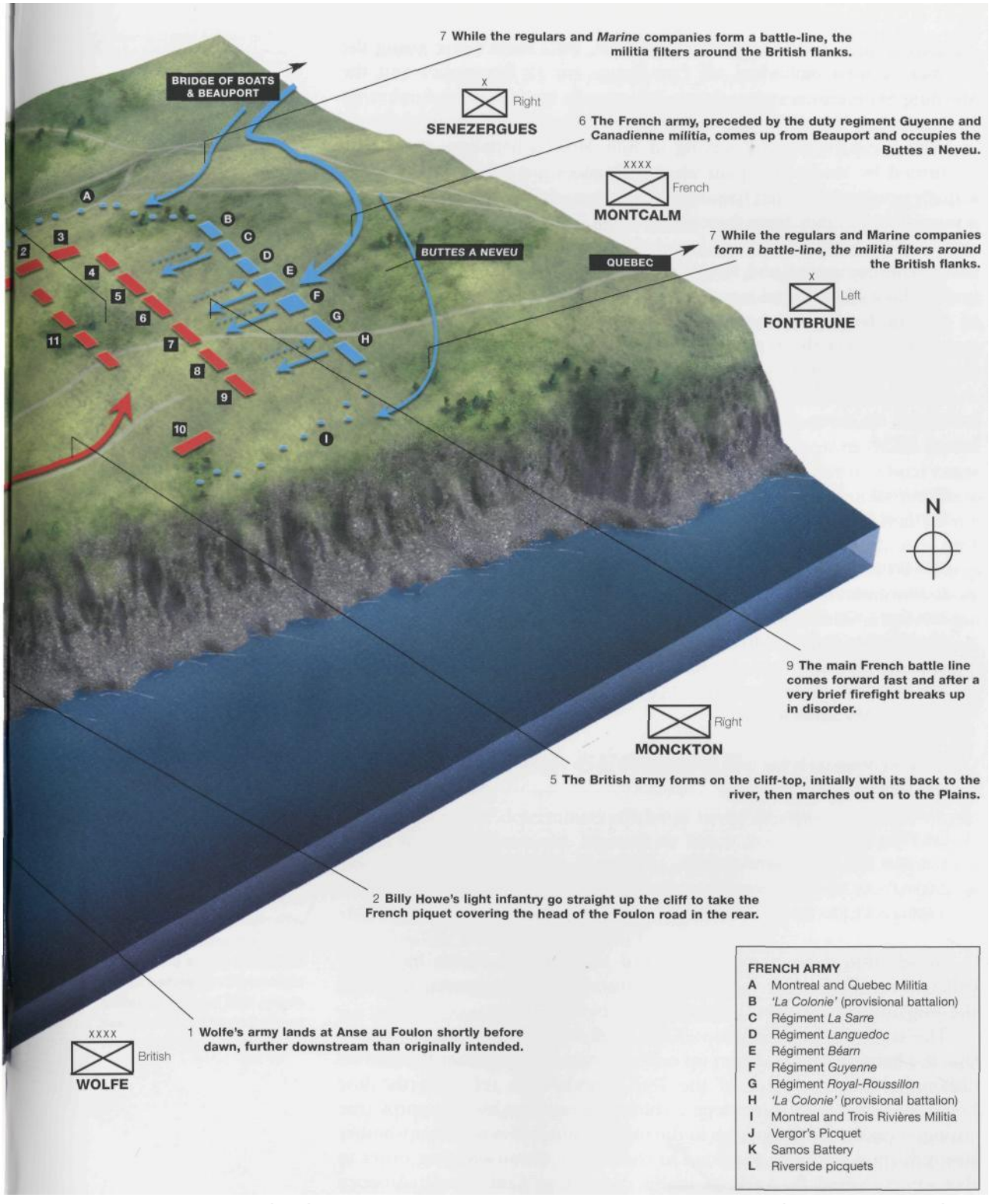
French infantry practising the platoon exercise as depicted by Le Blond in 1758. Note they are deployed in three ranks in accordance with the Instruction of 14 May 1754. Only the front rank is now kneeling. So far as is known this formation was used by Montcalm's regulars - their British opponents meanwhile had reduced their ranks to two.

In fact, Murray actually commanded the left of the firing line, for Townshend's left wing, comprising the 15th Foot and both battalions of the 60th Foot was refused in order to face northwards on a line parallel to the St Foy Road. This was primarily done to counter the growing numbers of Canadian militia assembling on that flank, but it may also have effectively denied the road to the French army. Similarly, the 35th Foot, drawn up in what Knox describes as a semicircular formation, were covering the right flank against more Canadian militia infesting the bushes lining the cliff-top.

A surprising number of men had been left on the transports or on the beach. All in all according to the Morning State appended to the official report on the batde there should have been a total of 3,826 soldiers present, besides officers and NCOs, and Mackellar's plan evidences 3,111 of them in what he called the 'front line'. This latter figure, however, is slightly misleading for while it is accurate in deducting those men known to have been left to guard the landing place, it also includes the men serving in the four units on the flanks as well as those in *the* main battle-line proper. The Morning State figures in CO5/51 as set out below also differ considerably from the printed return included in Knox's *Journal* which evidences no fewer than 4,816 officers and men, exclusive of staff and artillery. The explanation is provided by Malcolm Fraser of the 78th Highlanders, who noted in his own journal that: *'The detachment of our Regiment consisted, at our marching from Point Levi, of six hundred men, besides commissioned and non-commissioned Officers; but of these, two officers and about sixty men were left on board for want of boats, and an officer and about thirty men left at the landing place: besides a few sick left on board, so that we had about five hundred men in the action.'*

Knox's figure of 603 rank and file for the regiment agrees with the reported strength of the 78th at Point Levis, at the outset of the operation, and pretty well with the subsequent embarkation orders which assumed a strength of about 600 for this particular unit. On the other hand, *the* Morning State figure of 532 is exactly confirmed by Fraser's statement that 500 were 'in the action' and 30 more left on the beach.


BRITISH FORCES
1 3/60th Foot
2 2/60th Foot
3 15th Foot
4 58th Foot
5 78th Foot
6 47th Foot
7 43rd Foot
8 28th Foot
9 Louisburg Grenadiers
10 35th Foot
11 48th Foot
12 Light Infantry
13 Beach Guard
8 Conforming to this threat the British army adopts a horse-shoe formation.
Centre
MURRAY
Left
TOWNSHEND
II
Light Infantry
HOWE
DESCOURT'S MILL
1
ST FOY
12
PLAINS OF ABRAHAM
SILLERY WOODS
J
4 Having secured the head of the road, Howe's light infantry move west to seize the Samos battery and spread out to cover the army's rear.
II
K
13
L
SILLERY
3 The rest of the British advance guard and main body goes up the road.
L



THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM - THE FRENCH ATTACK

13 September 1759, morning, viewed from the south showing the British landing at Anse au Foulon and the advance on to the Plains of Abraham. Having marched up from Beauport, Montcalm's army deploys and attacks.

Both returns must therefore, be correct, with Knox's one giving the number of men embarked off Cap Rouge on 12 September and the Morning State enumerating those who actually landed at the Foulon on 13 September. However, judging by Fraser's account, neither set of figures includes the light infantry serving in Billy Howe's battalion, and this is confirmed by Mackellar's plan which evidences just 3,111 rank and file actually present in the ten battalions making up the front line. However, it is possible to estimate from their allocation of eight flat-bottom boats in the embarkation orders that there may have been as many as 400 under his immediate command and another 200 following aboard the transports under Major Hussey, making as many as 600 light infantry in all, exclusive of officers. During the battle they appear to have been flung out in a screen to protect the rear of the army from the inevitable approach of Bougainville's column.

In fact, therefore, the six battalions forming the main battle-line mustered no more than 1,768 bayonets and may perhaps have had as few as 1,734:

Right Wing	
35th Foot (LtCol Harry Fletcher)	406
Main Battle Line	
Louisburg Grenadiers (LtCol Alex Murray)	216
28th Foot (LtCol Hunt Walsh)	300
43rd Foot (Maj Robert Elliot)	256
47th Foot (LtCol John Hale)	196
78th Foot (Capt James Campbell)	532
58th Foot (Maj James Agnew)	300
Reserve ('drawn up in four grand divisions, with large intervals')	
48th Foot (LtCol Ralph Burton)	649
Left Wing	
15th Foot (Maj Paulus Aemilius Irving)	279
2/60th Foot (Capt Ralph Harding)	218
3/60th Foot (LtCol Sir John St Clair)	474

In addition there were at least two brass 6-pdrs, which had been dragged up the Foulon road by Williamson and his gunners, although the Morniner State refers to there having; been three.

The tactical formation adopted was interesting. Most accounts record that the battalions were drawn up only two ranks deep, rather than three, although Malcolm Fraser of the 78th Highlanders refers to the line being 'no more than three deep', which suggests that his own corps (the strongest on the field) drew up in the usual manner. It is not clear whether this reduction in depth was done in conformity with a standing order to that effect, issued by Amherst in his capacity as CinC North America on 9 July 1759, or was simply an *ad hoc* expedient to cover the required frontage. Quartermaster Sergeant John Johnson of the 58th Foot certainly thought it was down to the last reason, for he recalled that the files were drawn up 'at least three feet asunder, and forty yards or more in the intervals between the Battalions'. Taken in conjunction with the figures

French infantryman cocking his firelock in the front rank, after Baudouin 1757. Close examination reveals that although a member of the *Gardes Francais* he is still equipped with a *giberne* of the style earlier depicted by St Remy, that is a combination bullet bag and powder flask, rather than a cartridge box.

contained in the Morning State, this would suggest the length of the main firing line must have been very close on 1,100yds (1,000m). If, on the other hand, the battalions were drawn up on the usual frontage of 24ins (0.6m) per file, as laid down in the 1756 *Regulations*, they still ought to have covered around 875yds (800m) in total, unless of course Johnson was also exaggerating as to the intervals between each battalion.

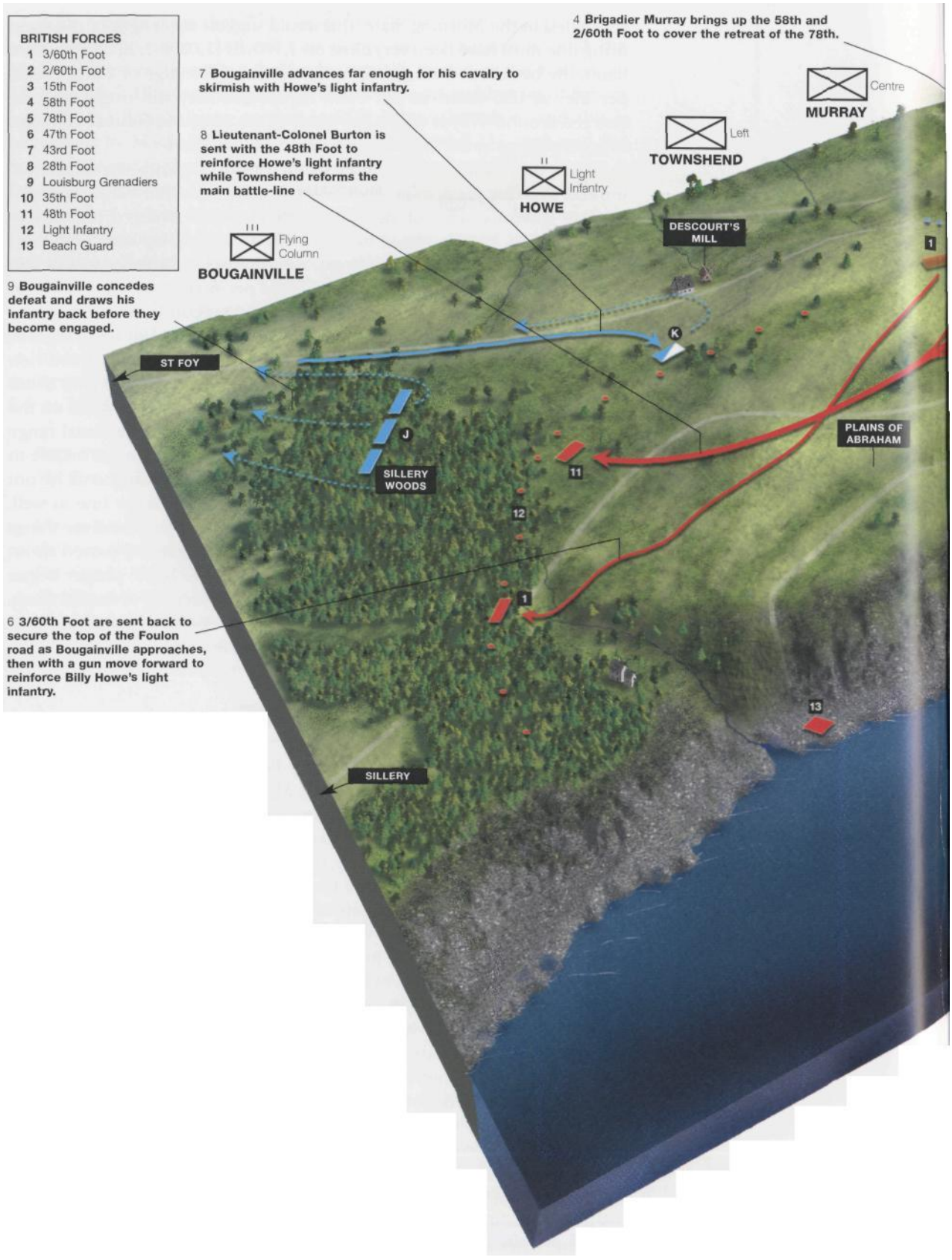
While they awaited Montcalm's arrival with his regulars, the substantial numbers of Canadian militiamen already arrived on the Plains engaged in fairly intensive skirmishing and eventually Wolfe ordered his men to lie down. He, on the other hand, is often accused by later writers of deliberately or at least recklessly exposing himself, but there was in fact nothing sinister in his behaviour; Wolfe had perforce to fight his battle on foot, and this imposed a fair number of important constraints on just how he went about it. Conventionally, a general officer would sit on horseback behind the lines, surrounded by his staff and with a reasonably good view of the proceedings. His aides de camp, also mounted, would ride about swiftly delivering orders and returning with situation reports. Wolfe on the other hand was not only restricted to a walking pace, but his visual range was also severely curtailed, not least by the fact that he was quite unable to see over the heads of his own troops. In order to see anything at all he not only had to be on the spot, but standing right in the front line as well. Unsurprisingly, in the circumstances, he also preferred to go and see things for himself rather than rely upon messengers. 'The general moved about everywhere,' wrote Mackellar, and shortly before the battle proper began he visited Townshend to reassure himself as to the security of the left flank. That done he passed along the line to take up a position on a low rising ground 'from whence he had a view of the whole field'.

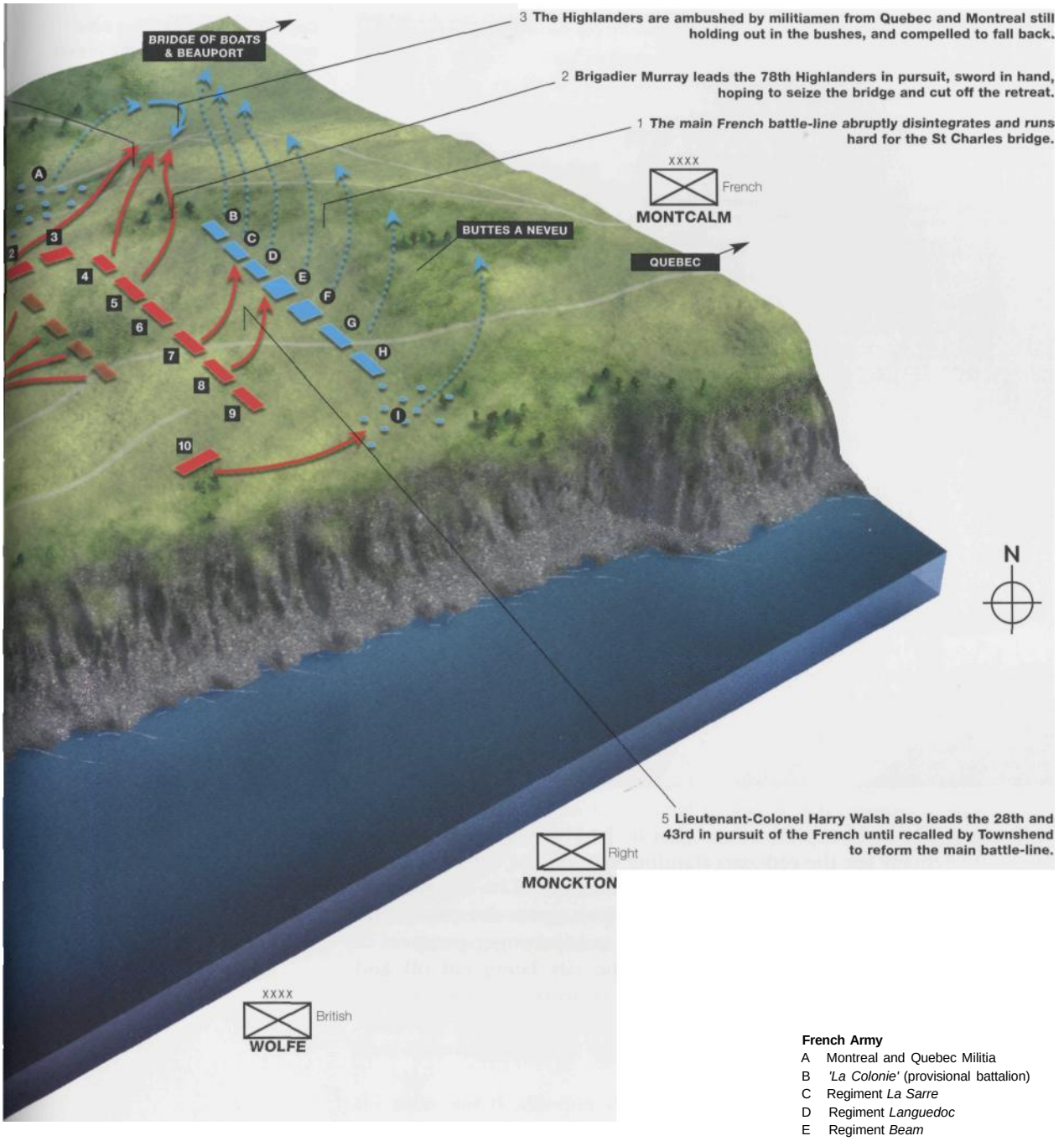
UNE AFFAIRE SERIEUSE

In contrast to the determined efficiency being displayed that morning by Wolfe and his officers, the Marquis de Montcalm was panicking. Despite the earlier movement by most of the British troops to the ships some miles above Quebec, the French commander had remained convinced that Wolfe still intended, ultimately, to fight his way ashore at Beauport. He was certainly encouraged in this happy belief by a noisy demonstration mounted in the basin by the boats of Admiral Knowles' ships on the night of 12 September. But having vainly stood to in expectation of a landing on the Beauport Shore until just after dawn, the Marquis was disagreeably surprised to receive reports of an actual landing at the Foulon.

It is easy to argue with the benefit of hindsight that Montcalm should have delayed attacking Wolfe, at least for a few hours, in order to first effect a proper concentration of his forces. Even if the British threat to the St Foy road, whether actual or imagined, prevented a physical junction with the troops from Cap Rouge, Bougainville could still have been relied upon to provide a significant if not a decisive diversion. Consequently, according to received wisdom, Montcalm and his men simply marched to the sound of the guns and pitched in almost as soon as they arrived, without adequate planning or preparation.

In fairness to Montcalm, however, he saw things rather differently at the time. After spending all night in readiness to repel a British landing


BRITISH FORCES
1 3/60th Foot
2 2/60th Foot
3 15th Foot
4 58th Foot
5 78th Foot
6 47th Foot
7 43rd Foot
8 28th Foot
9 Louisburg Grenadiers
10 35th Foot
11 48th Foot
12 Light Infantry
13 Beach Guard
4 Brigadier Murray brings up the 58th and 2/60th Foot to cover the retreat of the 78th.
7 Bougainville advances far enough for his cavalry to skirmish with Howe's light infantry.
8 Lieutenant-Colonel Burton is sent with the 48th Foot to reinforce Howe's light infantry while Townshend reforms the main battle-line
9 Bougainville concedes defeat and draws his infantry back before they become engaged.
6 3/60th Foot are sent back to secure the top of the Foulon road as Bougainville approaches, then with a gun move forward to reinforce Billy Howe's light infantry.
Centre
MURRAY
Left
TOWNSHEND
Light Infantry
HOWE
Flying Column
BOUGAINVILLE
DESCOURT'S MILL
ST FOY
SILLERY WOODS
PLAINS OF ABRAHAM
SILLERY
J
K
1
11
12
13

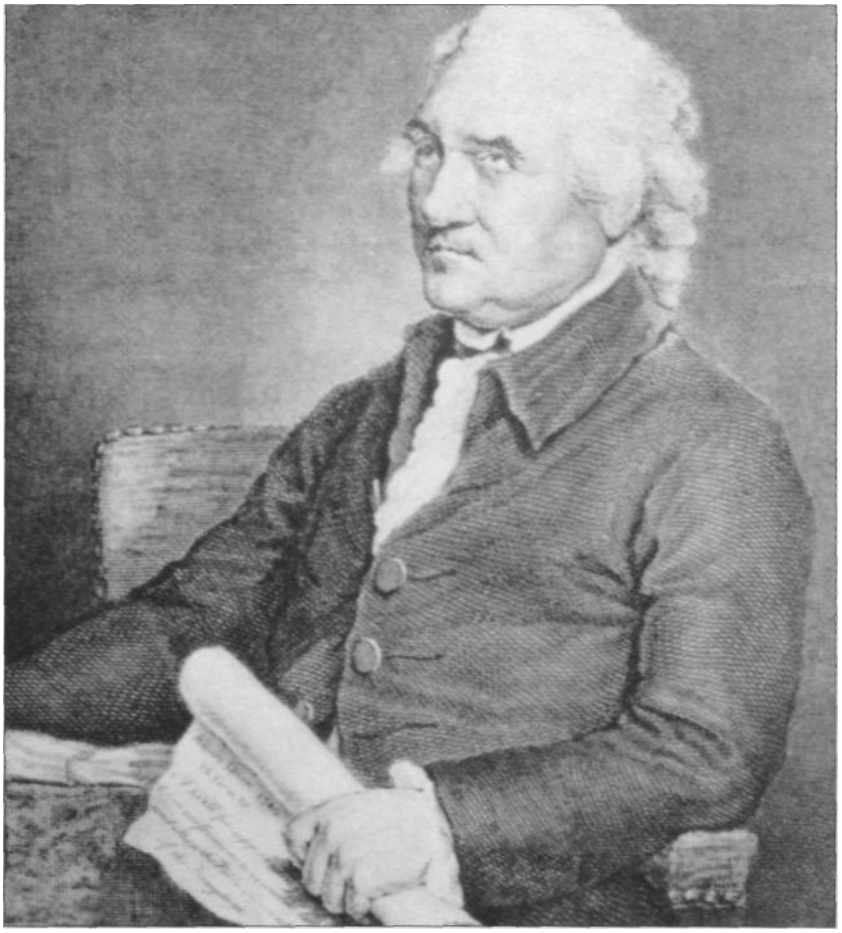


French Army

A Montreal and Quebec Militia
B *'La Colonie'* (provisional battalion)
C Regiment *La Sarre*
D Regiment *Languedoc*
E Regiment *Beam*
F Regiment *Guyenne*
G Regiment *Royal-Roussillon*
H *'La Colonie'* (provisional battalion)
I Montreal and Trois Rivieres Militia
J Bougainville's infantry
K Corps de Cavallerie

THE PLAINS OF ABRAHAM - THE FRENCH DEFEATED

13 September 1759, morning, viewed from the south showing the disintegration and rout of Montcalm's army. Bougainville, having arrived from Cap Rouge, withdraws after some brief skirmishing with Howe's light infantry.



Captain Isaac Barre 32nd Foot served at Quebec with the brevet rank of major as Wolfe's Adjutant General. The apparently odd expression on his face is the result of his having been blinded in the battle. (R. Chartrand)

at Beauport, he suddenly discovered that he had been outmanoeuvred. He could actually see the redcoats standing outside the city and, for all he knew, they were about to storm it at any moment. If he delayed, not only did he run the risk of watching the British storm the city before his very eyes, but also there was perhaps an even stronger prospect of Bougainville and the other forces above the city being cut off and destroyed in detail. Failure to support them or worse still lose the city was unthinkable, and he was heard to mutter 'C'est une affaire serieuse'. He really had no option but to march at once and interpose his men between the redcoats and the city.

This at least he accomplished successfully enough. It was after his troops had deployed in front of the city that things really started to go wrong. For some reason he convinced himself that the British were digging in, and was presumably encouraged in this belief by the late arrival of Williamson's gunners, who were themselves no doubt accompanied by seamen and perhaps other reinforcements as well. It must certainly have appeared clear that the longer he delayed the stronger the British were getting. Conversely he had no knowledge of Bougainville's whereabouts. Indeed there was no certainty at all that he could effect a junction with him, especially if the St Foy road was cut.

An artillery officer named Montbelliard afterwards recalled that: 7 *passed a moment with M. le Marquis de Montcalm, who said to me: "We cannot*

avoid action; the enemy is entrenching, he already has two pieces of cannon. If we give him time to establish himself, we shall never be able to attack him with the sort of troops we have". He added with a sort of shiver, "Is it possible that Bougainville doesn't hear all that noise?" He left me without giving me time to say anything in reply, except that we were very thin on the ground.'

There were by this time seven infantry battalions making up Montcalm's hastily formed line (all the cavalry were with Bougainville). In the scrubland on the right was a skirmish line of colonial militia from Quebec and Montreal. The outermost of the formed battalions, identified simply as 'La Colonie', was a provisional unit formed from *compagnies franches* and next came two regular battalions, *La Sarre* and *Languedoc.* All three, commanded by Colonel de Senezergues of *La Sarre,* were deployed in line formation, presumably three deep as prescribed in 1754. By all accounts, however, the two regular battalions that formed the centre, from the regiments *Béarn* and *Guyenne,* were deployed in column under Montcalm's personal command. The left wing, under Colonel de Fontbrune, was again deployed in line, and also comprised just two battalions, the regular *Royal-Roussillon* and another provisional unit of *compagnies franches.* The militia operating in the scrub on this wing were drawn from Montreal and Trois-Rivieres.

Lacking anything like a proper Morning State, it is difficult to establish with any certainty just how strong Montcalm's army actually was. In addition to the ordinary wastage to be expected in the course of the campaign, his regular battalions had earlier been stripped not only of their grenadier companies (always kept up to strength at the expense of the ordinary fusilier companies), but also of at least two picquets apiece, one serving with Bougainville's force, and another in the city garrison. Most British writers as a matter of course reckoned that they were outnumbered by the French, but Townshend appended a fairly detailed breakdown to his official report which estimated Montcalm's main battle-line to be 1,960 strong, with a further 1,500 militia infesting the bushes:

Right - Col Senezergues	
La Colonie (i.e. Colonial troops)	350
La Sarre	340
Languedoc	320
Column - Gen Montcalm	
Béarn	200
La Guyenne	200
Left - Col Fontbrune	
Royal-Roussillon	230
La Colonie	320
Militia (in the Bushes and along the face of the Bank)	1,500

This estimate does sounds rather low. It is certainly much lower than the figures afterwards provided to Knox by an 'intelligent Frenchman', which were at least 50 per cent higher and in some cases 100 per cent higher. However, it is probably not too far from the truth, especially if,

as was conventional, Townshend omitted officers and NCOs from the totals. At any rate, it is substantially confirmed by Levis and some other officers who estimated there were a total of 3,500 men present. On the other hand, Major Malartic of the regiment *Béarn* reckoned them at only 2,500, although he may not have been including the militia.

There is some uncertainty as well about the number of guns with Montcalm. Montbelliard, who was certainly the best placed to know, rather vaguely mentions having 'detached' two guns from the left to the right and later refers to the guns on the left, which would suggest a minimum of four, although another artillery officer named Foligne says five. Oddly enough, however, Townshend refers to only one and it would be surprising if in the circumstances the French managed to get any others away.

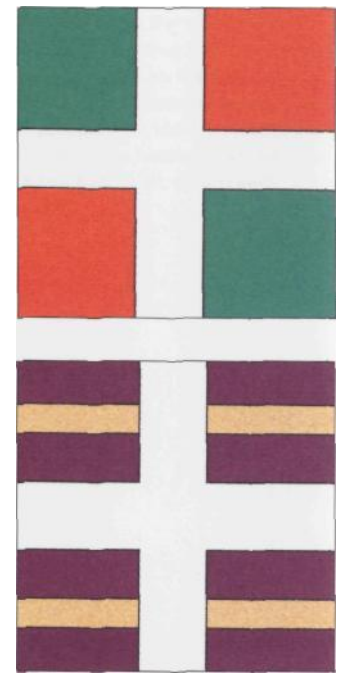
The slight advantage in numbers which Montcalm might have enjoyed in pitting his seven battalions directly against Monckton's and Murray's six was negated by a crucial difference in their tactical doctrine. In contrast to the British obsession with firepower, the French army, at this time, generally took a fairly relaxed attitude to discipline in general and musketry in particular. While British officers strove to control their men's fire, French officers actively encouraged what was called *a feu de billebaude*, which basically amounted to everyone blazing away in their own time. On the whole, moreover, the French favoured rapid offensive movements relying upon the bayonet, and for that a column formation was preferred.

This tactical philosophy may go some way to explaining why Montcalm now decided to fight. Like Wolfe, he did not live to explain himself, but having brought his men up on to the Plains a battle was inevitable. Sooner or later if he did not attack, it is reasonable to suppose that, Wolfe would have attacked him and having no great confidence in the ability of his men to win a static firefight in the open (and if Montbelliard is to be believed no great confidence in them in any event) Montcalm intended to pierce the British centre with a column attack.

Into Battle

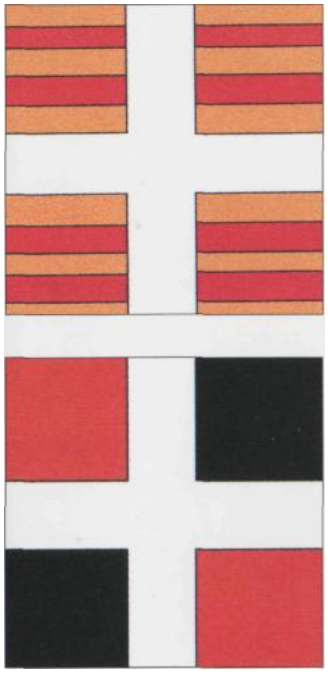
At about 10.00am Montcalm waved his men forward and within a few minutes it was all over. As the French advanced, the battalions on each wing opened an ineffectual fire on the waiting British and by all accounts quickly fell into disorder. The ranks of the five regular units had been padded out with conscripted militiamen and there are suggestions that, having fired, these men promptly went to ground or even ran away. However, these stories may only be an attempt by regular officers to scapegoat them, for the policy not only continued, but was actually stepped up by Levis afterwards. The British battalions, on the other hand, waited until the French came within 40 yards range, when they opened up with a steady fire described by Knox as 'a well-timed, regular and heavy discharge of our small arms'.

In the centre, however, the 43rd and 47th Foot momentarily held their fire, for in 1755 Wolfe had devised a patent method for demolishing French column attacks. In his instructions to his old regiment, the 20th Foot, issued on 15 December that year, he had written: *'If the center of the battalion is attacked by a column, the wings must be extremely careful to fire obliquely. That part of the battalion against which the column marches, must reserve their fire, and if they have time, to put two or three bullets in their pieces, it must be done. When*



TOP The 2nd Battalion of the Regiment *Guyenne,* whose colour is shown here, had white coats, lined white, with horizontal pockets, red collar, cuffs and waistcoats. At one stage they were encamped on the Plains of Abraham above the Foulon, but were recalled to Beauport shortly before Wolfe landed. A picquet from the regiment was detached to Fort Niagara, a second at Isle aux Noix, and a third to the Quebec garrison. The grenadier company was with Bougainville's force.

BOTTOM The Regiment *Berry* had white coats, fined white with double vertical pockets, red collar and cuffs and a red double-breasted waistcoat. Both the 2nd and 3rd Battalions fought in Canada - having been hastily redirected there instead of going to India, which must have occasioned a few jokes at their expense - and although they missed the battle on the Plains on 13 September, they took part in the battle of St Foy on 28 April 1760.



TOP The 2nd Battalion of the Regiment *Beam* had white coats, lined white with double vertical pockets, red collar, cuffs and waistcoats. A picquet from the regiment was detached to Fort Niagara and another to the Quebec garrison. The grenadier company was with Bougainville's force.

BOTTOM The 2nd Battalion of the Regiment *La Sarre* had white coats, lined white with horizontal pockets, blue collar and cuffs and red waistcoats. As with *Béarn,* a picquet from the regiment was detached to Fort Niagara and another to the Quebec garrison. The grenadier company was with Bougainville's force.

the column is within about twenty yards they must fire with a good aim, which will necessarily stop them a little. This body may then open from the center, and retire by files towards the wings of the regiment, while the neighbouring platoons wheel to the right and left, and either fire, if they are loaded, or close up and charge with their bayonets.'

Wolfe had indeed ordered his men to load with two balls that morning and now Knox of the 43rd Foot described how both his own regiment and the neighbouring 47th Foot, unaffected by the musketry **on** either side, gave the oncoming **columns** *'with great calmness, as remarkable a close and heavy discharge, as I ever J saw ... and, indeed well might the French Officers say, that they never opposed such a shock as they received from the center of our line, for that they believed every ball took place.* 'The 43rd and 47th Foot mustered a total of 452 men in the firing line that morning. If an optimistic 20 per cent of shots went home at such close range, the effect will indeed have been devastating and even a 10 per cent hit-rate will have sufficed to drop the leading rank of both columns. Either way, as the smoke thinned out all the way along the line it revealed the French army broken and in flight.

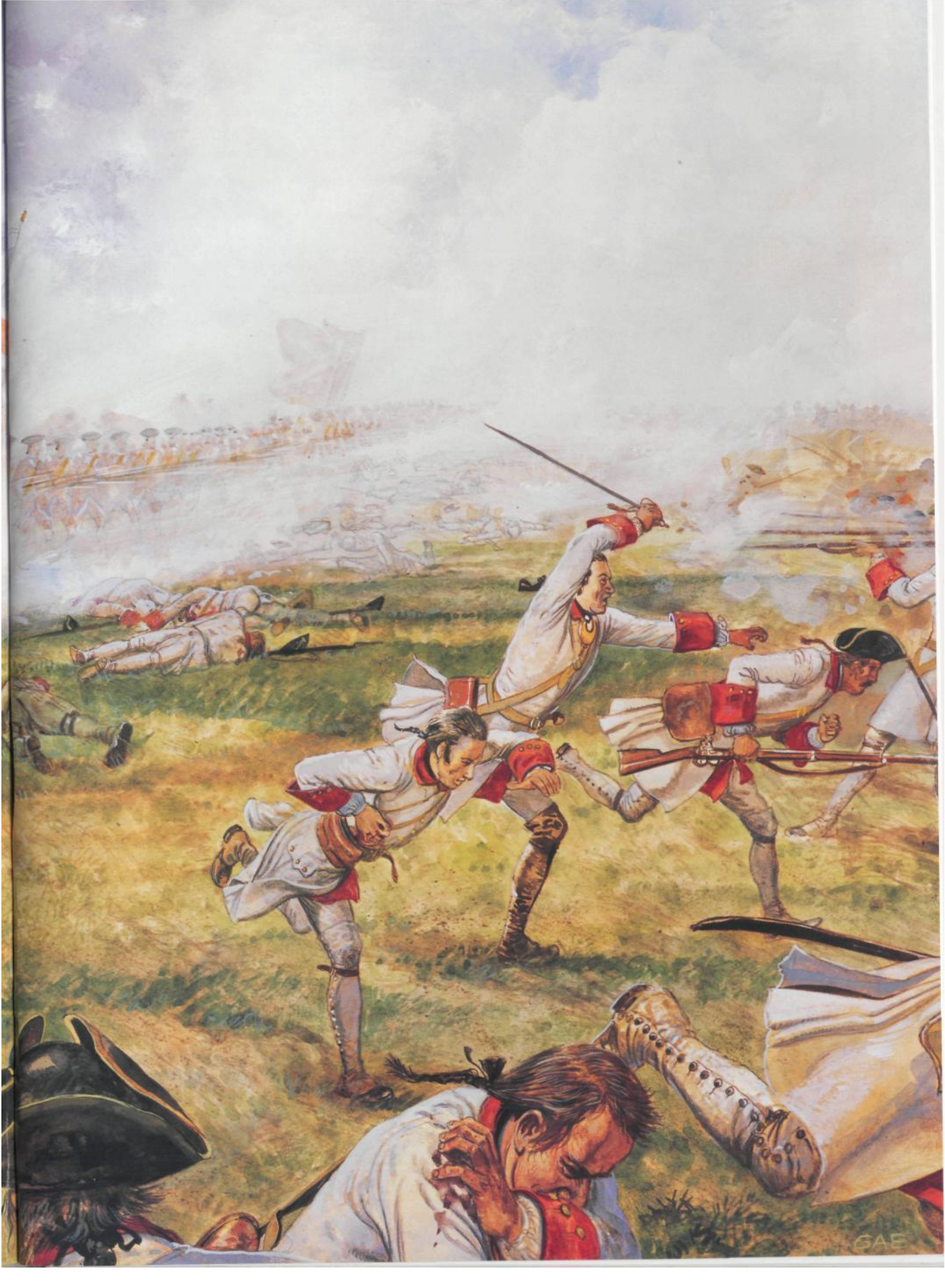
RIGHT A rather more convincing depiction than that on p.76 of the dying Montcalm being led back into Quebec at the close of the battle. (Print after Louis Bombled, courtesy of R. Chartrand)

An astonishingly inaccurate depiction of the death of Montcalm. Not only does he lie on a mattress in the open field rather than in the Ursuline Convent, but the uniforms are of a much later date and most strangely of all the noble savages on the right look to have strayed from classical Arcadia rather than Acadia.

OPPOSITE The Chevalier de Levis rallies his troops for one last assault in the battle of St Foy on 28 April 1760. It was to be the last real French victory of the war, but without enough ammunition to take Quebec it was ultimately worthless. (Print after Louis Bombled, courtesy of R. Chartrand)

Wolfe unfortunately did not live to see his victory. As Mackellar noted, just before the French advanced the General took post on a low rising ground on the right of the line. A few minutes earlier he had ordered a volunteer named James Henderson, serving with the Louisburg Grenadiers, to secure it with a few men and 'Maintain it to the Last Extremely'. Now, as the battle began, Wolfe stood beside Henderson, but as the volunteer rather illiterately recounted, the General; *'Was Scarce A Moment With me till he Receved his Fatal Wound ... When the Genrl Receved the Shot I Caut Hold of him And Carried him of the Feild, he Walked About one Hundred yards And then Beged I Would Let Sit Down, Which I Did. Then I Opened his Breast, And found his Shirt full of Blood At Which he smiled And When he Seen the Distress I was In, My Dear, Said he, Dont Grive for me, I Shall Be Happy In a Few Minutes, take Care of your Self As I see your Wounded. But Tell me O tell me How Goes the Battle their, Just then Came some Officers Who told him that the French had given Ground & Our troops Was pursuing Them to the Walls of the town, he Was then Lying in my Arms Just Expirin That Great Man Whos Sole Ambition Was his Country Glory Raised himself up on this News And Smiled in my Face. Now, Said he I Die Contented, from that Instant the smile never Left his Face till he Deided.'*

Nevertheless the British victory was by no means as complete as it might have been. Another contemporary version of Wolfe's final moments, recounted by Knox, tells how; '*... being asked if he would have a Surgeon ? He replied, "it is needless; it is all over with me. " One of them then cried*



THE BATTLE ON THE PLAINS (pages 78-79)

The best account of the climactic moment of the battle is undoubtedly that penned in Captain John Knox's journal (1): 'About ten o'clock the enemy began to advance briskly in three columns, with loud shouts and recovered arms, two of them inclining to the left of our army, and the third towards our right, firing obliquely at the two extremities of our line, from the distance of one hundred and thirty, until they came within forty yards; which our troops withstood with the greatest intrepidity and firmness, still reserving their fire and paying the strictest obedience to their officers: this uncommon steadiness, together with the havoc which the grape-shot from our field-pieces made amongst them, threw them into some disorder, and was most critically maintained by a well-timed, regular and heavy discharge of our small arms, such as they could no longer oppose.

'When the general formed the line of battle, he ordered the regiments to load with an additional ball. The forty-third and forty-seventh regiments (2), in the center, being little affected by the oblique fire of the enemy, gave them with great calmness, as remarkable a close and heavy discharge as I ever saw performed at a private field of exercise, insomuch that better troops than we encountered could not possibly withstand it: and, indeed, well might the French officers (3) say that they never opposed such a shock as they received from the center of our line, for that they believed every ball took place, and such regularity and discipline they had not experienced before; our troops in general, and particularly the central corps, having levelled and fired - comme un coup de canon.

'Hereupon they gave way, and fled with great precipitation (4), so that, by the time the cloud of smoke was vanished, our men were again loaded, and profiting by the advantage we had over them, pursued them almost to the gates of the town...'

Back in July Knox had recorded how after the 43rd were reviewed by Wolfe 'a serjeant from another regiment was ordered into the front to shew our men a new method of pushing bayonets; which, as it afforded a good deal of mirth in the field, I shall here describe, with the greatest regard to truth: The left hand under the swell below the lowermost rammer-pipe, and the right hand a-cross the brass at the extremity of the butt [actually the brass cartouche on the neck of the stock]. Thus was the firelock secured, which he poked out before him in like-manner as an indolent hay-maker tirns hay with a forked pole' (5). Notwithstanding the mirth this provoked, the 43rd were ordered to imitate it, and levelling their bayonets waist-high was to prove highly effective. (Gerry Embleton)

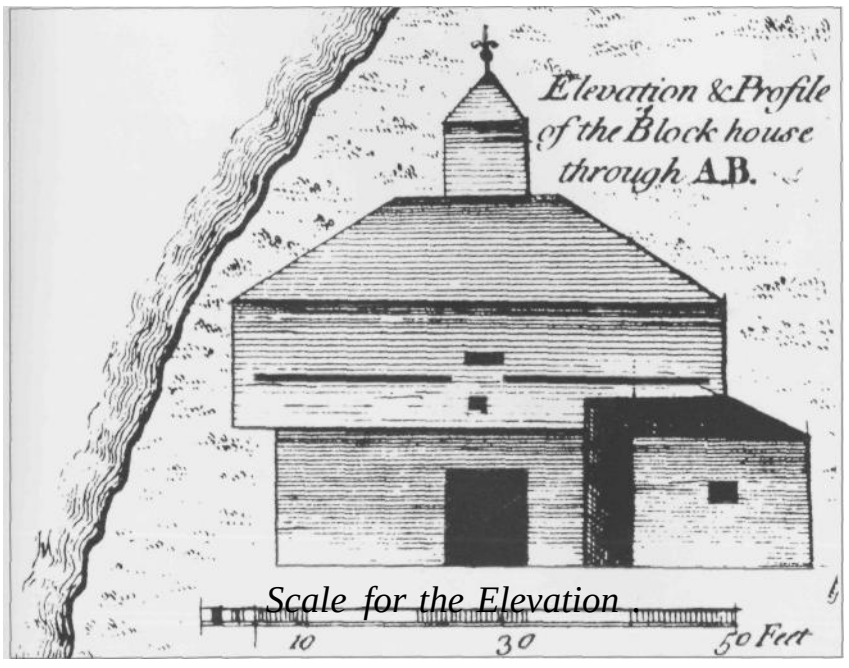
out, "they run, see how they run. " "Who runs?" demanded our hero, with great earnestness, like a person roused from sleep. The Officer answered, "The enemy, Sir; Egad they give way every-where. " Thereupon the General rejoined, "Go one of you, my lads, to Colonel Burton-; tell him to march Webb's regiment with all speed down to Charles's River, to cut off the retreat of the fugitives from the bridge. " Then turning on his side, he added, "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace. " And thus expired.'

While Wolfe's death at the very moment of victory was undoubtedly a particularly dramatic climax to his career, there is no denying that it also came at an extremely inconvenient time, since Monckton (standing between the 43rd and 47th Foot) was shot through the lungs at about the same time, and Carleton, Barre, Spital and Smyth were all wounded as well in the brief exchange. With Monckton down, command therefore devolved upon Townshend, but with so many other staff officers wounded it took some time for the Brigadier to learn of the fact. In the meantime, it fell to Lieutenant-Colonel Hunt Walsh of Webb's 28th Foot to carry out his general's last order and initiate a fairly disorderly pursuit of the fleeing French.

As Malcolm Fraser of the 78th Highlanders recalled, Brigadier Murray put himself at the head of his countrymen (who although the strongest regiment on the field were only commanded by a captain) and; '... *when the fire slackening, and the smoke of the powder vanishing, we observed the main body of the Enemy retreating in great confusion towards the Town, and the rest towards the River St. Charles. Our Regiment were then ordered by Brigadier General Murray to draw their swords and pursue them, which I dare say increased their pannic but saved many of their lives, whereas if the artillery had been allowed to play, and the army advanced regularly there would have been many more of the enemy killed and wounded, as we never came up with the main body.'*

Whether, in all the confusion, Ralph Burton ever received Wolfe's last message is not known, but as Malcolm Fraser recounted, Brigadier

Brigadier-General Murray as depicted sometime in the 1790s and revealing a little of the sour determination which sustained him during the winter siege of Quebec that followed Townshend's departure. (R. Chartrand)

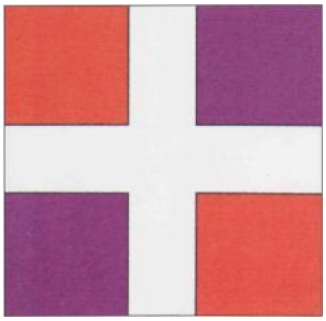


A typical blockhouse of a style used by both sides to secure key points in the North American wilderness. Those erected by Murray's men to defend the head of the Foulon road after the battle must have looked very similar.

Murray tried, on his own initiative, to seize the bridge over the St Charles. Unfortunately, the attempt foundered when he and the Highlanders came under heavy fire, first from the floating batteries covering the bridge, and then from a large body of Canadian Militia still hanging on in the scrub outside the St John's Gate. In fact, as a direct result of this abortive attempt to cut off the French retreat, the 78th Highlanders afterwards returned more casualties than any other British unit - 18 killed and 148 wounded before being extricated. By that time, a minor crisis was developing behind them. Finding at last that he was now in command, Townshend *'immediately repaired to ye center, & finding that ye pursuit had put part of ye troops in great disorder I formed them as soon as possible. Scarce was this effected when Monsr. de Boncainville wth about 2000 men, ye corps from Cap rouge & that neighbourhood, appeared in our rear.'*

Just before the main battle began, Wolfe had taken the precaution of ordering the 3/60th Foot back to cover the head of the Foulon road and of course the light infantry formed a broad cordon across the army's rear, now Townshend marched the rest of the army back there to confront Bougainville, who took the hint and drew off again without engaging. In the meantime, with the St Charles bridge still in their hands, the rest of the French were able to escape.

'The Death of Wolfe', Edward Penny's painting is the most accurate depiction of Wolfe's last moments. He is supported by Volunteer Henderson and attended by a surgeon's mate named Hewit. The identity of the standing grenadier is unknown, but the officer bringing news of victory is Lieutenant Henry Browne, also of the Louisburg Grenadiers. (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)



The 2nd Battalion of the Regiment *Languedoc* had white coats, lined white with horizontal pockets, blue collar and cuffs and blue waistcoats. A picquet from the regiment was detached to the Quebec garrison. The grenadier company was with Bougainville's force.

Nevertheless, the French casualties were quite heavy enough in all conscience. An officer named La Pause reckoned that the regulars lost about 150 killed on the spot and another 370 (presumably wounded for the most part) captured, but Vaudreuil rather more realistically estimated them at about 600 men and 44 officers in total. As in the British Army, a significant number of senior officers went down. The most prominent amongst them was Montcalm himself, badly wounded by a canister round during the retreat and dead by the following morning, and both his brigadiers, Senezergues and Fontbrune, were also killed.

On the British side Townshend reported a remarkably similar loss of 658 of all ranks, of whom 58 were killed, although Knox adds Wolfe and two gunners to make 61 dead, and 5 missing. While the close similarity in the number of casualties may appear surprising, it appears that most of the British losses were incurred when Murray was ambushed during the pursuit, while the French lost most heavily during the main firefight and thereafter ran away too quickly to incur many casualties!

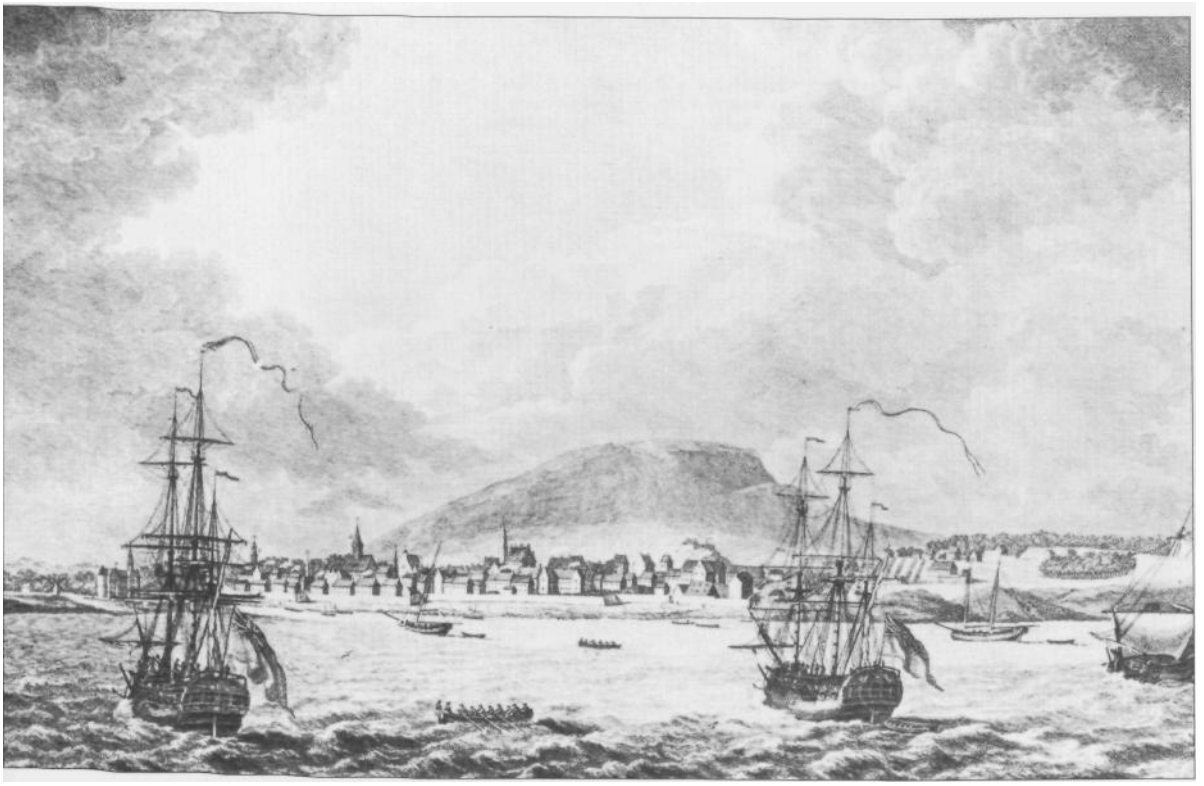
AFTERMATH

The rest of the story is quickly told. Despite Bougainville's desperate efforts to throw supplies and reinforcements into the city, Quebec surrendered to Townshend on 18 September, and almost immediately afterwards the prospect of ice closing the mouth of the St Lawrence forced the Royal Navy to withdraw from the river. With the ships went Wolfe's corpse, the wounded Monckton and, with rather less excuse, Townshend as well. Quebec was entrusted to a perilously weak garrison under Murray, while further upstream the Chevalier de Levis rallied the remnants of Montcalm's beaten army for one last gallant offensive to retake the city.

Only too aware that if Quebec remained in British hands the war was lost, Levis advanced in the spring before the snow had melted, gambling on retaking the city while Amherst's forces still lay in winter quarters. By scraping together every man he could lay his hands on, he marched north with no fewer than 6,910 effectives. What is more nearly 4,000 of them were regulars - 3,889 men in the eight battalions of *troupes de term* and two provisional battalions formed from *compagnies /ranches.*

His arrival was anticipated, but Murray's initial hopes of preventing him landing at Cap Rouge were frustrated by bad weather. All he could do was maintain a chain of outposts to give him some early warning and keep his sickly army under cover in Quebec itself. Then on the night of 26 April 1760 Levis' arrival was announced to Murray in a dramatic but quite unexpected manner. Landing at Pointe aux Trembles Levis had some hopes of cutting off the British advanced posts at Lorette and St Foy before Murray knew what was happening. However he reckoned without an artilleryman falling overboard from one of the bateaux and then clinging on to an ice-floe long enough to be rescued off Quebec. According to Knox he was pretty far gone and it took two hours to warm him up sufficiently to get any sense out of him, but warned just in time Murray sallied out at daybreak next morning with half the garrison and succeeded in withdrawing his outposts in the very face of the French advance.

Perhaps taken aback by this vigorous response, Levis, who has probably been rather overrated, proceeded so cautiously that Murray resolved to repeat the experiment next day. Like Montcalm before him Murray regarded the defences of Quebec as untenable against a regular siege, especially since his garrison was very sickly - some 700 men had died since the departure of the fleet and hundreds more were unfit for duty. He was particularly keen to secure the high ground of the Buttes a Neveu, which in some measure dominated the walls. He had in fact seriously contemplated forming an entrenched camp there, from which to defend the city, until the weather and solidly frozen ground persuaded him otherwise.



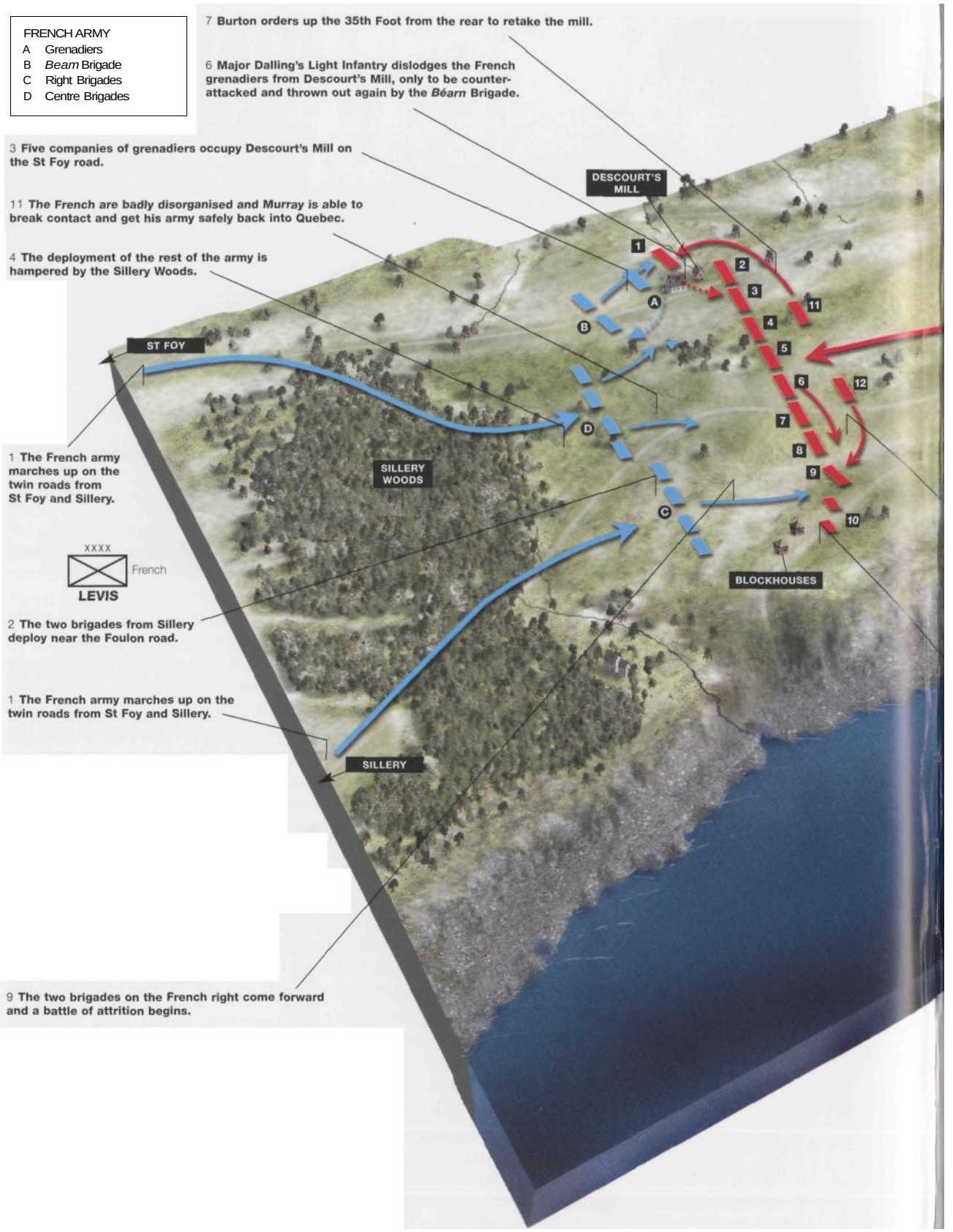
Montreal, seen here in a print dating from after the British capture of the town, was the centre of New France. Had Amherst pushed northwards to it with any vigour he could have quite literally split the colony in two. As it was, by the time he did arrive the war was all but over and it only remained to accept the surrender of the Chevalier de Levis and the last remnants of the French army.

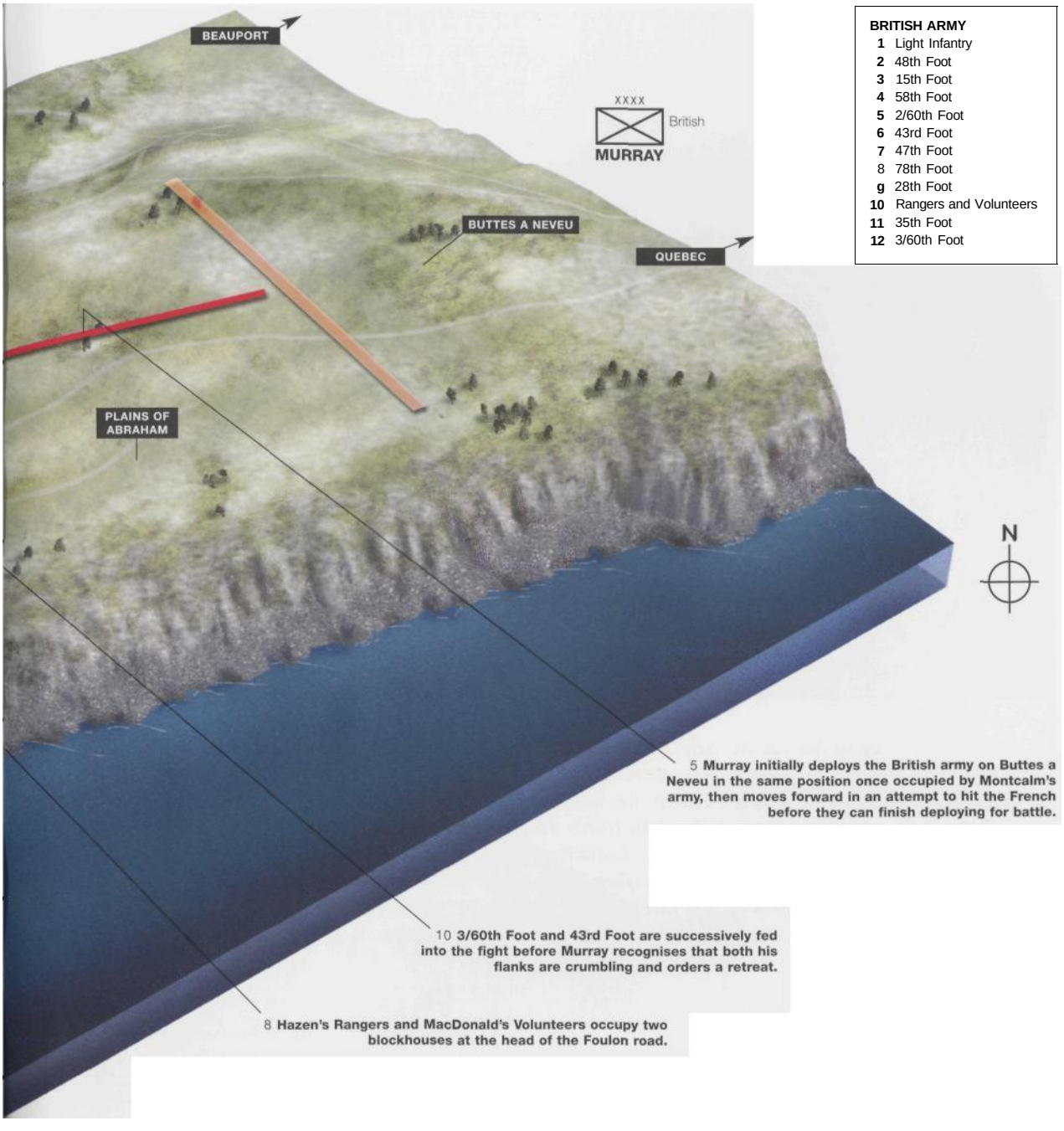
By the last days of April conditions were scarcely any better, for while the snow was melting fast the ground was now waterlogged, but with the crisis upon him, Murray resolved to march out with some 3,866 effectives drawn from the garrison and the hospitals. They carried spades and pickaxes with which to entrench themselves and no fewer than 20 light guns and two howitzers. To capture Quebec, Levis first needed to take the Buttes and Murray intended that he should pay a heavy price for them.

He very properly marched out as soon as he was able, at 6.30am on the morning of 28 April, and in so doing surprised Levis, who was still advancing very cautiously. So cautiously in fact that, although clearly intent on securing the Buttes, he had only just begun to deploy his forces. Most of them were still marching up the St Foy road. Only his advance guard was actually on the field. On what was intended to be his right, two brigades were in place beside a couple of blockhouses built by Murray at the head of the Foulon road. On his left, five grenadier companies were occupying a windmill at the side of the St Foy road. However, the line between the two was only lightly held and Levis' main body was still debouching from the Sillery Woods, nearly a mile further back.

Understandably reluctant to entrench his already sickly army on the sodden Buttes, Murray took the very soldier-like decision to seize the 'Luckey Minute' and attack. By catching Levis off-balance not only would he decisively deny him the high ground, but might in the process gain a victory even more decisive than Wolfe's had been and so render the Canadian army its quietus.

Throwing down their entrenching tools and moving forward, his main fighting line was composed of two brigades. On the right astride the St Foy road was the 48th Foot and to their left the 15th, 58th and 2/60th Foot


FRENCH ARMY
A Grenadiers
B *Beam* Brigade
C Right Brigades
D Centre Brigades
7 Burton orders up the 35th Foot from the rear to retake the mill.
6 Major Dalling's Light Infantry dislodges the French grenadiers from Descourt's Mill, only to be counter-attacked and thrown out again by the *Béarn* Brigade.
3 Five companies of grenadiers occupy Descourt's Mill on the St Foy road.
11 The French are badly disorganised and Murray is able to break contact and get his army safely back into Quebec.
4 The deployment of the rest of the army is hampered by the Sillery Woods.
DESCOURT'S MILL
ST FOY
SILLERY WOODS
BLOCKHOUSES
SILLERY
1 The French army marches up on the twin roads from St Foy and Sillery.
XXXX
French
LEVIS
2 The two brigades from Sillery deploy near the Foulon road.
1 The French army marches up on the twin roads from St Foy and Sillery.
9 The two brigades on the French right come forward and a battle of attrition begins.



BRITISH ARMY

1 Light Infantry
2 48th Foot
3 15th Foot
4 58th Foot
5 2/60th Foot
6 43rd Foot
7 47th Foot
8 78th Foot
g 28th Foot
10 Rangers and Volunteers
11 35th Foot
12 3/60th Foot

THE BATTLE OF ST FOY

28 April 1760, viewed from the south showing the advance of the French army under the Chevalier de Levis and General Murray's rapid response as he attempts to engage the French before they have fully deployed.

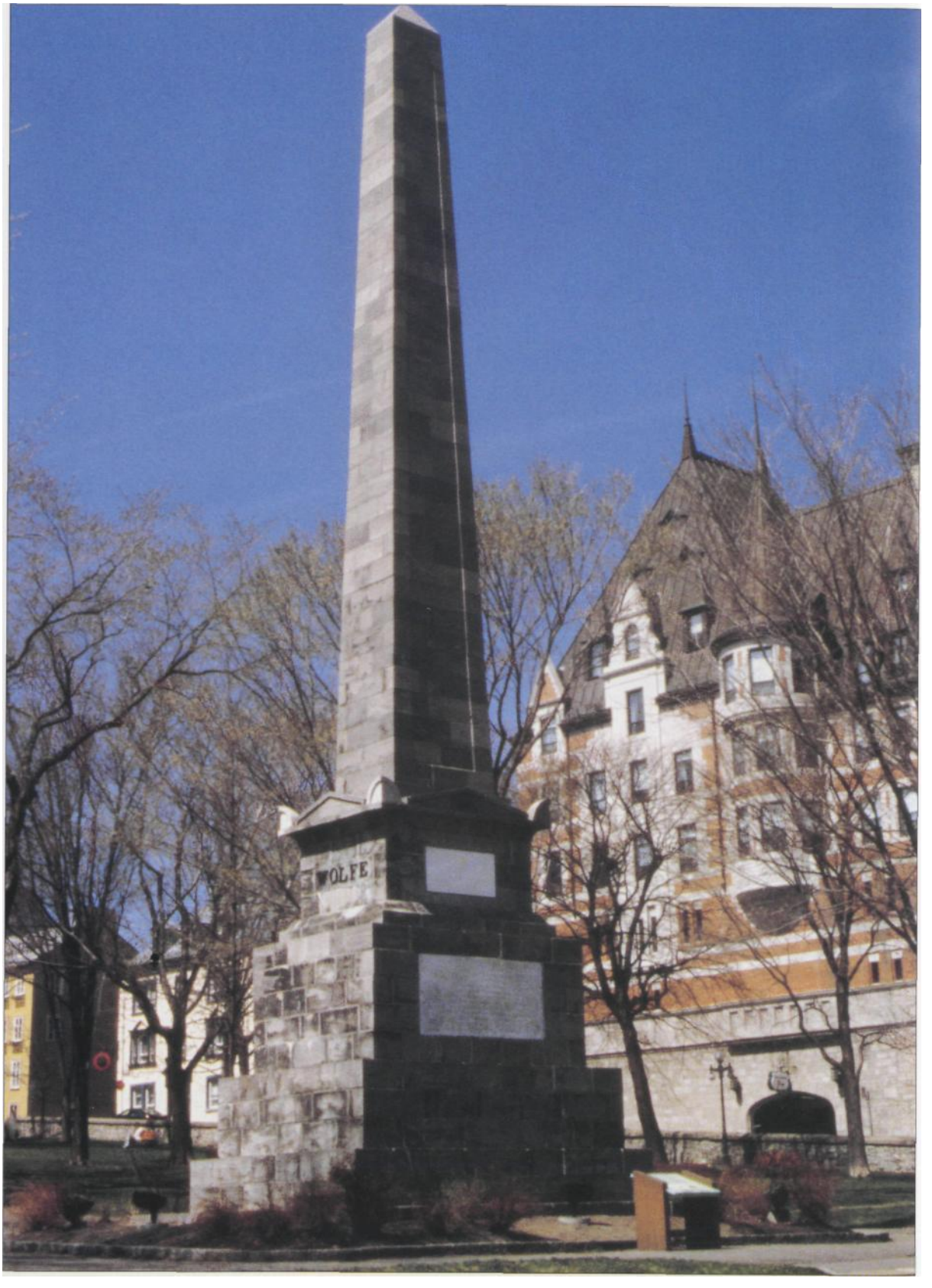
Wolfe's birthplace; the old vicarage at Westerham.

forming one brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Burton. Next came the 43rd, 47th, 78th and 28th Foot constituting the other brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Simon Fraser. Two more battalions, the 35th Foot and 3/60th Foot stood in reserve behind Burton's and Fraser's brigades respectively. Mindful of the way in which the Canadian militia had lapped around the flanks of Wolfe's army in the earlier battle, most of Murray's light infantry, under Major Dalling, was posted wide of his right flank, and the rangers and some more light infantry under Moses Hazen and Captain Donald MacDonald of the 78th covered his left. In order to cover this broad front, however, Murray had not only to draw them up two deep, but also leave wide intervals between each battalion. This meant that his battle-line was perilously thin, but initially the guns, probably 6-pdrs, more than compensated for this. These, commanded by Major John Godwin, who 14 years earlier had commanded Cumberland's guns at Culloden, were 'placed occasionally in front, in the intervals, or on the flanks, as circumstances might require'.

At first events unfolded favourably. Dismayed by the unexpected attack Levis pulled his whole army back to the eastern fringe of the Sillery Woods and Dalling's light infantry dislodged the grenadiers from the windmill. At that point however the *Beam* Brigade, led by Lieutenant-Colonel d'Alquier, mounted a fierce counter-attack and succeeded in tumbling Dalling's men back in turn. Worse still, as they fell back, the disordered light infantry masked the fire of Murray's right. The situation was stabilised by bringing forward the 35th Foot, whose grenadiers retook the windmill.

RIGHT The conqueror of Quebec. Wolfe's statue, based on the famous Hervey Smyth sketch, in his birthplace at Westerham. As befits a military hero he carries a sword in his hand although he never actually appears to have done so. At Louisburg in 1758 he went ashore armed with nothing more lethal than a cane, and it was probably the same one which was shot out of his hand at Montmorency. Hervey Smyth depicted him with a firelock slung on his back, and a bayonet, but no sword.


USE ANTIQUES 01959 561
WESTERHAM HOUSE ANTIQUES


WOLFE

The George *and Dragon* at Westerham. Traditionally Wolfe is said to have slept here on a last, brief visit to the village before embarking for Canada.

Levis now decided to attack on his right. At the outset Hazen and his Rangers had occupied the blockhouses, but the pressure gradually became too great - only 100 rangers had been left behind when the fleet departed. MacDonald was killed and Hazen wounded. Murray was soon forced to call up his reserve battalion, the 3/60th, and then as the situation continued to deteriorate switched the 43rd Foot across from the centre, but it was all in vain. Levis ignored his centre and launched heavy column attacks on both wings. Murray's artillery superiority initially compensated for the fact that he was outnumbered by nearly two to one, but as the battle went on his gunners experienced more and more trouble bringing ammunition up through the mud and slush. In places some of his men were fighting 'almost knee deep' in the muck and the ammunition carts became 'bogged in deep pits of snow'.

Realising the tide was turning, Murray gave orders to break off the action and retire into Quebec. All but two of his guns had to be spiked and abandoned, and he recorded 292 killed, 837 wounded and 53 prisoners, although these dismal totals also appear to include the few casualties lost during the subsequent siege. Murray has been widely criticised for fighting. Had the ground been firmer, however, Murray might indeed have gained the victory he sought despite the odds. Unlike Montcalm he at least got his army away in good order, which was probably no mean feat. Murray himself was the last man to enter the gates.

Levis for his part admitted to losing 193 killed and 640 wounded, which in the circumstances was certainly too high a price to pay for failing

OPPOSITE Monument to Montcalm and Wolfe in Quebec (R. Chartrand)

to destroy the British army. Having found them in the open his objective should, as he readily admitted, have been to drive the British away from the city as Montcalm's men had been six months earlier. While there is no doubting either his gallantry or his good intentions, his generalship was considerably inferior to that of the unjustly maligned Murray. Having carelessly exposed his army to defeat in detail at the outset, his subsequent attacks were poorly co-ordinated and in fact largely launched on the individual initiative of the various brigade commanders. Although he did finally order one of his brigades to try to get between the British and the city, it seems never to have even come into action.

Ironically, Murray's battle was probably unnecessary for Levis had only one 24-pdr and was desperately short of ammunition for all his big guns. At least he had an intimate knowledge of the weak spots in the city's defences. When he unmasked his batteries on 11 May they concentrated on the Glaciere Bastion, and sure enough it began crumbling within a matter of hours. Since taking the city, however, the British had opened new embrasures in the walls to enable their gunners to direct a heavy counter-battery fire on the French. It proved depressingly effective and next day Levis was forced to restrict his guns to firing a mere 20 rounds a day.

All now depended on whether the Royal Navy or French reinforcements would be the first through the ice and into the river. A single British ship, HMS *Lowestoft,* had in fact appeared on 9 May, but Levis doggedly clung on to hope until the evening of 15 May when two more British warships, the *Vanguard* and the *Diana,* arrived. The following day they attacked and destroyed the French frigates supporting Levis' army and he was left with no alternative but to retreat. Thereafter the fall of New France was just a matter of time. On the night of 8 September the last remnants of the *troupes de terre* burned their colours and next day laid down their arms in Montreal's Place d'Armes. Wolfe's legacy to the British Empire was secure.

THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY

Of the ground fought over in 1759, little remains recognisable today. The Beauport Shore is largely built up, although the Montmorency Falls remain impressive. The battlefield on the Plains has also largely been built over although a small part of it remains as an ornamental public park. A monument recalls that Wolfe fell there victorious, although militant French Canadians are apparently in the habit of defacing the word 'victorious'.

The French appear to have initially formed just below the summit of what is now called Perault's Hill, west of the line of Clair Fontaine Street. The British for their part were to the west of the line of the present Salaberry Street, standing at right angles across the Grande Allee and St John Street. The main action apparently took place in the region of De Salaberry and Cartier streets

Parts of the original fortifications can still be found, but the only place where any sense of the 1759 battle can still be felt is the cliff above the Foulon. Wolfe's landing place has long since disappeared under a modern ocean terminal, and the crucial Foulon road, along which the bulk of his army marched to the Plains of Abraham, has been graded and widened to accommodate motor vehicles. However, the actual cliff face scaled by Billy Howe and his light infantry on that memorable morning remains largely as it was in 1759 and has drawn generations of historians, who are probably far too old for such nonsense, to scramble up themselves.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brumwell, Stephen, *Redcoats; The British Soldier and the War in the Americas 1755-1763* (Cambridge, 2002)
Chartrand, Rene, *The French Soldier in Colonial America* (Ottawa, 1984)
Chartrand, Rene, *Quebec 1759* (Osprey, Order of Battle 3, 1999)
Houlding, J.A., *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army 1715-1795* (Oxford, 1981)
Houlding, J.A., *French Arms Drill of the 18th Century* (Ontario, 1988)
Katcher, Philip, *Armies of the American Wars 1755-1815* (London, 1975)
Knox, John, ed, Doughty, *An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America* (Champlain Soc, 1914-1916)
Reid, Stuart, *Wolfe; the career of General James Wolfe* (Staplehurst, 2000)
Stacey, C.R, *Quebec 1759; The Siege and the Battle* (London, 1973)
Willson, Beckles, *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe* (London, 1909)
Wolfe, James, *General Wolfe's INSTRUCTIONS to Young Officers* (London, 1780)

Public Records Office
CO5/51 - Correspondence etc. relating to operations in North America (an absolutely invaluable source including Wolfe's and Townshend's dispatches and returns)
WO34 - Amherst Papers

INDEX

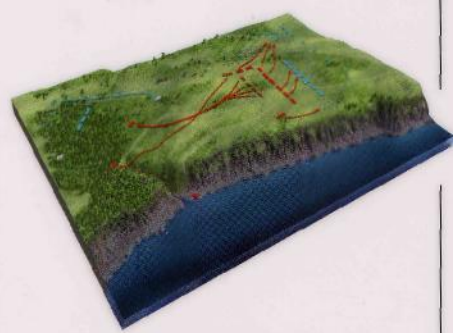
Campaign • 121

Accounts of history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics and battle experiences of the opposing forces throughout the crucial stages of each campaign.

Quebec 1759

The battle that won Canada

Full colour battlescenes



3-dimensional 'bird's-eye view' maps

Illustrations

Maps

"What a scene!" wrote Horace Walpole. "An army in the night dragging itself up a precipice by stumps of trees to assault a town and attack an enemy strongly entrenched and double in numbers!" In one short sharp exchange of fire, Major-General James Wolfe's men tumbled the Marquis de Montcalm's French army into bloody ruin. Sir John Fortescue famously described it as the "most perfect volley ever fired on a battlefield".

In this book Stuart Reid details how one of the British Army's consummate professionals literally beat the King's enemies before breakfast and in so doing decided the fate of a continent.

OSPREY
PUBLISHING

www.ospreypublishing.com

ISBN 1-85532-605-1

9 781855 326057