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# British Light Infantryman of the Seven Years' War

North America 1757–63



by Ian M McCulloch & Tim J Todish • Illustrated by Steve Noon

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Cover Illustration: Major George Scott, 40th Foot, 1758-59. Reproduced for the first time here in color, this portrait by John Singleton Copley gives us a very valuable look at some of the uniform and equipment modifications made by Light Infantry soldiers in North America. (Private collection)

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# BRITISH LIGHT INFANTRYMAN OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR, 1757-63

## INTRODUCTION

### 'A Service Truly Critical'

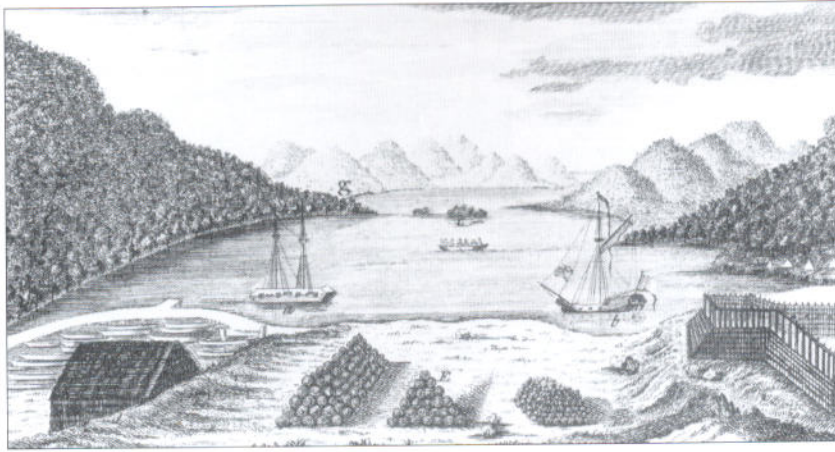
The Seven Years' War (1755-1763) was the world's first global war, a conflict spanning the continents of North America, Europe and Asia. Fought principally between Britain, France and their respective allies, it is known simply as the French and Indian war in most American history books and is generally acknowledged to have started at a remote spot on the Pennsylvanian frontier in 1754. Anglo-French rivalries in the teeming forests and rich river plains of the disputed Ohio River valley led to an exchange of shots between Virginian Provincials led by a young officer named George Washington and a force of French soldiers and their Indian allies. The result was a diplomatic incident that escalated into a crisis between Britain and France. Both countries dispatched expeditionary forces of Regular troops to North America in anticipation of hostilities.

Before the war was even officially declared in April 1755, Major General Edward Braddock had advanced with 2,200 British Regulars and American Provincials against Fort Duquesne, a wooden French fort on the forks of the Ohio River and site of the present-day city of Pittsburgh in western Pennsylvania. One of three British expeditions against French frontier posts, Braddock's force was surprised seven miles short of its objective by a vastly inferior force of Indians and French colonial soldiers. As Braddock's men tried to stand and fight European-style against an elusive foe using Indian tactics of envelopment and concealment, they were slaughtered and their general killed. This shocking defeat sent a clear message to the Duke of Cumberland, the Captain-General of Britain's army, as well as other senior officers of the day. The North American theater of war demanded a special type of soldier.

On European battlefields, the essential tasks of scouting, screening and skirmishing for an army on campaign were usually assigned to the cavalry. In the wilderness however, troops were restricted to using lakes and waterways as no highways existed and the terrain, much of it mountainous, was covered with a full-growth primeval forest. With the landscape totally unsuitable for cavalry, the British heavy infantry (styled on the Prussian

Mastering the terrain. Light Infantry training in the rugged Adirondack Mountains under the tutelage of Lord Howe (left foreground). Note the cropped hair, trimmed hats, Indian-style backpacks, leggings and moccasins. Light Infantrymen (LI) had to be able to travel light in all seasons and weather, over all types of terrain, skills unfamiliar to most European style heavy infantry of the day. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)





**Cockpit of war.** The southern end of Lake George in upstate New York as it would have looked to Robert Kirkwood and other Light Infantrymen in Amherst's 1759 expedition to take Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Batteaux and floating batteries can be seen marshalled at the water's edge. (Courtesy of the David M. Stewart Museum, Montreal)

model of the eighteenth century) would have to quickly adapt and develop its own 'foot cavalry' capable of traversing all kinds of terrain as well as scouting and skirmishing with an opponent already well-versed in the arts of forest fighting.

A journal of the day neatly summed up the problem areas:

In an American campaign everything is terrible; the face of the country, the climate, the enemy. There is no refreshment for the healthy, nor relief for the sick. A vast inhospitable desert, unsafe and treacherous, surrounds them, where victories are not decisive, but defeats are ruinous; and simple death is the least misfortune, which can happen to them. This forms a service truly critical, in which all the firmness of the body and mind is put to the severest trial; and all the exertions of courage and address are called out.

North America came as a shock to most British veterans accustomed to soldiering in Flanders' open countryside with level roads and small towns and villages interspersed along the way to provide ready billets. One old 'Flanderkin' who survived Braddock's ill-fated expedition to take Fort Duquesne in 1755 was dismayed by the 'Trees, Swamps and Thickets' and observed that 'the very Face of the Country is enough to strike a Damp in the most resolute Mind.' He despondently concluded, 'I can not conceive how War can be made in such a country.'

Of course New World warfare and its attendant problems had been with the British colonists from the outset of their arrival and the establishment of Jamestown, the first British settlement, in 1607. Wars with the coastal Indians for the first 50 years of the settlers' precarious existence were followed by a protracted 70 year struggle for North America with New France, located to the north and west, starting in 1689. That latter period consisted, in fact, of four separate wars. The first three: the War of the League of Hapsburg (1689-97), the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-13) and the War of the Austrian Succession (1744-48), were fought by the colonists of both mother countries using colonial methods and military resources to hand. The French utilized their Indian allies from the outset and armed them with muskets. The American frontier militias were thus forced to assimilate the best features of Indian

tactics in order to effectively counter their enemy: small-unit operations, loose formations, informal dress, swift movement, fire discipline, ambush and surprise attack. Aided by a greater population base and their own Indian allies, many American frontiersmen became adept at marksmanship, a skill which increased as more accurate weapons were developed.

At the outset of the Seven Years' War however, the frontier had marched westwards from the coastal communities of the Thirteen Colonies and their inhabitants had lost the shooting and tactical skills developed through trial and error to counter the tactics of their Indian and French adversaries in the previous three wars. In 1755, George Washington himself pointed out the poor quality and limited capabilities of most colonial militias (with the exception of selected Ranger units guarding the frontiers). He wrote:

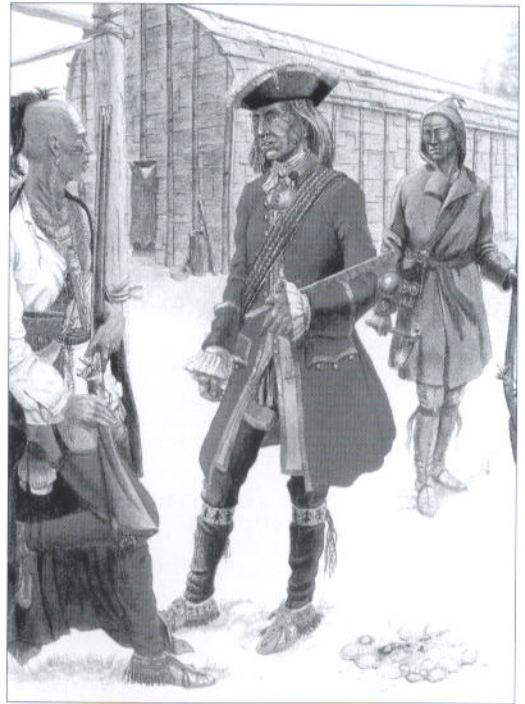
Militia, you will find never answer your expectations, no dependence is to be placed on them; they are obstinate and perverse, they are egged on by the officers, who lead them to acts of disobedience, and when they are ordered to certain posts for the security of stores, or the protection of the inhabitants, will, on a sudden, resolve to leave them, and the united vigilance of their officers can not prevent it.

A long campaign to distant fields that also involved defending against Indian tactics of stealth and ambush was one for which colonial militias were eminently unsuited and, moreover, one in which they were unwilling to participate. Lieutenant Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia, however, knew where to find men to meet the challenge. He wrote to his friend James Abercromby in England in 1755: 'I am still of Opinion without force from Home, we shall hardly be able to drive the French from the Ohio; we want Military Men, and particularly Engineers.'

Were the 'Military Men', the British regulars, equal to the task? Were they capable of waging protracted campaigns in a virtual wilderness against elusive adversaries, experts in all aspects of irregular warfare? Some perhaps were not prepared for the ruthless savagery of scalping and cannibalism encountered, but many soldiers and their officers were well-inured to irregular warfare and skirmishing either from experiences in Scotland or on the battlefields of Europe.

War in North America for armies was essentially a problem of manoeuvre, communications and resupply. And while the principal task of generalship was simply moving a force of moderate size into contact with the enemy, the face of battle was, for the British Regular who had to penetrate hundreds of miles into trackless and unsettled country, a daunting one.

Aspiring commanders thus needed a small, highly-trained army of experts: light troops, Rangers and friendly Indians for scouting and skirmishing; batteaux men to move the armies along the waterways which served as the only highways; and artillerymen and engineers to lay



**The enemy.** Eastern woodland Indians such as these Iroquoian warriors pictured here were the cunning opponents of the Light Infantry soldier. Many items of Indian dress were adopted by the latter such as moccasins, leggings, powderhorns and tomahawks. Indians friendly to the British cause instructed Light Infantrymen in bush tactics as well as the use of snowshoes and canoes, while others taught the skills to captives like Robert Kirkwood. (Source: Directorate of History & Heritage, Department of National Defense, Canada)



siege to the French forts once the army had closed with its objectives. Long lines of communication also necessitated the building of well-garrisoned, defensible forts and depots along the way.

The year 1757 saw British commanders introduce for the first time, an experimental, temporary corps that stemmed from the nature of the terrain as well as the tactics of an elusive and savage foe. These warriors were called 'light troops' or 'Light Infantry' to distinguish them from their comrades serving as heavy infantry in the marching regiments. Similar to the widespread practice of 18th century armies taking grenadier companies from their respective battalions to form special 'shock troop' battalions, so the shorter, agile men and marks-men of the other flank company of a regiment became part of an elite ad hoc corps specializing in scouting, patrolling, screening and skirmishing for the army. By the end of the Seven Years' War in North America, these 'Chosen Men' had become the most seasoned and utilitarian veterans of Britain's 'American Army' – the Light Infantry.

During the period 1757–1764, the 'American Army' underwent a dynamic period of transformation, a process in which the Light Infantryman with his special skill sets became an integral part of any expeditionary force. New dress, new weapons, new tactics, and most of all a new ethos arose to move the process along to its logical conclusion; adapt or die. The evolution of the Light Infantry soldier in tandem with the physical as well as psychological challenges confronting him, would see these warriors gain pride, prominence, and respect throughout Britain's 'American Army' and as such, surpass the grenadier as the elite soldier of choice.



**Spearhead.** Light Infantry and Rangers lead the way on Lake George, 1758. All soldiers had to be proficient in the use of boats, such as the whale boat pictured here, and the larger batteaux, as they were the principal means of transport through the North American wilderness. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)

## CHRONOLOGY

- 8 July 1755** Defeat of Braddock's Column on expedition to Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh) by Western Indians.
- December 1756** Creation of the Royal American Regiment authorised.
- January 1757** 77th Montgomery's Highlanders raised. Robert Kirkwood enlists.
- July 1757** Kirkwood and 77th Foot sail for Charleston, SC.
- August 1757** Loudoun's expedition from Halifax to Louisbourg cancelled.
- 1 September 1757** Kirkwood and 77th Foot land in Charleston, SC and go into garrison.
- 5 September 1757** Robert Rogers commences seven-week Ranging school for volunteer gentlemen destined for Light Infantry or Ranger commissions.
- December 1757** Creation of Gage's Light Infantry authorised. Loudoun recalled and replaced by Major General Abercromby as Commander-in-Chief.
- April 1758** Kirkwood's regiment sent to Pennsylvania for Fort Duquesne expedition.
- 1 June 1758** Ten Light Infantrymen per regiment designated marksmen and issued rifles for Abercromby's Ticonderoga expedition.
- 8 June 1758** Light Infantry land and lead the way at the Louisbourg landings.
- 6 July 1758** Light Infantry land and lead the way at north shore of Lake George near Ticonderoga. Lord Howe killed at the head of Gage's Light Infantry.
- 8 July 1758** Light Infantry fight at Battle of Ticonderoga. Lead assault and cover withdrawal.
- 9 July 1758** Abercromby retreats.

Robert Kirkwood could rightly claim on his return from ten years service in the French & Indian War that "few Men have traveled more than he has, in the back parts of North America". Kirkwood soldiered from the heat of the Carolinas to the storm-blown crags of St. John's, Newfoundland, westwards to look upon Niagara Falls and navigate the Great Lakes as far as Detroit, and, in 1765-6, travelled down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to the Gulf of Mexico, stopping briefly in Florida before returning to Philadelphia.



**26 July 1758** Louisbourg capitulates.

**August 1758** Kirkwood and the 77th Foot reach Fort Bedford in western Pennsylvania. Kirkwood's first scout.

**September 1758** Kirkwood captured by Shawnee Indians during Major Grant's failed attack on Duquesne.

**29 May 1759** Kirkwood escapes from a Shawnee war party.

**20 June 1759** Kirkwood arrives at Fort Cumberland. Returns to 77th Foot.

**July 1759** 77th Foot participate in Amherst's capture of Fort Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

**13 September 1759** Kirkwood departs Crown Point as a volunteer on Rogers' infamous St Francis Raid. Wolfe's Light Infantry land and lead way onto Plains of Abraham the same day.

**7 November 1759** Kirkwood arrives at Fort No. 4. with other raid survivors.

**28 April 1760** Light Infantry decimated with Murray's army at Battle of Sillery (Ste Foy), Quebec.

**17 May 1760** Siege of Quebec by Levis' Franco-Canadian army raised.

**June 1760** Kirkwood's regiment marches to Oswego for Amherst's invasion of Canada by way of Lake Ontario and down the St Lawrence River.

**6 September 1760** Amherst's, Murray's and Haviland's armies converge at Montreal.

**8 September 1760** Montreal capitulates.

**13 September 1760** Kirkwood detached for duty with Robert Rogers to take possession of the French western forts.

**8 November 1760** Rogers takes possession of Detroit.

**May 1761** 77th Foot dispatched to Carolinas to fight Cherokees without Kirkwood.

**1 July 1761** Kirkwood arrives at Albany and given R & R.

**August 1761** Kirkwood deserts.

**November 1761** Kirkwood apprehended and imprisoned at Fort Ontario.

**1 December 1761** 77th Foot dispatched for service in the Caribbean without Kirkwood.

**24 January 1762** Light Infantry storm Mt Tarnenson in Martinique.

**27 January 1762** Light Infantry capture Morne Grenier, Martinique.

**4 February 1762** Martinique surrenders.

**7 June 1762** British land for siege of Havana.

**24 June 1762** French capture St. John's Newfoundland.

**11 August 1762** Havana surrenders.

**13 August 1762** Kirkwood pardoned by General Amherst for desertion. Sent on William Amherst's expedition to retake St. John's, Newfoundland.

**15 September 1762** Kirkwood participates in the successful climb and capture of Signal Hill, St. John's.

**10 February 1763** Treaty of Paris ends Seven Years' War.

**May 1763** Western Indians under Pontiac attack British forts.

**19 July 1763** Kirkwood's light company of 77th joins Bouquet's relief expedition to Fort Pitt.

**31 July 1763** Captain Dalyell's force of 80th Light Infantry, 60th Foot and Rangers ambushed at Bloody Run outside Fort Detroit.

**5-6 August 1763** Kirkwood and 77th light company fight as part of Bouquet's force at the Battle of Bushy Run.

- 9 August 1763** Fort Pitt relieved.
- 14 September 1763** 309 Seneca warriors ambush and massacre two companies of 80th Light Infantry on Niagara portage trail.
- 25 October 1763** Kirkwood transferred to 42nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch).
- 1 July 1764** Colonel Bouquet's Muskingum expedition against the Cherokee departs Fort Pitt. Kirkwood and 42nd Foot participate.
- 15 November 1764** Bouquet's force including Kirkwood's company returns to Fort Pitt.
- 24 August 1765** Kirkwood departs Fort Pitt down the Ohio as part of Captain Thomas Stirling's company to take possession of the Illinois French forts.
- 9 October 1765** Kirkwood's company arrives at Fort Chartres and takes possession next day.
- 1 December 1765** Kirkwood's company relieved by the 34th Foot from New Orleans.
- 13 December 1765** Kirkwood's company departs for New Orleans.
- 5 January 1766** Kirkwood's company arrives in New Orleans.
- 27 February 1766** Kirkwood's company departs by ship for Pensacola, Florida.
- 13 March 1766** Kirkwood's company arrives in Pensacola, Florida.
- 15 June 1766** Kirkwood's company arrives in New York and marches to barracks in Philadelphia. In garrison for next twelve months.
- June 1767** Kirkwood and 42nd Highlanders relieved by 18th Foot. Sail home from New York.
- 28 July 1767** Kirkwood and remnants of Black Watch arrive Cork, Ireland.

## RECRUITMENT AND ENLISTMENT

### 'Going for a Soldier'

One of our best accounts of life as a British Light Infantrymen in North America during the Seven Years' War is found in *The Memoirs and Adventures of Robert Kirk; Late of the Royal Highland Regiment*, published in Limerick, Ireland, 1775, just before the American Revolution. His story constitutes a very rare voice from the ranks, a remarkable chronicle by a private soldier of some of the most vicious woods fighting and cruelest skirmishing ever encountered by the British army up until this time. With an eye to book sales, however, Kirkwood was not adverse to embellishing some of his adventures in North America with a few lurid campfire tales or, in some cases, plagiarizing from other soldiers' accounts, most notably a 17th century French officer, the Baron de Lahontan. Kirkwood also neglected to tell readers that he was confined for desertion in 1761, pardoned by Major General Amherst in 1762 and sent on the expedition to recapture St John's Newfoundland from the French. By the time Robert Kirkwood returned from 'a service truly critical' in North America in 1767, our roguish hero was an accomplished marksman, hunter, and tracker, proficient in the use of canoes, snowshoes and tumplines, the ultimate Light Infantryman of the self-styled 'American Army'.

'I was born in the town of Air, in the West parts of the North of Britain of honest, old, creditable parents,' Kirkwood wrote on his return in his book, 'and they gave me what may be called a common education, because their circumstances could not afford better; but they were careful to bring me up in the knowledge and fear of God.' And it was to God that Kirkwood swore an oath: that he was a Protestant willing to honorably serve his King overseas. But only after the recruiting sergeant had determined his prospective recruit was 'able Bodied, Sound in Limbs, free from Ruptures, Scald heads, ulcerous sores or any remarkable deformity.' A barrel-maker by trade, Kirkwood also quickly satisfied the sergeant's recruiting orders that warned him against taking 'Strolers, Vagabonds, Tinkers, Chimney sweepers, Colliers or Saylor's.' Finally, he made sure that Kirkwood was one 'born in the Neighbourhood of the place they are inlisted in' and a man of whom he could 'get a good Account.'



**Recruiting.** A detail of *See John the Soldier, Jack the Tar* by William Hogarth, depicting a recruiting sergeant measuring a prospective candidate. All recruits had to be 'able-bodied, sound of limb, free of ruptures, scald head, ulcerous sores or any remarkable deformity'. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)

'I enlisted in his Majesty's 77th Regt. Of Foot, commanded by Colonel Archibald Montgomery in the latter end of the year 1756,' noted Kirkwood, 'from which time I was employed in recruiting and Disciplining the regiment, which was mostly composed of impress'd men from the Highlands.' This statement is interesting as the British redcoat of the Seven Years' war was technically a volunteer, as was Kirkwood, but many men had no choice.

Kirkwood's regiment (initially called the First Highland Battalion, later numbered 62nd, then re-numbered the 77th Foot) was not a typical marching regiment, being one of two Highland battalions specially raised for service in North America. As such, Kirkwood's officers were the cream of Campbell and Grant gentry and not afraid to use some gentle coercion and political influence in 'beating up' a suitable number of recruits. Ludovic Grant, the cousin of Major James Grant under whom Kirkwood would serve and be taken prisoner, was a prominent Whig landowner. He told his tenantry that it was a matter of clan honour that his kinsman's company be among the first to be completed. He personally instructed them to 'manage matters so as that all the young fellows upon Estate who incline the army goe into his Companie preferable to any other.' While the fate of those who did not comply when the recruiting parties came visiting was not clearly stated, his closing remarks, whilst polite, did not leave much to the imagination. He told them bluntly: 'If you have the least regard all of you upon this occasion ... I hope by your conduct at this time you'll give me reason to continue your affectionate friend and humble servt.'

By the Spring of 1757, Kirkwood's regiment, the 77th Foot, and Fraser's Highlanders, the 78th Foot, had surpassed their recruiting quotas of 1000 men, each battalion boasting 500 surplus recruits or 'supernumerary men' of whom 200 would accompany them to North America. Compared to other battalions of the day, this is impressive for a five month recruiting drive, especially when one takes into account that Kirkwood's regiment turned 472 recruits away. Famine and chronic unemployment in the recruiting regions were the principal reasons for successful recruitment in 1757. As the war progressed, another seven regiments were raised in the Highlands with disappointing and diminishing results.

As recruiting of a typical British redcoat is already adequately discussed in *Warrior 19: British Redcoat 1740-93*, which gives complete details on 18th century terms of enlistment and the pay system, we can move on to how Light Infantrymen were selected and recruited internally from within their own battalions. Fit and intelligent young officers and senior non-commissioned officers (NCOs) were selected by their lieutenant-colonel who, in turn, kept a sharp eye out for potential talent existing within the eight other fusilier or 'hat' companies of the battalion. The type of man required for 'The Light Infantry Service' had to be a cut above the ordinary soldier and not content with just firing elbow-to-elbow platoon volleys with his comrades in set-piece battles.

A directive issued in North America prior to the siege of Louisbourg 1758 gives us a good idea of the kind of recruit required. The battalions just arrived from Europe were 'to provide active marchers and men that

are expert at firing ball.' Those that had been in North America for a couple of years already were to provide 'those men most accustomed to the Woods' and 'good marksmen'. In essence, they had to be physically fit, expert shots, and willing to be detached on independent service. As Major General Jeffery Amherst put it: 'alert, Spirited soldiers, able to endure fatigue'. Invariably, the men recruited for the light companies looked upon themselves in the same light as one officer recorded in his journal, as 'Chosen Men'.

## DRESS, EQUIPMENT AND APPEARANCE

### 'See the droll figure we all Make'

In February 1758, Major George Scott, 40th Foot, commander of the Light Infantry and Rangers for the Louisbourg expedition, wrote to Lord Loudoun, the Commander-in-Chief in North America, recommending dress and kit for 'the bushfight', with a functional explanation for each article of kit and its practicality. This information was undoubtedly passed to Colonel Thomas Gage, then actively raising and equipping the first officially recognised regiment of Light Infantry regulars in the British Army. The 80th Foot were quickly nicknamed 'The Leathercaps' because of their adopted headgear.

Although Robert Kirkwood neglected to tell us much about his clothing or kit, Major George Scott's letter contains a good summary of the generic kit required. 'The Leather Cap,' he argued, 'if properly jack't and made of good Leather is intended to fend off the blow of a Scalping-Ax or Firelock. It is also better adapted to the Hood of a Cloke than a Hatt and will keep its form.' The coat he proposed was the same as the regular issue, but with shorter skirts and inside breast pockets, the lapels extending to the waist to provide extra warmth in winter. A Light Infantryman would also have worn short trousers for ease of movement, and buskins, keeping his uniform light and practical and reducing the amount he would be expected to carry.

Kirkwood spent some time as a prisoner of the Shawnee, and it is therefore fairly safe to assume that he was one of many Light Infantrymen to adopt Indian moccasins. Knox describes these in some detail:

These slippers are generally made of the skin of a beaver, elk, calf, sheep, or other pliant leather, half-dressed: each *moggosan* is of one intire piece...; they have no additional sole or heel-piece and must be used with three or four frize socks, or folds of thick flannel wrapt round the foot; they are exceedingly warm, and much fitter for the winters of this country than our European shoe, as a person may walk over sheets of ice without the least danger of falling.

Major George Scott, 40th Foot, by Copley, c.1758-59. Scott was the commanding officer of the Provisional Light Infantry Battalion who distinguished himself at the 1758 Louisbourg landings. He proposed many reforms to British uniforms, kit and weapons for the Light Infantry service. Here he wears a cut-down uniform of his own design and holds a leather cap in his right hand. Other items, shown far left, include a musket with a short knife bayonet instead of the common triangular style. (Private Collection)



Standard weaponry for a Light Infantryman also varied from regular issue. A carbine rather than a firelock was generally preferred because the shorter (thus lighter) barrel was considered easier to aim and, suitably blackened, improved a marksman's accuracy. In the New York theater of war, Gage's



Light Infantry were issued with firelocks that 'were cut shorter and the stocks dressed to make them lighter' as well as ten 'rifled carbines' for use by their best marksmen on the 1758 Ticonderoga campaign. The Light Infantryman was also equipped with a tomahawk that could be used from a distance or in close engagements with the enemy, and a short knife used for dressing game or eating meals. Kirkwood's regiment, the 77th Foot, requested as early as 1757 to lighten their soldiers' load by leaving their broadswords in Philadelphia before campaigning in the wilderness. His commanding officer argued: 'Our men are young and the less they are loaded the better, if you can give us a little help ... in this matter, they'l March like so many Grey-Hounds.'

A 35th Foot Light Infantryman's experience serving in Wolfe's army at Quebec in 1759 illustrates how the tomahawk was an important backup to the musket in close-quarter fighting, but only if one was well skilled in its use. Sergeant John Johnson recorded that in:

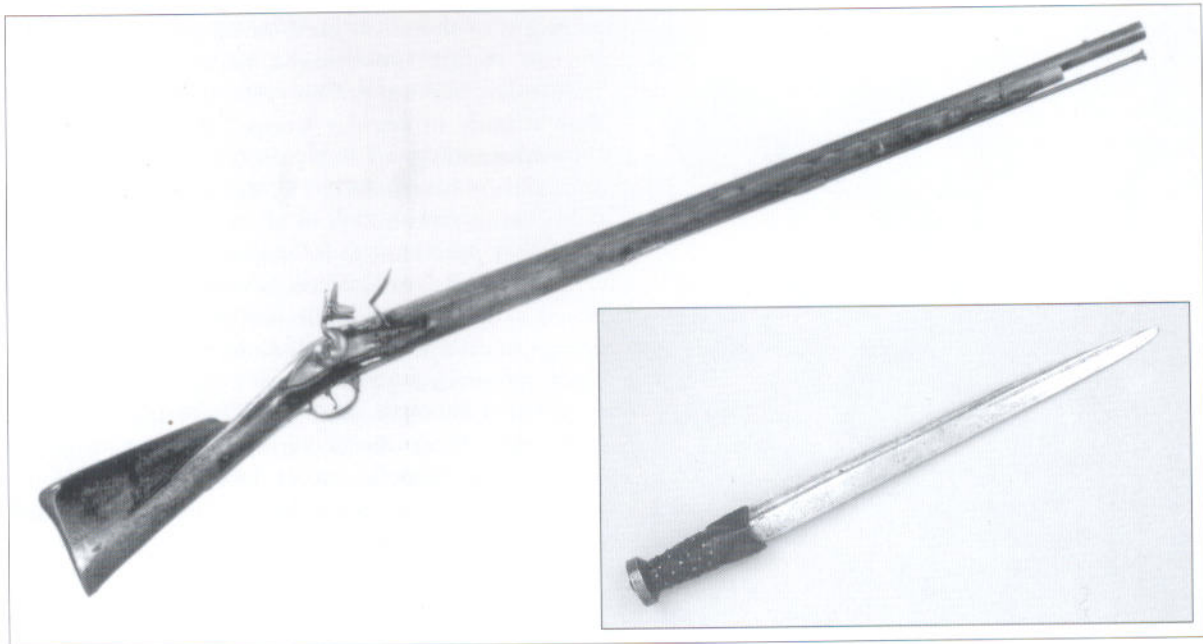
an Engagement between our Scouting Parties and the Indians, [my friend] saw an Indian who fir'd at him, but missed him; ... he levelled his Piece and fir'd at the Indian and miss'd him likewise; upon which the Indian immediately threw his Tommahawk at him and miss'd him; whereupon the Soldier catching up the Tommahawk, threw it at the Indian and levell'd him, and then went to scalp him; but 2 other Indians came behind him, and one stuck a Tommahawk in his Back; but did not wound him so much as to prevent his Escape from them.

Buskins were more popularly known as 'Indian leggings' or 'mitasses', which John Knox of the 43rd Foot described as:

Leggers, leggins or Indian spatterdashes are usually made of frize or other coarse woolen cloth ... at least three quarters of a yard in length; each leggin about three quarters wide...then double it and sew it together from end to end ... fitting this long narrow bag to the shape of the leg ... tied round under the knee and above the ankle with garters of the same colour; by which the legs are preserved from many fatal accidents, that may happen by briars, stumps of trees, or underwood, etc. in marching through a close, woody country.

The cartridge box proposed by Scott was to be covered with tin which would 'guard the ammunition from the least wett or damp'. Much lighter than a leather cartouche box, it would also carry 'eleven rounds

**This rare example of a powderhorn used by a Regular British soldier is inscribed "William Davison in Inniskilling 1758 or XXVII Regt." George Scott argued that all Light Infantryman should carry a powderhorn containing "Pistol powder" with a finer, more combustible grain. The horn was usually slung off the left shoulder under the right armpit, a quicker and more convenient way of priming one's musket in the midst of a firefight. (Courtesy of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum)**



more'. The powder horn that he recommended was for carrying 'Pistol powder' with its finer and more combustible grain. Easily ready to hand and slung off the left shoulder under the right armpit, the horn was a quicker and more convenient way of priming one's musket, Scott argued, and was not 'subject to burn priming or miss fire'. It also prevented the most common 'fault which Men are subject to in time of Action ... Viz., that of spilling one half of their Cartridge of powder and sometimes more in priming and shutting their Pans'. The result of such nervousness or sloppiness on the part of a soldier in a firefight meant that the musket ball would not be 'sent with half the force it is intended or anything near the distance it ought to go'.

George Scott's sensible recommendations were based on watching the Nova Scotia Rangers assigned to his command waging constant irregular warfare against Micmac warriors and their French allies. He concluded that if his proposals were accepted, they would reduce the standard weight of a British regular by 13 pounds, 'a difference which I conceive will be a great advantage'.

Of course, during winter, a Light Infantryman, like his hat company colleagues, had to wear additional clothing and use additional equipment in order to survive the bitter weather, cross ice and snowy terrain, then close with and destroy his enemy. The dress for all troops in the North American winter was unorthodox, adapted from Indian warriors' clothing and usually a question of survival versus neatness and uniformity. Robert Kirkwood made several trips during winter, but with his Indian training and private's outlook neglected to give us much detail. However, John Knox of the 43rd Foot, described in his detailed journal the winter apparel of General James Murray's army garrisoning the captured city of Quebec in 1760, stating: 'our guards ... mak[e] a grotesque appearance in their different dresses.

'Our inventions to guard us against the extreme rigour of this climate,' he continued, 'are beyond imagination: the uniformity, as well

**ABOVE MAIN** A wilderness modification. A cut-down musket similar to those used by some Light Infantry soldiers in North America during the Seven Years' War. The shortened barrels rendered them less cumbersome for the close-in bushfighting characteristic of the wilderness. Although some features suggest that this particular musket may have been shortened slightly after the war, it almost certainly saw service in North America. (Campus Martius Museum, Ohio Historical Society)

**ABOVE INSET** Highland dirk, c.1758. Used by Volunteer Peter Grant at the Battle of Ticonderoga, 1758, the dirk was the preferred hand-to-hand combat weapon of the Highland Light Infantry soldier because of its familiarity. The 78th Fraser Light Infantry used them with deadly effect against French grenadiers using hand-held bayonets in the bloody battle for Dumont's Mill at the Battle of Sillery (Ste Foy) near Quebec, April 1760. (Courtesy of the National Army Museum, Chelsea)



**A Nova Scotia Ranger, c.1755.** These frontier soldiers were the model for Major George Scott's proposed dress reforms for British Light Infantry. Familiar with Gorham's Rangers, Scott had seen the utility of their dress and equipment first hand after several years in garrison in Nova Scotia. It appears most recommendations were adopted by Colonel Thomas Gage when raising the first regular Light Infantry unit of the war, the 80th 'Regiment of Lightly Arm'd Foot'. Recreation by artist Gerry Embleton. (Courtesy of the Directorate of History & Heritage, Department of National Defense, Canada)

as nicety, of the clean methodical soldier, is buried in the rough fur-wrought garb of the frozen Laplander; and we rather resemble a masquerade than a body of regular troops.' Knox added that 'notwithstanding all our precautions, several men and officers have suffered by the intenseness of the cold, being frost-bitten in their faces, hands, feet and other *parts* least to be suspected!'

'Watchcoats' or greatcoats were common items issued to one in every eight men and shared by those going out on operational missions or standing sentry. Knox mentions a party of the 43rd Foot on its way from Fort Edward in Nova Scotia to Halifax in March 1758 with officers dressed in brown cloaks and the men in brown 'watchcoats'. By December of the same year, the men had their clothing issue augmented with flannel under-waistcoats and leggers, or 'Indian stockings', while Major General Jeffery Amherst had issued similar instructions regarding flannel for warm socks as well as leggings and waistcoats. The British conquerors of Montreal in 1760 were quick to adopt the winter dress of their former foes – the 'capote' or blanket coat of the French Canadians, usually white with blue bars at the hood, cuffs and shirt.

In order for a Light Infantryman to patrol, forage and skirmish successfully in the winter he needed the same mobility over snow that his enemies possessed. All learned the art of using snowshoes, a skill taught to them by their Ranger or Indian auxiliaries. Knox describes how Light Infantrymen at Quebec became very proficient on snowshoes, surprising their French and Indian enemies on several occasions. The snowshoes they used were:

hoops of hickory, or other tough wood, bended to a particular form, round before; and the other two extremities of the hoop terminate in a point behind, secured together with strong twine; the inward space is worked like close netting, with catgut or the dried entrails of other animals ... They must be used under moggosans, as well for the sake of the wearer's feet, to keep them warm and preserve them from the snow.

Hard-sole shoes, Knox added, could be used at a pinch but 'they will not bind on so well' and would wear out the snowshoe sooner.

In January 1760, the weather at Quebec was so 'cold and windy, with drifts of snow' to which were added 'frequent showers of hail, liquid and freezing rain,' wrote Knox, 'that the town ... is one intire sheet of ice'. In order to get up and down the steep hills of the walled city, the soldiers had to tie metal ice-creepers to their footwear, though Knox records getting down as an easier proposition. 'Being to mount guard in the lower town,' he wrote, 'I found it impossible to get down with safety and we were therefore obliged to sit down on the summit and slide to the bottom, one after another to prevent accidents, the men's arms being



loaded.' Ice-creepers were also used on patrol by Light Infantry and Rangers to cross frozen lakes or climb icy, rocky terrain.

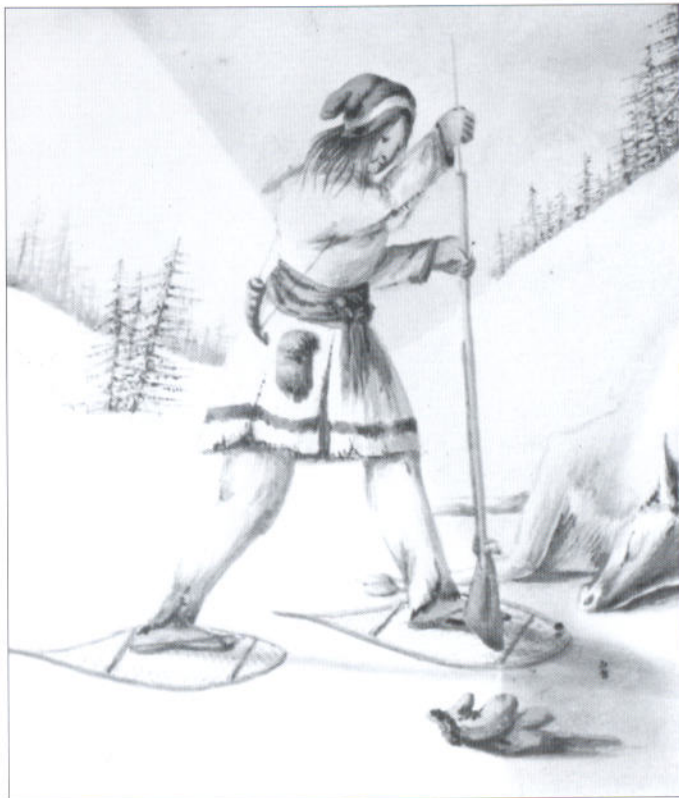
The dispersed nature of the various armies in North America meant that Light Infantrymen in each theater took on different appearances depending on their commanders' preferences. By comparing the directives of the various campaigns, however, a fairly accurate picture of what the generic Light Infantryman looked like and how his appearance evolved can be drawn.

The earliest description of British Light Infantry dress appeared in an anonymous soldier's account of the 1758 Louisbourg campaign which stated: 'The Light Infantry ... are a body of men draughted out of the regiments and cloathed something like the Indians to scour the woods.' We are also informed that Light Infantrymen were dressed 'some in blue, some in green Jackets and Drawers, for the easier brushing through the Woods; with Ruffs of black Bear's skin round their Necks, the beard of their upper Lips, some grown into Whiskers, others not so, but all well smutted on that part, with little round Hats like several of our Seamen'.

This temporary move away from wearing scarlet jackets was an attempt at camouflage; a practical response to the need for not being seen in the woods by one's sharp-sighted enemies. For young Robert Kirkwood on his first campaign in the Pennsylvanian woods in 1758, this requirement was common sense for 'the trees and the Indians were of the same colour, and this circumstance, trifling as it may appear, aught always to be consider'd by forces who mean to operate with success, as against them, at that season they have a sure view of you, but you can't have the least idea of them'.

A Light Infantryman was also encouraged to break up the whiteness of his face before going on operations by growing a beard or 'smutting' it with charcoal. George Scott's practical recommendations included the suggestion that Light Infantrymen's short jackets should be 'the colour of the bark of trees', advice adopted by Gage's Light Infantry of 1758, who wore brown jackets with black buttons and no facings, brown short trousers and brown leggings. In 1763, this 'regiment of light-arm'd foot' switched to a short scarlet tunic, faced orange, with black buttons.

During the 1758 campaign against Fort Ticonderoga, a Light Infantryman serving in James Abercromby's army underwent significant dress changes that prompted many observations from different spectators on his appearance. The changes occurred under the watchful eye of Abercromby's dynamic second-in-command, Brigadier George Augustus Howe, Colonel of the 55th Foot. Lord Howe had already experimented by



**Enemy 'Light Infantry'.** Indigenous warriors such as the Indian hunter pictured here were adept in the use of snowshoes and were expert marksmen. This warrior is dressed in French woollen tucque, 'capote' or blanket coat and moccasins. His mittens lie on the ground as he reloads. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-122387)



**Detail of 'Leathercap' of Gage's Light Infantry at Lake George, by Thomas Davies, c.1759. One of only two known contemporary depictions of a British regular Light Infantry soldier in America during the Seven Years' War. This Leathercap climbs the military road from Fort George and fortified encampments clustered at the southern end of Lake George in upstate New York. (Courtesy of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum)**

having his entire battalion adopt Light Infantry dress and instituted his reforms throughout Abercromby's army, Regulars and Provincials alike. 'You would laugh to see the droll figure we all make,' wrote a Massachusetts officer to a Boston paper. 'Regulars as well as provincials have cut their coats so as scarcely to reach their waists ... No officer or private is allowed to carry more than one blanket or bearskin ... No women follow our camp to wash the linen. Lord Howe has already shown the example by going to the brook and washing his own.'

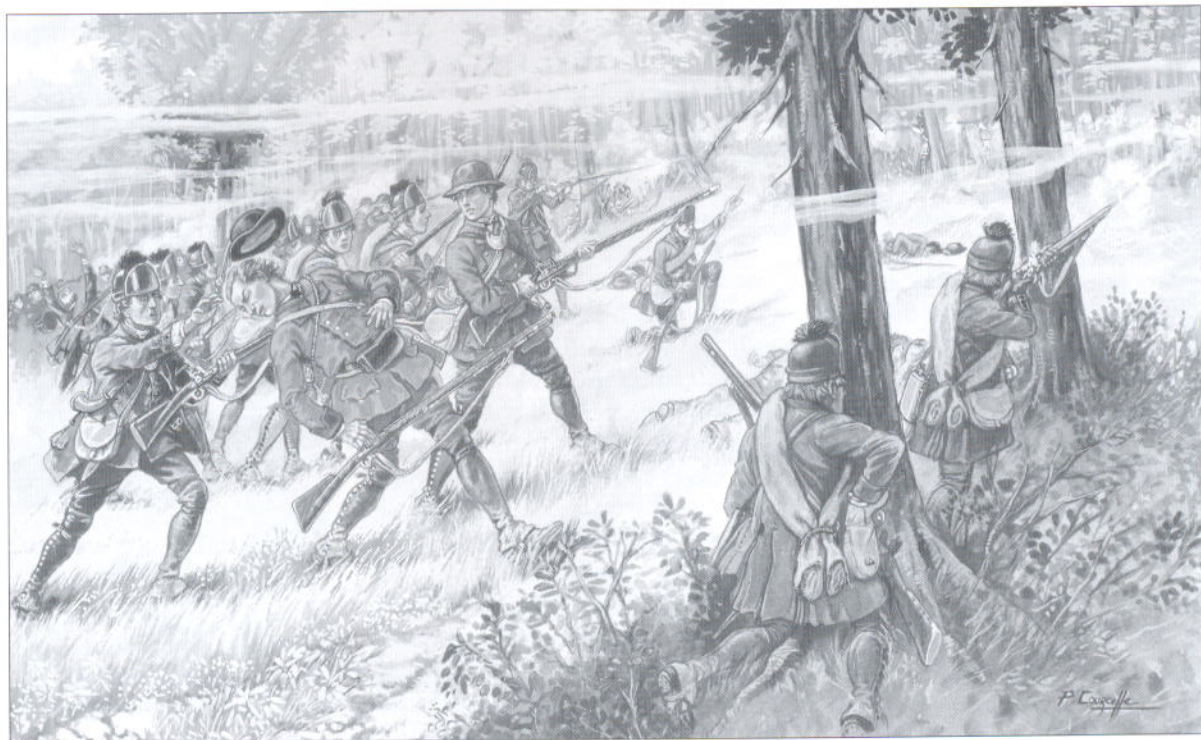
The bearskin was multi-purpose, serving as a mattress, blanket or as a backpack in which to roll one's haversack containing rations and personal items of kit; eating and cooking utensils, and spare clothing. Howe had more orders drawn up instructing 'the Whole Army to have their hats cut down that they may know one another from the Enemy', causing Dr Richard Huck, an army surgeon, to comment wryly that 'we are now literally an Army of Round heads' with the brims of the hats worn 'slouched about two Inches and a half broad'.

Further orders stated that 'the officers do not carry their sashes, but wear their gorgets on duty'. Howe wanted none of his men getting entangled in the woods, or as Dr Huck put it, 'French sticking in our Skirts'.

Commanding officers were left to choose what color leggings their Light Infantry soldiers would wear and were directed to ensure that 'The barrells of the Firelocks of the Light Infantry must all be made blue or brown, to take off the glittering; and the coats of the Light Infantry may be quite plain, or with the facings of the Regt. as the Commanding Officers like best. The less they are seen in the Woods the better.'

The final development and standardisation of Light Infantry dress and appearance took place in the spring of 1759 when General Amherst, the Commander-in-Chief in America, issued a dress policy. We learn from a directive issued in Wolfe's army that all the Light Infantrymen of the army serving in North America were, henceforth, to be uniform in appearance. The following instructions are worth quoting in full:

The following order for the dress of the Light Infantry, as approved of by his excellency General Amherst: Major-General Wolfe desires the same may be exactly conformed to by the light troops under his command: the sleeves of the [red] 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 coat of no encumbrance 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 balls 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, and is fastened



with a strap of web over his shoulder, as the Indians carry their pack. His cartouch-box hangs under his arm on the left side, slung with leathern strap; and his horn under the other arm on the right; hanging by a narrower web than that used for his knapsack; his canteen down his back, under his knapsack 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 waist-coat. No bayonet; his leggins have leathern straps under his shoes like spatterdashes; his hat is made into a cap, with a flap and a button, and with as much blackcloth 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.

Looking like a Light Infantryman, of course, was not enough in the woods to guarantee success. Only good training and actual combat experience in the wilderness could produce a good Light Infantryman, as George Townshend, a subordinate of Wolfe's, wrote to General Amherst some years later: 'It is not a Short Coat ... that makes a Light Infantry Man, but as you know, Sir, a Confidence in his Aim & that Stratagem in a personal conflict which is derived from Experience.'

## TRAINING AND TACTICS

### **'Fit for that Service'**

Ironically, Robert Kirkwood received his Light Infantry 'training' from North America's experts – his Shawnee Indian captors. Taken prisoner on Major James Grant's botched raid of Fort Duquesne in September

**Death of Lord Howe, 6 July 1758 at the head of Gage's Light Infantry. Lord George Augustus Howe was one of the British Army's leading advocates of light dress and tactics. His death was not only a blow to reformists but also contributed significantly to the serious defeat suffered by his army two days later on the Heights of Carillon near Fort Ticonderoga. Recreation by Patrice Courcelle. (From Campaign 76: Ticonderoga 1758 by René Chartrand.)**

1758, spared from the scalping knife and adopted as a 'brother' into the tribe, Kirkwood was trained in the way of the woods. He learned to track, hunt and skirmish as well as becoming proficient in the use of canoes and snowshoes. His six-month tutelage culminated in him being deemed by his Shawnee 'brothers' as ready 'to take up the hatchet' as a fellow warrior.

Kirkwood recorded in his journal that in the spring of 1759, his tribe 'began to form a large scout against the Cherokees ... this party composed of their best warriors and was in number about forty'. Kirkwood was dressed in breech clout and Indian leggings; with his hair dressed in scalplock he took up his rifle, powderhorn, tomahawk and scalping knife, and crossed the Ohio River heading south. 'We had a war dance, having our faces black'd in token of the destruction and immediate death we meant to give our enemies.'

After 'several skirmishes with the Cherokees', Kirkwood and another white captive turned Indian warrior slipped away and made their escape back to civilisation. The first white man they encountered 'ran with all possible speed, being sure we were Indians. We halloed to him, but to no purpose, he added speed to his flight in such a manner, that had not my comrade who was very nimble, run him down, we could never have [had] the least conversation with him.' The white hunter 'expected on being overtaken to have the tomahawk struck in his scull, but was agreeably deceived, when he found by our discourse that we were Englishmen'.

On Kirkwood's return to his regiment several weeks later, 'great was their joy and surprise when they saw me as one risen from the dead, for they supposed I had been killed amongst the Indians'. Kirkwood proudly recorded he was 'particularly taken notice of by my officers', and with his new skills and expertise became a valuable instructor for other members of his regiment – the only one who had been trained by the enemy.

Just as dress differed from theater to theater, so did the standard, quality and amount of training. No two Light Infantry corps were trained the same way because no written doctrine existed. Everything was new. For example, the men at Halifax formed into light companies for the 1757 Louisbourg expedition under Lord Loudoun, found a very strenuous training regime awaiting them. Mock fortifications and works were built, and a Light Infantry soldier would have spent each day alternately attacking and defending them. This practice may have seemed a light-hearted exercise to most British Regulars but as Captain Lieutenant Henry Pringle, 27th Foot, explains: 'altho' often times several circumstances would happen which made us laugh (as there were no balls flying about) & there were many jokes concerning this mock Fort, yet it certainly was informing to those who were absolute strangers in this respect, of whom the largest portion of the army was composed'.

But Loudoun had to abort the 1757 Louisbourg expedition due to local French naval superiority and terrible weather and thus returned his regiments to winter quarters in Halifax, New York and Pennsylvania. The same year, Lord Loudoun had not been keen to raise additional Ranger companies to act as light troops because of their inordinate expense, their poor discipline, and, as they expanded, diminishing quality as experienced woodsmen were killed off and replaced with raw provincials and drunken riff-raff. But he reluctantly did so to buy time 'till I can make some of our own people fit for that Service'.



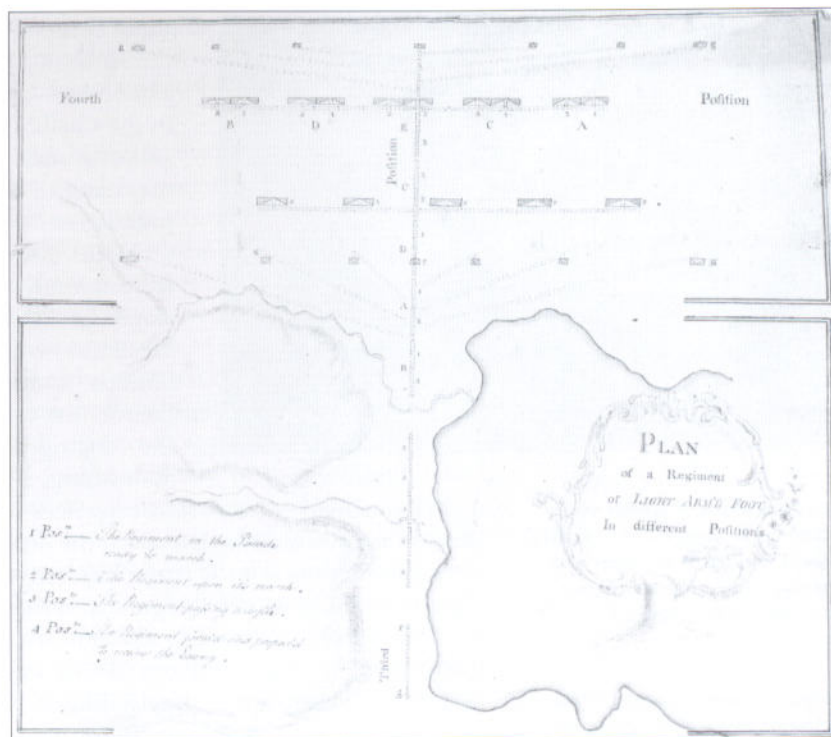
**Marksman. Ten men in every Light Infantry company were issued rifles such as this marksman from the 55th Foot (Howe's). They were probably all of European manufacture in the German Jager style. This soldier has a backpack fastened with an Indian tumpline which could also be slung across the forehead for especially heavy loads. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)**

**OPPOSITE Training. Cherokee warriors led by war chieftain 'Little Carpenter' trained Light Infantry such as Robert Kirkwood of the 77th Foot (Montgomery's Highlanders) during General Forbes' 1758 expedition against Fort Duquesne. Kirkwood praised 'the firm and intrepid conduct of the Little Carpenter and his Indians'. In this detail from the painting *Warriors* by Robert Griffing, a Highlander of the 77th Foot learns the finer points of tracking, a skill not uncommon in many men of the Highlands who came to America with deerstalking and shepherding skills. (Courtesy of Robert Griffing and Paramount Press)**

In an exchange of letters between Loudoun and the Duke of Cumberland on 'the Bushfight in which the [French] have so great an advantage by their Canadians and Indians', the latter advised his friend 'to teach your troops to go out on Scouting Parties; for 'till regular Officers with men they can trust, learn to beat the woods, and act as Irregulars, you will never gain any certain Intelligence of the Enemy, nor screen and protect a marching column'.

The distinction of being the first Light Infantry in the British Army went to the previously mentioned 80th Foot, or Gage's Light Infantry, raised in December 1757. It consisted of experienced officers and men from the regimental light companies, some of whom had trained or served as volunteers with Rogers' Rangers. Some recruiting was done in the colonies as well, the preferred recruits being woodsmen, but most men inclined to join had already done so and preferred the ranger companies that offered more pay and less discipline. Gage's Light Infantrymen thus underwent extensive training under experienced officers and NCOs, one of them recording in June 1758 that their soldiers were employed 'in Exercising a new Method of fighting, forming and marching in the Woods'.

Light Infantrymen with good shooting skills prior to the Ticonderoga expedition of 1758 found themselves issued with a new weapon before the campaign. Eighty 'rifled barrel pieces' of European origin were given to the ten best shots in each regiment of Major General James Abercromby's large army. Before the expedition was launched, each rifleman was 'ordered to fire three rounds each' before embarking on the boats. Eighty men firing three rounds apiece does not sound like a very long or comprehensive target practice, nor was it intended to be. It was, in fact, the men zeroing in their new rifles, as each piece was handcrafted and each weapon had to be adjusted to its user. By adjusting rear sights at given ranges, the rifleman could determine his line of sight and whether his personal firelock aimed high or low. Musketry and target practise, commonly referred to as 'firing at Marks' (hence marksmen) became a top training priority for all Light Infantry soldiers as well as



ABOVE A 1757 diagram for a proposed five-company Light Infantry regiment that became the first of its kind in the British Army – Gage's Light Infantry. Dotted lines show the evolutions required to shake out companies from column into line and facing the enemy after passing through a defile. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)





**Scouting ahead.** A soldier of the 80th Foot or Gage's Light Infantry scouts forward of the army with friendly Indians on campaign. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)

**Robert Rogers at Detroit, 1760.** While Rogers did not invent the Ranger concept, he was instrumental in writing the first woodsfighting manual and acting as chief instructor for many British Light Infantry officers. In the fall of 1760, Rogers and a combined force were dispatched to accept the surrender of Detroit and the other French posts after the fall of Montreal. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)



their companions in the hat companies. By the spring of 1761, when the battalions of the 'American Army' were preparing for service in the Caribbean, Amherst could observe with some satisfaction that 'all the men are so good marksmen, that it requires only a little practise to keep their hands in'.

With the recognition that his Light Infantrymen required physically fit and woodwise officers, in September 1757 Lord Loudoun ordered Captain Robert Rogers, the famous Ranger, to instruct 55 handpicked 'gentlemen volunteers' serving in the ranks 'in the ranging discipline, methods of marching, ambushing, fighting, etc. that they might be

better qualified for any future services against the enemy'. If judged by Rogers as qualified cadets after the intensive seven-week course, these young soldiers were to be commissioned as ensigns in their own regimental light companies, or the Rangers, as vacancies occurred.

Several other officers in different theaters of war were simultaneously putting pen to paper and articulating what was needed in training British regulars to cope with 'the bushfight'. Brigadier-General John Forbes, entrusted with the 1758 expedition to take Fort Duquesne, wrote to his second-in-command, Bouquet, that it was paramount to 'comply and learn the Art of Warr from Ennemy Indians or people ... who have seen the Country and the Warr carried on it'. Bouquet, a Swiss officer who had experienced irregular warfare on European service, quickly concurred and started to arm and accoutre his Royal Americans like the Indians. He, too, obtained rifles for his marksmen – 16 in number – as well as inventing his own training exercise to prepare his men for woods fighting, sending them into the thick forest in small columns with two men abreast, 'which deployed into line in two minutes with the light troops *en echarpé* [literally "scarfed", meaning in a screen to the front]'.

An American Provincial observing Bouquet's training regimen wrote: 'Every afternoon he exercises his men in the woods and bushes in the manner of his own invention, which will be of great service in an engagement with Indians.'

Bouquet would later identify general maxims that applied in all Indian warfare stating that there wasn't 'anything new or extraordinary in this way of fighting which seems to have been common to most Barbarians'. First, they always 'surround their enemy', he wrote. 'The second, that they always fight scattered, and never in a compact body. The third that they never stand their ground when attacked, but immediately give way to the charge.' For a Light Infantryman, it followed then:

- 1st That the troops destined to engage Indians must be lightly clothed, armed and accoutred.
- 2nd That having no resistance to encounter in the attack and the defense, they are not to be drawn up in close order, which only will expose them without necessity to a greater loss.

And lastly, that all their evolutions must be performed with great rapidity; and the men enabled by exercise to pursue the enemy closely, when put to flight, and not giving them time to rally.

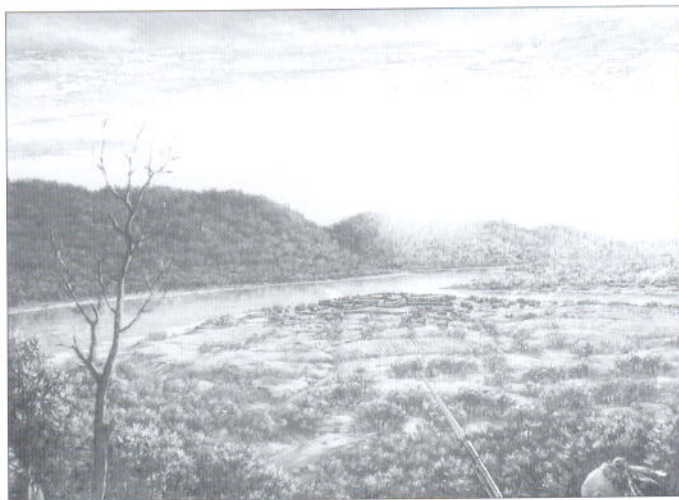
Bouquet's training program gave specific attention to items such as clothing, arms, training techniques, construction of camps and settlements, logistics and tactical manoeuvres to meet most contingencies. Under his supervision, the company replaced the battalion as the unit of manoeuvre, and troops were taught to snapshoot, wheel on the run over broken terrain, swim rivers and march on snowshoes. Robert Kirkwood and his fellow Highlanders, no doubt, partook of this training, as Ensign Thomas Gist of the Virginia Provincials recorded that James Grant, Major of the 77th Foot, tried to instil 'the art of bushfighting' in his men before leading them on his ill-fated assault on Fort Duquesne.

Kirkwood must have excelled for he was one of twenty handpicked men ordered to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force against Fort Duquesne in August 1758. Accompanied by Cherokee warriors led by the well-known war chieftain, Little Carpenter, they destroyed a French and Shawnee war party but failed to reach their objective. On their return to Fort Bedford, they were pursued by 'French and Shannie Indians drawn together for that purpose and they were often near us that we could plainly distinguish their halloo'. Two stark realities driven home to Kirkwood on his first British Army scout were: if one was too wounded to walk, one was left behind to the mercies of the enemy; and, one had to be physically as well as mentally fit for such expeditions. 'This being the first scout I ever went upon,' he wrote, 'you can imagine how fatigued I was, but amidst these hardships, I had the comfort of a relief from the firm and intrepid conduct of Little Carpenter and his Indians.'

The 550 light troops preparing for the 1758 Louisbourg campaign under the watchful eye of Major Scott were told that once they 'had by practise & experience, acquired as much Caution & Circumspection as they have spirit & Activity, the howling Barbarians' would 'flee before them'. Accordingly, a Light Infantryman was taught 'to attack & defend ... judiciously always endeavouring to get upon the Enemy's Flank and equally watchful to prevent [encirclement]'. Furthermore, he was to 'be instructed to chuse good posts and lay ... in ambuscade to advantage, to be alert, silent, vigilant and obedient, ready at all times to turn out without the least noise or least confusion'.

Light Infantry troops were also to 'always march in Single files, & generally fight in a single rank; pushing at the Enemy when they see him in confusion, and that the Ground favours their Efforts; never pursue with too much eagerness, nor to give way, except in a very great inequality of numbers'. With the emphasis on spreading out and using cover they were instructed to 'avoid huddling together, & running into a Lump; in such

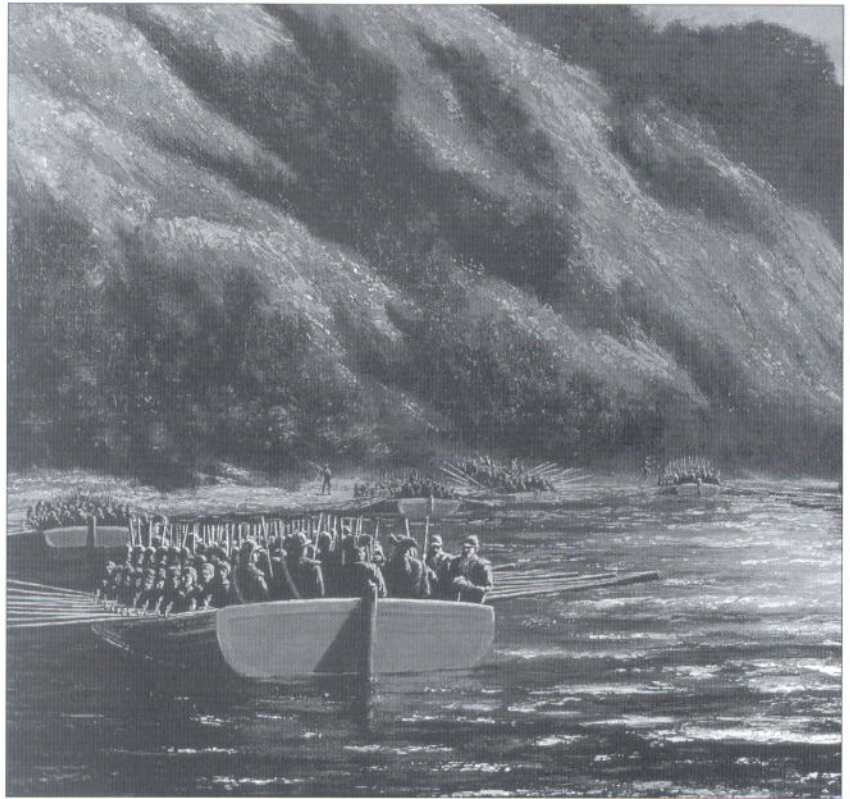
**A view of Fort Duquesne. A detail from the Robert Griffing painting *Triumphant Return to Fort Duquesne*, showing the French fortress captured by British troops under General John Forbes in 1758, and the scene of Robert Kirkwood's capture by Shawnee Indians. (Courtesy of Robert Griffing and Paramount Press)**





**ABOVE LEFT Two Light Infantrymen, c.1759.** A detail of two Light Infantry soldiers, one of the 46th Foot (left) and one of the Royal Americans (60th Foot), from Benjamin West's *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian*, painted c.1764. This is one of only two known contemporary paintings of British regular Light Infantry in North America. (Courtesy of the Derby Museum)

**ABOVE RIGHT Lead and land first.** A painting by Peter Rindlisbacher depicting Wolfe's Light Infantry landing at the cove below the Heights of Abraham, Quebec in September 1759. They silently scaled the heights and took possession of them so the rest of the army could march up. (Courtesy of Peter Rindlisbacher)



a situation they are a fair object for their adversaries, & not able to employ their Arms to purpose'. These irregular tactics or 'stratagems' highlight the additional skills that the common British redcoat had to fully master before becoming a Light Infantryman.

No amount of training however could replace experience. Only repeated exposure to wilderness fighting could build up the confidence and expertise of a Light Infantryman expected to counter the 'paint and howl' of his adversaries. Major Patrick Mackellar, Wolfe's chief engineer at Quebec in 1759, and a survivor of Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela, gave credence to the old maxim 'familiarity breeds contempt', when he observed that the continuous skirmishing had 'the good effect of using our men to the woods, and familiarising them with the Canadians and Indians, whom they soon began to despise'.

On the whole, by 1761, British Light Infantry and their regimental brethren were sufficiently trained to ignore the Indian 'halloo' or 'howl' and act with 'Spirit and Coolness' in most situations. In fact, many of them adopted the Indian howl as their own, James Grant noting how his Highland Light Infantrymen on Martinique in 1762 had bolstered the resolve of another regiment as they moved up to support them during battle. Grant remembered 'a large body of French immediately opposite us [were] driving in the 60th [Royal Americans] who were slowly retiring before them to our right down the hill. We instantly gave the Indian Halloo, part of our Backwoods acquirements; the brave fellows of the 60th instantly stood, as if riveted to the spot and advanced with us.' But even the most experienced Light Infantryman on campaign suffered bloody defeat or mauling at the hands of the enemy from time



to time, the cause of which was usually attributable to a lack of alertness or failure to follow the basic dictates of his training.

## CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

### **'Put nothing to chance'**

#### **Lodgings**

A Light Infantryman being 'the most active and resolute soldier' of his regiment thought nothing of sleeping out under the stars while on long scouting or raiding missions. He and his comrades would cut branches and boughs of pine forming a mattress to keep themselves off the damp or hard ground. If the weather was cold, they constructed rude lean-to shelters from the same materials in the Indian style. Lord Loudoun described them as 'bush tents of pine boughs; two opposite each other ... a space between them in which they make great fires, and the men in each of the tents lie with their feet to the fires in which situation they are tolerably comfortable'.

On his return to base camp for provisions, rest and resupply, Kirkwood and his colleagues would draw their tents from regimental storage. The tents were usually made of light water-proofed sailcloth and slept four to eight men. In more established camps, rude huts would be constructed, while in captured towns or cities such as Quebec, soldiers were billeted in ruined houses and buildings.

Many soldiers spent weeks or months aboard transport ships, either on their way to America, or taking part as the landing troops on the numerous amphibious operations conducted in the Americas during the Seven Years' War. Operations against Louisbourg, Martinique, Dominica, Cuba and the Grenadas meant that regiments were packed into ships under conditions that rivalled those of the slave trade. Private James Miller, on first coming to America in 1757, remembered that 'the accommodations of soldiers on board ship are not very conducive to ease or health, all between decks being separated by boards, into births [sic], and they creep into these holes, in the best manner they can, one third of which, are generally kept on deck while at anchor'. Miller confessed that he 'seldom went below, for there proceeds such a disagreeable stench, of putrid breaths, when you are going down the hatchway, that no being accustomed to fresh air can bear, but more particularly, when cheese, or grog, were serving, there is such a compound of Villainous Smells, enough to suffocate a Hottentot'.

#### **Everyday Tasks**

Robert Kirkwood gives us a good idea of the more routine tasks and outpost duties he and his fellow Light Infantrymen were called upon to

How the barracks of Fort Ligonier would have looked to Kirkwood and his comrades stationed there in 1758, and 1763-1765. The Light Infantry became familiar with the roads between Forts Pitt, Ligonier and Bedford as one of their most important and dangerous tasks was convoy escort duty. (Photo by Tim Todish)





**First glimpse of America. The harbour of Charles Town, South Carolina as it would have looked to Private Robert Kirkwood and his fellow Highlanders of Montgomery's 77th Foot on arrival in September 1757. They garrisoned the colony's capital from September 1757 to April 1758. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)**

perform. After fighting their way through to the besieged fort in the early winter of 1763/64 during Pontiac's Indian uprising, Kirkwood and his comrades,

staid there but a short time, having to escort the inhabitants down the country and to come back with more provisions. We continued employed in this manner 'till the first of January [1764], the snow falling so deep, we were obliged to shovel it away every night to make our beds and fires; every man being provided with a hatchet to cut wood, and a shovel for the snow, we were obliged also to go in parties, and trample it before the horses, in order to prevent their being mired in it.

Kirkwood estimated that in convoy protection duties 'we marched 1500 miles' before 'the Forts [were] stored with provisions'. Later that spring, 'Provisions at last becoming scarce, we made several incursions into the fields around Fort Pit [sic] where we found Indian corn in great plenty of which we brought considerable quantities to the garrison and pounded it for broth.' Such excursions were not without tragedy for Kirkwood wrote: 'we were frequently in great danger for the Indians gave us many a chace. On one of these expeditions I lost my comrade who was taken, scalped and died the same day.' The following winter at Fort Pitt, Kirkwood found himself 'employed in bringing coals into the garrison over the ice, in bags made of cowhides. The pit from which they are extracted is on the other side of the river Mannighally [Monongahela].'

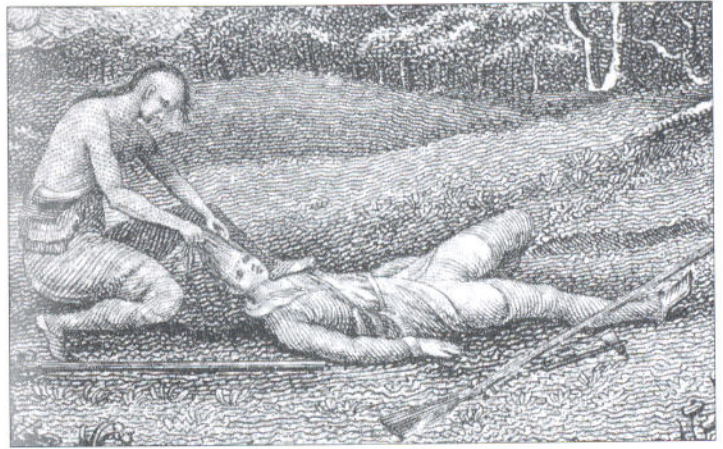
The need for fuel in winter necessitated woodcutting expeditions on an almost daily basis at every fort or outpost. Thus protection parties were needed to guard them and these were usually drawn from the Light Infantry or Rangers who were proficient in the use of snowshoes. Also essential was the task of clearing heavy snows away from the fortifications to prevent any enemy walking over ditches and ramparts in snowshoes. Henry Pringle, writing from Fort Edward, New York in 1757 recorded: 'We have had prodigious Snows which has employed all the Garrison in clearing the works & when the first is removed, a second, two feet comes in

the night. Our intercourse with the French is stop'd by it, as we have not had a deserter since, nor have we sent another Scout there yet.' Knox, serving at Quebec three years later, described the same type of fatigue in which 'the bitterness of the season [was] not to be conceived; several of the men who were clearing the snow that was lodged under the scarp of the town-wall were frostbitten, and some swooned away with the excessive cold'.

Other outpost duties included delivering vital dispatches through hostile country, a task that Kirkwood performed once at great peril. 'I being always forward,' he wrote, 'undertook to carry a packet to Fort Ligonier' as 'the Indians ... had cut off all communications between the Forts, so that it was impossible to send any Intelligence from one place to another.' Setting off with another Light Infantryman and their dog, Kirkwood recorded that they reached Ligonier 'without any interception' but on the return journey 'the Indians had got scent of us and lay in wait'. Kirkwood and his companion resolved to travel in darkness only and laid up the following day, both falling asleep.

'By this imprudence,' Kirkwood noted, 'we threw ourselves into the greatest danger, and would have certainly been murdered, but for [our] dog ... which was alarmed by the noise and the howling the Indians made; they tracked us to the very spot, and had waited until they had gather'd their infernal crew, to make a sacrifice of us.' Kirkwood and his comrade took to their heels, avoiding the road and taking a circuitous bypath 'under terrible apprehensions, for all the way we heard the Indian halloo'. They and their trusty dog reached 'the Fort in safety but our expedition was unlucky for two of the soldiers belonging to the garrison who had been out to look for horses fell in with our pursuers who scalpt them both and left them dead on the spot'.

Everyday tasks sometimes included a soldier's former trade and occupation. In Kirkwood's case, 'being a cooper by trade, I was employed to mend our water casks'. For any sizeable campaign in the wilderness, any army had to be self-sufficient in skilled labourers, whether regular soldiers, provincials or hired civilians. Bouquet was emphatic that troops should be 'taught to throw up entrenchments, make fascines and gabions, as well as to fell trees, saw planks, construct canoes, carts, ploughs, barrows, roofs, casks, batteaux and bridges, and to



**'I lost my comrade'. A soldier is scalped by a French Amerindian warrior. Light Infantry soldiers and Rangers took to scalping enemy Indians in retaliation, as well as for the five-pound bounties that were offered for such grisly war trophies. (Library of Congress)**

**Building a Cabin. In fortified camps of a more permanent nature, Provincial and Regular soldiers were called upon to construct their own cabins or storage sheds. Many soldiers with a trade could earn extra pay for such work. (Dover Pictorial Archives)**



build ovens and loghouses'. They would also need to 'become tolerably good carpenters, masons, tailors, butchers, shoemakers, etc.'

### **Food**

The weekly ration Robert Kirkwood and his comrades could expect while based in a semi-permanent camp or a fort garrison was 'seven pounds of beef, or, in lieu thereof, four pounds of pork, which is thought to be equivalent; seven pounds of biscuit bread [hardtack] or the same weight of flour; six ounces of butter, three pints of pease, half a pound of rice; and this is called seven rations'. With four to six men per tent or hut, these rations would have been pooled with messmates, and either a designated cook or the company women would prepare the daily meals.

An orderly book tells us how the provisions were prepared on arrival in camp for distribution, the regimental quartermasters responsible 'to attend in person to see the flower [sic] weighed deducting the weight of the cask; the pork unpack'd the salt beat off of it and weighed. The butter unpack'd and weighd. Pease to be received by mesure, rice by weight.'

In order to balance the men's diet, garrison and camp gardens were established so that men and officers could grow fresh vegetables such as cabbage, peas, carrots, asparagus, squash, corn and melons. Some regiments kept milking cows, while others kept live sheep, pigs and cattle which would be slaughtered from time to time to provide the men with fresh meat. Sutlers and camp followers also attended each army and provided baking and cooking services, the latter usually for officers. Sutlers also provided luxury items such as eggs, salt, pipe tobacco, sugar, molasses and a wide range of liquors.

Being an accomplished hunter, Robert Kirkwood would undoubtedly have been sent out on hunting parties to supplement the salted meat ration, bringing back such fresh game as deer, moose, elk, bear, wild turkeys, buffalo and a various assortment of ducks and partridge. Every trip away from the safety of camp was rife with danger as Indian scalping parties lurked in the woods waiting for just this type of excursion. One party venturing out of Crown Point in March 1760 to hunt deer as 'they thought the Ice of the Lake so bad the Indians could not approach,' recorded Henry Pringle, were 'all made Prisoners before our eyes & within cannon-shot of the Fort'. Pringle, who had been captured after Rogers' battle on snowshoes in March 1758 thought the affair frivolous: 'To be made prisoner where the Service does not call is inexcusable ... They risk their life, their liberty & intelligence to the Enemy against a Pertridge or a Deer.' He concluded, 'We should at present be old Soldiers in the American War & put nothing to a chance for such a trifle.'

The game that Kirkwood and his fellow marksmen brought in for their company was as varied as the terrain the soldiers had to pass through. While on the Ohio River, Kirkwood observed, 'Here the Buffalo are as plenty as our black cattle in Europe, the Deer as numerous as our Sheep, and wild Turkeys in as much abundance as our poultry.' When tasked with his company of Black Watch (having been transferred on disbandment of the 77th at the Peace) to take possession of French forts in Illinois country in 1765, Kirkwood wrote: 'we had a good pastime in killing the Buffaloes, which were then in their prime ... They have a large hump on their backs, when laid open, appears to be solid fat, much like that of the breast of a cow, and it is really most

delicious eating. In short, the whole carcass for the purpose of soup-making, is in my opinion, preferable to any of our beef.'

Other more exotic fare tried by British soldiers included rattlesnake, porcupine and racoon. Captain James Murray of the Black Watch wrote that 'rattlesnakes make the richest and best soup that can be, which I eat of and like much. The meat is but insipid.' Knox on garrison in Nova Scotia confessed to having tried racoon: 'the flesh of it white and tender, not unlike kid meat; but it was strong and of a disagreeable fishy flavour'.

Fishing was another means of supplementing the standard army fare and Kirkwood's favourite catch of the day was catfish. Whilst in Ohio country he wrote: 'You may catch large fish which they call Catts, some weighing 100 pounds, it makes excellent sauce, and eats very deliciously, broiled on the coals.' Many soldiers carried lines, weights and hooks in their packs – for the 1758 Louisbourg expedition, these items were specially issued and the men encouraged to fish. Knox noted that they 'took great quantities of fish over the ships' sides ... chiefly mackerel and pollock'. While in garrison at Halifax, the soldiers were able to buy 'most kinds of fish and particularly lobsters in great plenty'.

In 1762, a Light Infantry officer at the siege of Havana recorded that his men caught 'a sort of land-shellfish which carries its shell about (as snails do theirs)' which looked 'like a Crawfish or prawn. They run very nimbly along, but when touched, halt and retire as quickly into their movable houses – the Soldiers boiled and ate them'; the hermit crabs were 'so very plenty in some places, that we were obliged to clear them away in order to sit down'. His men also took their hatchets to the 'Cabbage Tree without compassion [and] laid their beauty in the dust ... for to get [fruit] which is at the very top, the tree must be cut down & obliged us to make this Paradise seem a desert'.

When hunting and fishing could not take place because he was on the move, the Light Infantryman was expected to carry his own provisions for the duration of the mission. The usual fare taken was some salt beef or pork, parched Indian corn, peas, rice, hardtack biscuits, 'johnny' (or journey cake) and perhaps some sugar or chocolate to provide instant energy, or to sweeten hot drinks.

### Cannibalism

A stark example of how desperate men could become when deprived of rations on campaign is related by Robert Kirkwood in his *Memoirs* in some gruesome detail. As one of the many Light Infantry 'volunteers' who took part in Rogers' raid on St Francis in September 1759, Kirkwood and the others were forced to return home by a different route, living off the land after their concealed boats containing all their provisions for the return journey had been discovered by the enemy. Eleven days after the raid and split off into groups of about 20 men, they

**A pause on the march. Three Light Infantrymen fill canteens and drink from a pond in the wilderness on campaign. Men were routinely warned not to take muddy or brackish water from ponds or swamps. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)**



struggled southwards through a rugged wilderness strangely devoid of any wildlife. Kirkwood recalled 'being so afflicted with the cold and hunger which we now began to feel in an intolerable degree'. The 'deepness of the snow and the swampness of the country made it impossible for us to stir for several days. During this miserable period we were obliged to scrape under the snow for acorns, and even eat our shoes and belts, and broil our powder horns and thought it delicious eating.'

Kirkwood acknowledged that a captive Indian woman in their party was extremely helpful in gathering edible roots and barks, but when the spectre of death by starvation loomed, Major Rogers, who led Kirkwood's party, saw the woman as their only chance of survival. 'She was plump and fat,' recalled Kirkwood, 'having more flesh upon her than five of us, and Major Rogers several times proposed to make away with her, but we would never consent to it.'

When Kirkwood's party was 'reduced to ten in number, weak and ... in the greatest extremity', he wrote about Major Rogers 'who I observed was stronger than any of us, followed the squaw who was gone out to gather roots, and there he kill'd and cut her up, and brought her to our fire, where he divided and cast lots for the shares, which were distributed to each an equal part. We then broiled and ate most of her; and then received great strength thereby.'

Unsurprisingly, Rogers' own published journals make no mention of this alleged incident, but there is conclusive evidence that other parties of Rogers' fragmented command resorted to this last 'extreme survival' expedient. The story of Lieutenant George Campbell's detachment, recorded by a contemporary historian, Thomas Mante, in his *History of the Late War in North America*, recounts how that party ate the remains of their own men who had been killed and left on the trail by avenging Indians some days earlier.

### **Diet and Disease**

The 'American Army' was cognizant of the important link between a soldier's diet and his ability to withstand disease. Perhaps the most common and persistent affliction was scurvy, popularly believed to be the curse and scourge of the Royal Navy in the 18th century. However, soldiers in North American winter quarters that were located far from cities or towns were the most susceptible, having no recourse to fresh vegetables or meat. A diet solely of salt pork, hard biscuit and rum was almost guaranteed to cause an outbreak of scurvy and Private James Miller in garrison at Quebec in 1760 noted that 'it made a dreadful havock amongst us'. Another soldier of the garrison wrote that 'the soldiers' disorders are chiefly scorbutic, with fevers and dysenteries', a fact 'far from being surprising when we consider the severe fatigues and hardships they have ... which, with indifferent cloathing, uncomfortable barracks, worse bedding and their being intirely confined to a salt provision diet, are sufficient to reduce or emaciate the most robust constitutions in this extremely frigid climate'.

A preventative measure for scurvy was the issue of 'spruce beer' which according to John Knox was 'an excellent antiscorbutic ... made from the tops and branches of the Spruce-tree, boiled for three hours, then strained into casks, with a certain quantity of molasses; and as soon as it is cold, it is fit for use. When we were incamped at Halifax, the allowance was

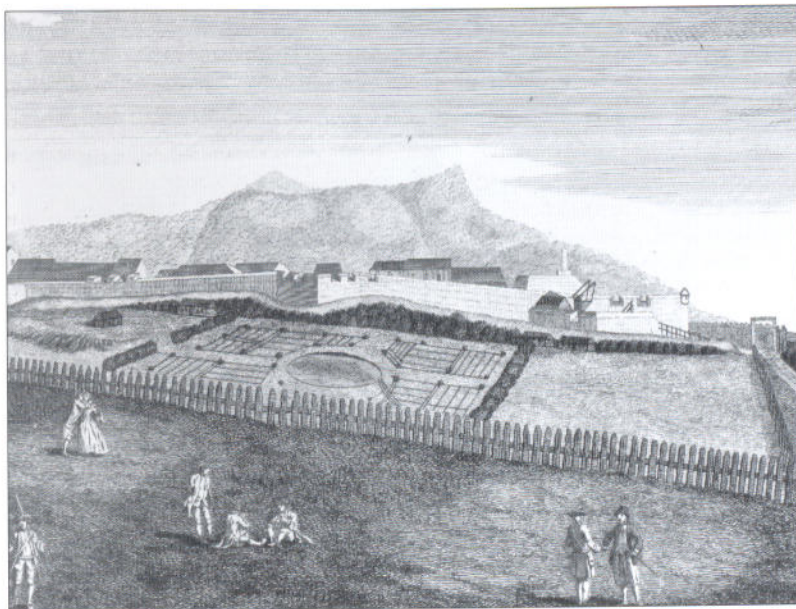
two quarts a day to each man, or three and a half gallons per week.'

As Amherst's army moved north on its 1759 Ticonderoga campaign, orders stated: 'Eight barrels of spruce beer to be allowed to each Regt and one barrel to each company of Grenadiers & Light Infantry.' Preventative measures were also taken to ensure the men had fresh supplies of water and many routine orders of the day testify that the men were often warned not to take muddy or brackish water from ponds or swamps. Lord Howe, an advocate of Light Infantry, directed that all his soldiers on the march 'should not be permitted to stoop to drink, as they are generally inclined to do, but obliged to lift water in their canteens, and mix ginger with it'.

During the 1762 Havana siege, poor water coupled with the extreme heat brought on sickness at an alarming rate. Private James Miller of the 15th Foot recorded: 'The fatigues on shore were excessive, the bad water brought on disorders, which were mortal, you would see the men's tongues hanging out parch'd like a mad dog's, a dollar was frequently given for a quart of water.' Some men, not trusting the water, resorted to alcohol, the result being, as Miller recalled, meeting 'officers and Soldiers, drunk every hour of the day'. Such hard drinking under a tropical sun, no doubt, contributed to the 'American Army's' spiralling mortality rates. Some 5,366 soldiers were lost at Havana between June and October 1762, representing about 40 per cent of the soldiers present. Of these soldiers, just 560 were killed in action or died of wounds. The remainder, 4,708, succumbed to disease.

### Drink and Discipline

When Robert Kirkwood was off duty, he was not averse to 'tying one on' to relieve stress. After his return from the 1761 surrender of French forts on the Great Lakes, he relates that he and his comrades arrived in Albany, New York and enjoyed 'a honeymoon, for we had all our back pay given to us, which, tho' earned hardly, we spent merrily ... verifying the old proverb "got like horses and spent like asses"'. The size of his and his friends' hangovers is not recorded but we do know that an inebriated Kirkwood was charged with desertion shortly afterwards. No doubt he was in no hurry to rejoin his regiment for an expedition to the aptly-named 'Fever Islands' of the Caribbean. Kirkwood was caught and confined at Fort Ontario on 2 December 1761, but was given a reprieve six months later when all able-bodied men who could be spared from the North American garrisons were formed into a fighting force to retake Newfoundland from the French.



**Fort garden.** In order to balance the men's diet, garrison camp gardens were established so that men and officers could grow fresh vegetables such as cabbage, peas, carrots, asparagus, squash, corn and melons. Some regiments kept milk cows while others kept live sheep, pigs or cattles which would be slaughtered from time to time to provide the men with fresh meat. This detail is from an 1762 engraving of Fort Royal in Guadeloupe, by Lieutenant Archibald Campbell, Royal Engineers. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)

Landing at Havana, 1762. A detail from a Dominic Serres view of troops landing stores in the tropical heat of Cuba. Many of the newly arrived battalions from Europe were still dressed for fighting a conventional war. Despite adapting uniforms, heat exhaustion, sunstroke and dehydration weakened the men to such an extent that yellow fever, malaria and dysentery became rampant and mortality rates by disease surpassed those of men killed in action by six to one. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)



Kirkwood also recalled the dangers of drunkenness on the frontier, especially amongst the Amerindians who firmly believed the effects to be the work of spirits so that their behaviour was excused whilst under the influence. He was nearly tomahawked to death by a drunken Shawnee during his first days of captivity but saved by his adoptive 'brother'. On another occasion in Ohio country, he witnessed 'an affray ... betwixt our party and the French Indians who quarreled with one another in their drunken fits and with their scalping knives killed one of our Indians and lost two of their own party so that we had to make peace between them the next morning'.

For soldiers cooped up in the isolated garrison forts in the wilderness there was little to do in the off-duty hours but eat, sleep, gamble and drink. At Fort Stanwix in 1759, a commander wrote that drunkenness had become a serious problem as the men began 'to debauch themselves by Drinking a Great Deal too much Pernicious & hurtful ... New England Rum'. The latter, popularly known as 'Killdevil', was issued daily to the men, a gill or quarter pint their authorised ration. Men could earn an extra gill in lieu of money for extra duties such as road building or fort construction, and in some cases were given extra gills on their return from strenuous patrols or successful expeditions. A Light Infantryman would dilute his rum with water and take it out when scouting or on ambush patrols to warm his bones on particularly cold nights. When rum was not available, captured stocks of French brandy such as those taken at Louisbourg and Quebec were used as a substitute.

Drink was understandably seen as an unwelcome inconvenience by most commanders, as drunken troops were the antithesis of well-disciplined and alert soldiers. Strict regulations were put in place on sutlers during military operations so that unnecessary temptation was kept from the men and they could stay focussed and alert to the tasks at hand. Needless to say enterprising soldiers could always find drink somewhere and Private James Miller, who served with the 15th Foot at Quebec in 1759-60 recalled 'Liquors were extremely scarce, and when



the men could procure them, they generally drank to excess, it was no uncommon thing in the morning, to find several men frozen to death, from the above cause.'

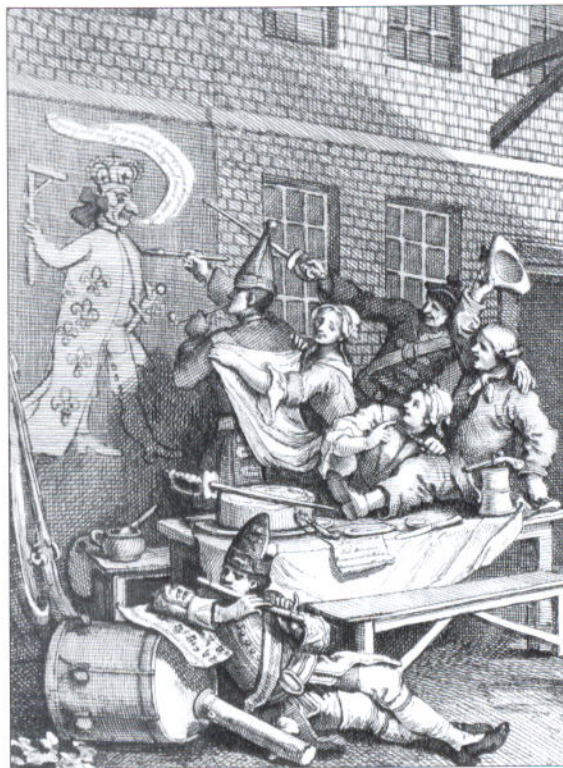
Strictures against the sale of alcohol were usually relaxed after a successful campaign or when regiments went into winter quarters. While heavy drinking could be a killer in hot or cold climates, it was also one of the root causes of army crime. British historian Stephen Brumwell remarked in his excellent study of the British soldier in North America, *Redcoats*: 'it is unusual to find a court case in which alcohol [did] not play some part'.

Insolence, violence against superiors, theft and murder were common outcomes of too much drink and were dealt with accordingly by General Courts Martial. Despite Light Infantrymen being the most active and spirited soldiers of their battalions, they were also human. Thus many were brought to account at one time or another for breaking some regulation or committing some petty crime. Robert Kirkwood was no exception and in 1762 we find him mentioned in orders published in New York on 13 August 1762: 'General [Amherst] has been pleased to pardon, Joseph Craddock of the 22d Regimt, prisoner on board the James, & Robert Kirkwood of the 77th Regimt, prisoner on board the Fanny, & as they are going upon Service, the General hopes they will shew themselves by their behaviour deserving of this Mercy.' The urgent operational necessity and the fact that Kirkwood was an experienced Light Infantryman probably had a lot to do with him earning a reprieve from the usual punishment meted out for desertion – death by hanging or the lash.

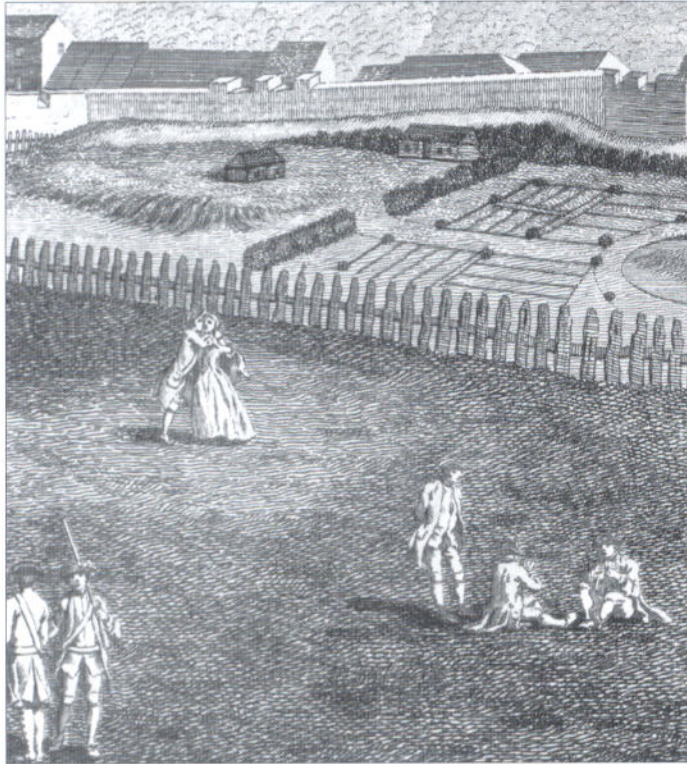
### Flogging and Hanging

Punishment in the British Army was quick and severe, the lash or cat-o-nine-tails being the most common chastisement of the private soldier and the origin of the standard provincial epithet normally thrown their way – 'Bloodybacks'. One provincial Light Infantryman was horrified the first time he witnessed the flogging of a British regular. Massachusetts Sergeant David Perry recorded in his memoirs:

There is one thing I would here notice, which shows a specimen of British cruelty without a parallel, I could hope, in the history of that nation. Three men, for some trifling offence which I do not recollect, were tied up to be whipped. One of them was to receive eight hundred lashes, the others five hundred apiece. By the time they had received three hundred lashes, the flesh appeared to be entirely whipped from their shoulders, and they hung as mute and motionless as though they had been long since deprived of life. But this was not enough. The doctor stood by with a vial of sharp stuff, which he would ever and anon apply to their noses, and finding, by



**Drink.** Off-duty soldiers carousing outside a pub. A detail from *See John the Soldier, Jack the Tar*, by William Hogarth. Drink was seen as an evil necessity by most commanders. Drunken troops were the antithesis of well-disciplined and alert soldiers so strict regulations were put in place during military operations to ensure the men stayed focused and alert to the tasks in hand. Needless to say, enterprising soldiers could always find drink somewhere. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)



OPPOSITE Gambling. A detail from a 1762 engraving of Fort Royal Guadeloupe by Lt. Archibald Campbell, Royal Engineers. Playing cards was one of the favorite off-duty pastimes in frontier garrisons to while away the hours. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library).

OPPOSITE BELOW Drinking in the tent lines. Private James Miller recalled meeting 'officers and soldiers, drunk every hour of the day.' Such hard drinking under a tropical sun no doubt contributed to the 'American Army's' spiraling mortality rates. Some 5,366 soldiers were lost at Havana between June and October 1762, representing about 40% of the soldiers present. Of these soldiers just 560 were killed in action or died of wounds. The remainder, 4,708, succumbed to disease. A view of Fort Royal, Guadeloupe by Lieutenant Archibald Campbell, Royal Engineers. (Courtesy of the William L. Clements Library)

the pain it gave them, that some signs of life remained, he would tell them, 'Damn you, you can bear it yet' – and then the whipping would commence again. It was the most cruel punishment I ever saw inflicted, or had ever conceived of before – by far

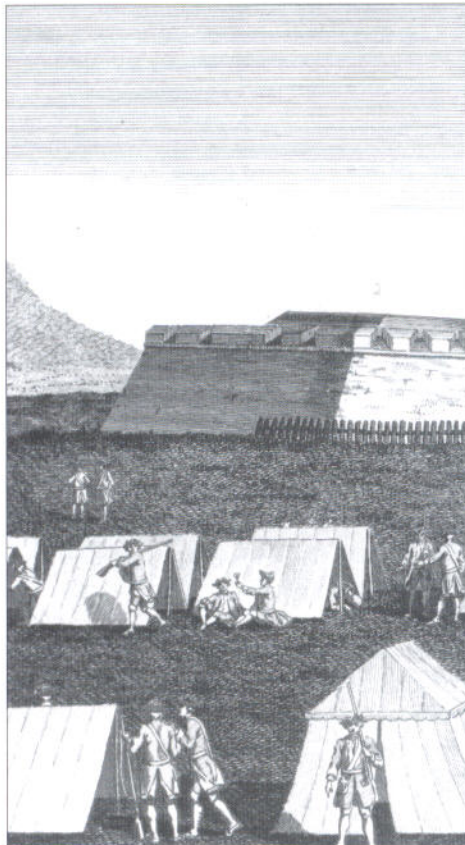
worse than death. I felt at the time as though I could have taken summary vengeance on those who were the authors of it, on the spot, had it been in my power to do it.

Men of Gage's Light Infantry, who one Highlander described as 'the Jailbirds of America', seemed to have a very high incidence of flogging and death by execution, while Highland units like Kirkwood's by comparison had relatively little. Military records of August 1758 from the Lake George camp, where Abercromby's army rested and licked its wounds after the drubbing they had received at Ticonderoga, reveal that desertion was a serious problem that had to be dealt with quickly and severely. They stated on 25 August 1758 that 'John Andrew, John Harrison, Thos Vincent & Wm Moor, of His Majesty's Regt of Light Infantry are to suffer Death tomorrow morning at nine o'clock, for Desertion, in the front of their own Regt. A picquet of that regiment to guard the above Prisoners from the Provosts & and the whole Regiment to be under arms, to attend the Executions.' Hanging was usually the punishment reserved for traitors, deserters found in the uniform of the French or for soldiers who murdered their own comrades.

### Women

Robert Kirkwood and his fellow Light Infantrymen were no strangers to women as the 'American Army' had its share of

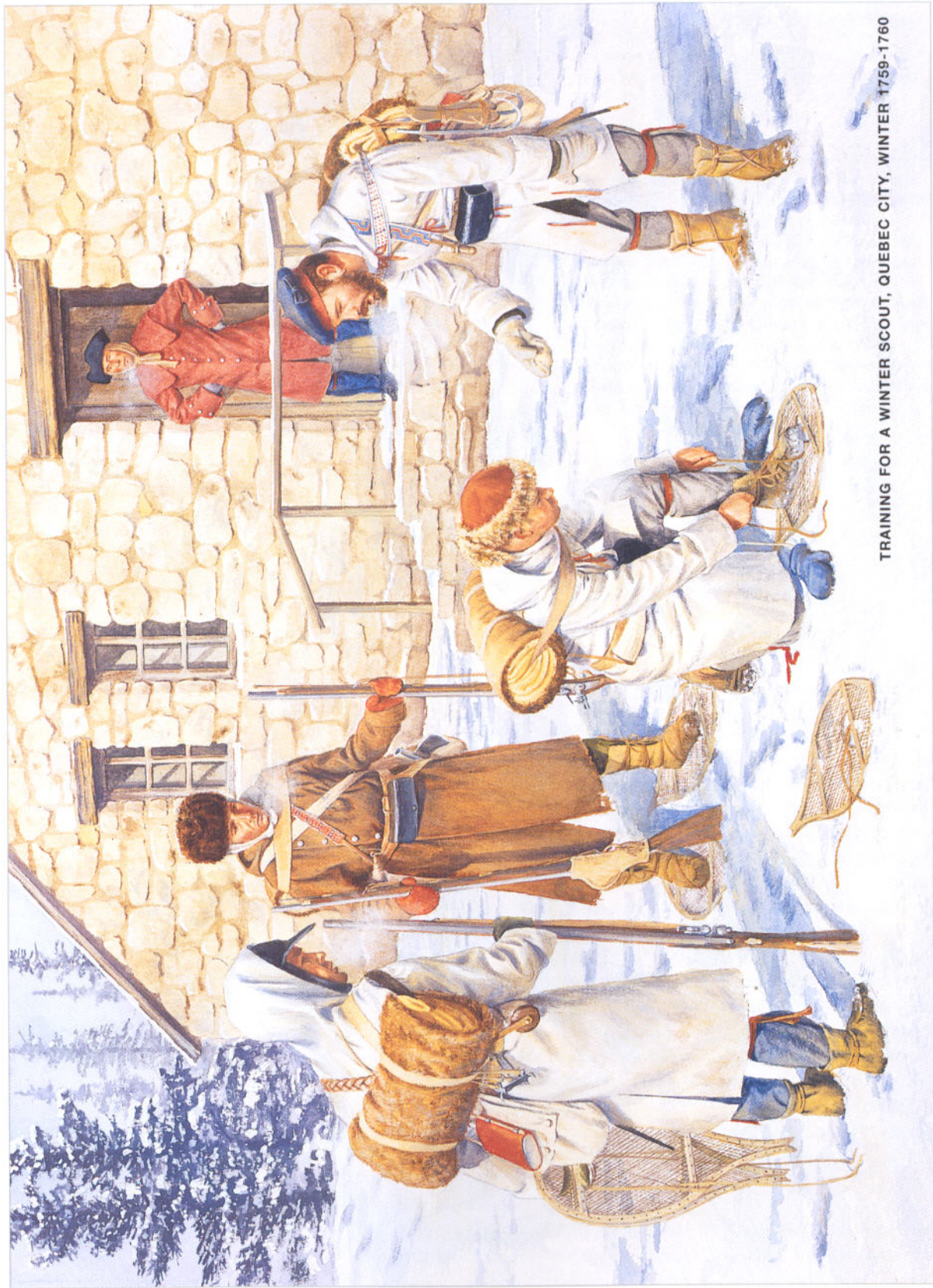
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LIGHT INFANTRYMAN, 55TH REGIMENT 1758



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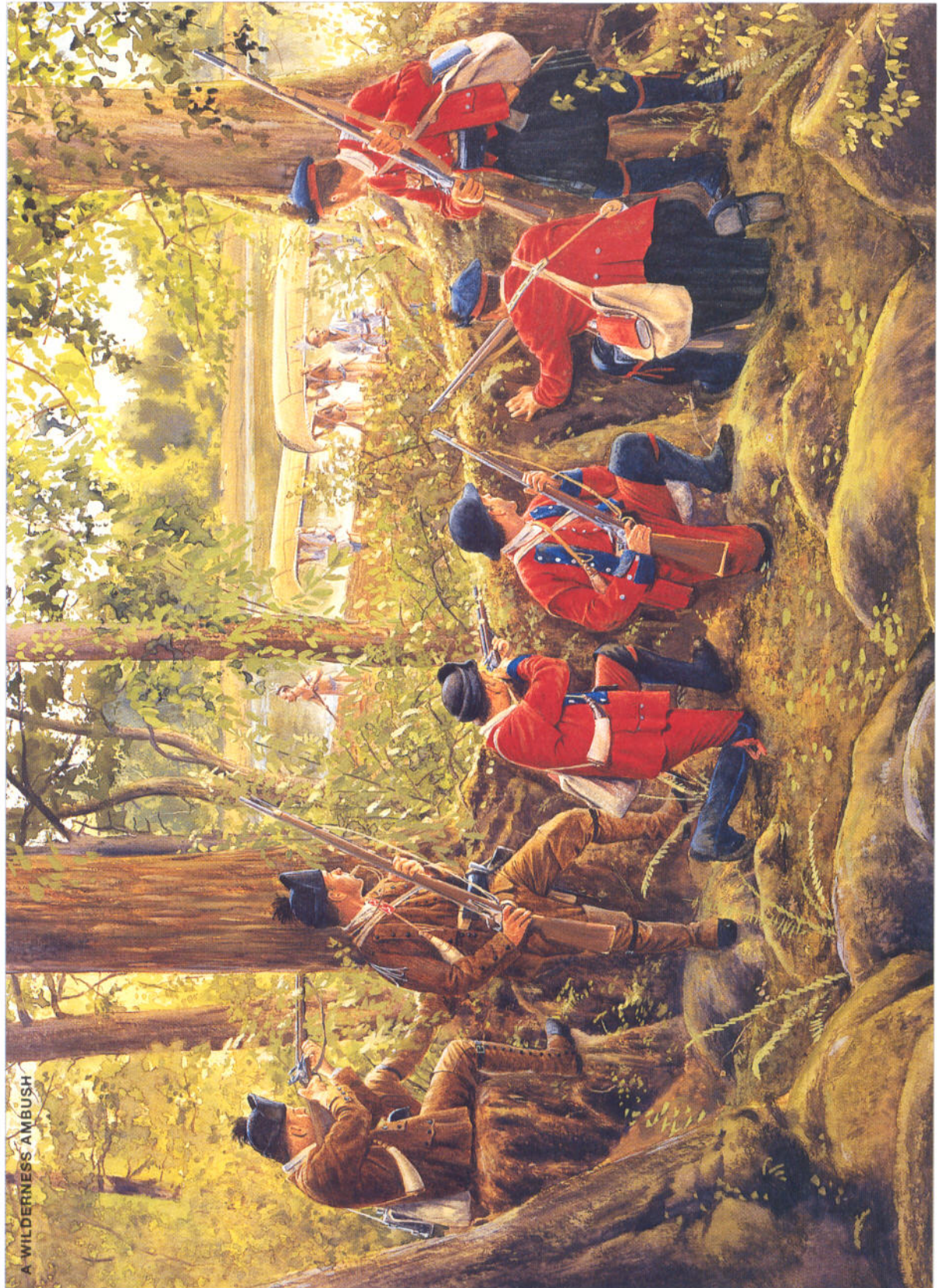


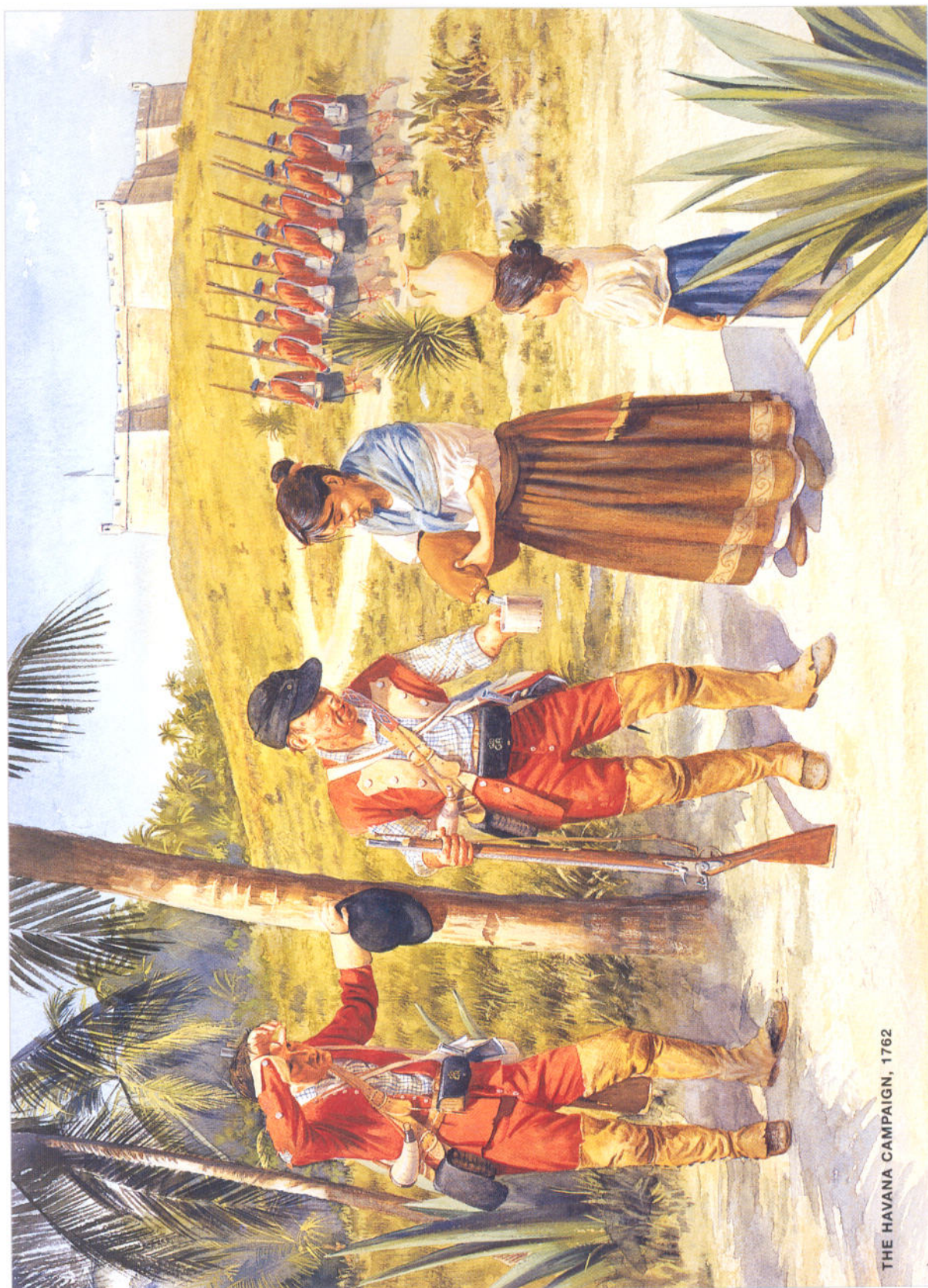
TRAINING FOR A WINTER SCOUT, QUEBEC CITY, WINTER 1759-1760

DAILY LIFE AT FORT CROWN POINT, 1761



A WILDERNESS AMBUSH





THE HAVANA CAMPAIGN, 1762

LOUISBOURG 1758-KENNINGTON COVE





THE STORMING OF SIGNAL HILL



80TH (GAGE'S LIGHT INFANTRY): LATE WAR



army wives and camp followers, simply referred to in the records of the day as the 'women'. Kirkwood's regiment and others usually had an establishment of six women per company, who performed a myriad of chores from cooking and sewing to nursing and laundering.

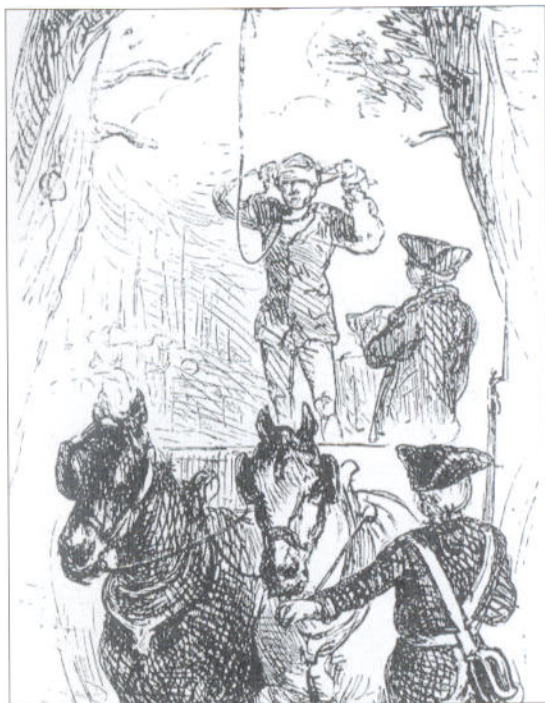
Kirkwood's *Memoirs*, intended for a male audience and specifically written for soldiers going on duty to North America, mentions Indian women several times. During his captivity and when adopted into the tribe to replace a fallen warrior, he was not only outfitted and armed as an Indian, but inherited a wife, son and cornfield. His new wife 'seem'd very glad at my appearance,' recalled Kirkwood, 'but begged she might be excused my bed, as she thought this sacrifice due to [her husband's] memory'. Kirkwood confessed to be 'not the least displeas'd with my spouse's behaviour' and 'could have forever dispensed with her company'.

Other soldiers, including officers garrisoned at remote outposts and forts, took unofficial Indian wives on a regular basis, to keep them company. Captain Quinton Kennedy of Gage's Light Infantry was one of the best known, his exploits making the pages of *The Scot's Magazine*: 'Kennedy has married an Indian squaw, whose tribe has made him a king ... He has learned the language, paints and dresses like an Indian and ... His wife goes with him and carries her provisions on her back.'

Military records of the 1758 and 1759 Ticonderoga expeditions tell us that women were not permitted to follow the army on campaign. Instead, they were instructed to report for service as nurses at the General Hospital in Albany. Orders on 15 May 1758 stated that all regimental commanding officers were 'to give in the women's names they intend should receive [sic] the allowance for provision this campaign and are to recommend - The first that came with the Regt from Europ if they are willing to be nurses to the Gen. Hosp'tl when required. They are not to exceed 4 per company.'

Many a young Light Infantryman wounded on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec in 1759 found themselves tended by French Augustine nuns, who according to John Knox were 'young, handsome and fair ... When our poor fellows were ill and ordered to be removed from their own odious regimental hospitals to [the Hospital-General] they indeed were rendered inexpressibly happy.'

An entry from Crown Point in June 1761 indicates that 'supernumerary' women over and above those carried on regimental establishments were allowed to accompany their husbands, but on the understanding they did not draw rations; this implies that too many unruly women and their families were at Crown Point and things were out of hand. They were ordered 'to go down the country' and 'to be ready to depart early on Saturday morning with their children and baggage, they will have Batoes [batteaux] to carry them to Ticanteroga and must embrace the first opportunity of going across Lake George. If any of them presume to remain after this order, or to return to Crown Point, [they]



**Hanging.** Hanging was usually the punishment reserved for traitors, deserters, soldiers who had murdered their own comrades or had stolen from civilians. The offender's entire regiment was usually paraded to witness the execution and thus be reminded that most transgressions of the Articles of War were punishable by death. (Dover Pictorial Archives)



TOP Camp laundress. Woman doing laundry in camp. A detail of the painting *Passing the Time of Day*. (Courtesy of John Buxton and Paramount Press)

BOTTOM Indian family. On his capture by the Shawnee in 1758, Robert Kirkwood was adopted into the tribe to replace a fallen warrior and, in the process, inherited the dead man's wife, infant son and cornfield. A detail of the painting *Leaving*. (Courtesy of Robert Griffing and Paramount Press)

may depend on being drummed out of the regiment.' These orders obviously did not have the desired effect, as many women and children took to the woods rather than leave their men.

Orders a day later took on a more strident tone and placed the onus on their husbands: 'The women who have absconded this morning and have not obeyed the order of yesterday must depart tomorrow morning at Sun rising with their baggage, their husbands to be acquainted that if they disobey, that their names will be put in orders discharging them forever from the regiment.' There was no further mention of the incident in following entries, indicating that compliance was swift from the more rebellious women.

Other camp followers included prostitutes and sutlers, both peddling wares but of differing sorts. The former were found in the many towns and cities of North America, wherever armies and fleets gathered; some followed the regiments as they moved from garrison to garrison. One provincial soldier at the Lake George camp in October 1758 recorded with some disgust in his diary: 'this afternoon their was a Lobster Corporal married to a Road Island whore'.

Women sutlers, on the other hand, were enterprising soldiers' wives who acted as money-changers or sold small luxury items not provided by the army such as 'rolled tobacco, tobacco leaf, Scots snuff, hard soap, lump sugar, ordinary smoking pipes, Dutch pipes, threads, needles, pins, tapes, flannels, coarse woolen cloths, nails, bolts, locks, hasps, garden tools and stationary supplies.' Fiercely independent and aggressive, they sometimes incurred the wrath of commanders by selling too much liquor or flouting camp discipline. The 42nd Highlanders' orders for 17 May 1759 in Albany stated that 'all the petit Sutlers tents in the rear or any other whereabouts the Regt' were to be 'struck immediately and if any woman whatsoever pretends to pitch tent about after this, near the regt, the Qr. Mr. is to order it to be struck and burnt directly'.

### Songs and Music

For some off-duty Light Infantrymen, singing and music offered a pleasurable way to pass the time in an isolated outpost or while carousing in a tavern. Songs that have survived to this day are a mixture of ribald drinking songs with choruses, patriotic marching tunes like 'The British Grenadiers' and 'The Grenadiers' March', or melancholy ballads such as 'The Highland Man Kist his Mother' or 'For the Sake of Gold she left

me'. A Light Infantryman in Howe's 55th Foot, John Bremner, preserved his favourite fiddle tunes in his journal, a sampling of which include: 'The Lady's Breastknot'; 'Lochiel's Reel', 'The Maltman Comes on Monday'; 'The Flowers of Edinburgh'; and 'Welcome, Welcome, Brother Debtor'. 'Hot Stuff', written by a sergeant of the 47th at the siege of Quebec to the tune of 'Lilies of France', was a campfire favourite after 1759. The third verse boasts that the 'Chosen Men' of the Seven Years' War were a force not to be trifled with:

With powder in his periwig, and snuff in his nose  
 Monsieur will run down our descent  
 to oppose  
 And the Indians will come but the Light  
 Infantry  
 Will soon compel them to betake to a tree.

The Irish, Welsh and particularly the Scottish Highlander brought with them a rich oral tradition of music, songs, recitations, proverbs, riddles and innocent games. William McMurdo was an accomplished piper and poet who served in Kirkwood's regiment, the Montgomerie Highlanders. Fraser's Highlanders boasted a Corporal Iain Campbell who is attributed with the composition 'At the Siege of Quebec', a popular Gaelic song which became a favourite in the Highlands after the war.

Musical instruments available to the soldiers were fifes, flutes, tin whistles and fiddles, while Highland regiments had bagpipes to make their own distinctive music, the pipers of the Black Watch being the renowned McIntyres, hereditary pipers to Clan Menzies. The last music Robert Kirkwood heard before being captured by Indians was the skirl of the pipes and the beating of drums trying to rally the 77th Highlanders fighting for their lives outside Fort Duquesne.

## ON CAMPAIGN

### *'Scourg'd and tortur'd the entire day'*

Every Light Infantryman had to contend with the weather, wildlife and terrain of North America while on campaign before he could even think of closing with the enemy, each providing their own particular dangers for the unprepared or unwary soldier.

BELOW TOP **Sutlers.** A detail from Richard Short's 1759 engraving 'A General View of Quebec' depicting a female sutler in a tricorne hat talking to soldiers on guard duty. Sutlers were independent merchants or pedlars who followed the army whilst on campaign. Many enterprising soldiers' wives acted as money-changers or sold small luxury items not issued by the army. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-335)

BELOW BOTTOM **Highland fiddler.** A detail of the painting *Long Way from Home*. The Irish, Welsh and particularly the Scottish Highlander, brought with them a rich oral tradition of music, songs, recitations, proverbs, riddles and innocent games. (Courtesy of Robert Griffing and Paramount Press)



## **Weather**

In winter, Light Infantry soldiers serving on sentry duty, wood-cutting parties or convoy duty quickly discovered that their issue clothing was ill suited to withstand the rigours of the North American climate. Wolfe's victorious army in 1759 found themselves in dire straits when they occupied a city in ruins with very little overhead cover to protect them against the elements. Almost all succumbed to frostbite while others died of 'ague' and pneumonia.

On Christmas Day 1759, General Murray recorded the return of a Light Infantry detachment from patrol, which 'to a man, had been frost-bit'. The next year at Crown Point on Lake Champlain, the commander of the 27th Inniskilling Regiment recorded it 'was monstrosly cold', while Amherst noted that a 166-man detachment on the march from that garrison to Fort Ticonderoga had 'suffer'd in an extraordinary manner from the intensesness of the cold' and how the regimental surgeon, George Eagle, was 'oblig'd to cut off above 100 toes'.

The other extreme was the debilitating heat of the tropics, and many a Light Infantryman serving in Martinique and Cuba in 1762 preferred night operations to avoid the sweltering heat of the cane fields and jungles. Men in the 'American Army' seemed to have fared slightly better than the newly arrived battalions from Europe who were still dressed for fighting a conventional war. Commanding officers of these European units had to be instructed 'to order the Lining ... ripped [sic] out of the Men's Cloaths, the Lapels to be taken off and Skirts cut Short'. Heat exhaustion, sunstroke and dehydration weakened the men to such a state that yellow fever, malaria and dysentery became rampant and mortality rates from disease surpassed those of men killed in action by six to one.

## **Wildlife**

It was not only the climate that was demanding. Numerous insects and wildlife had to be contended with, as one Light Infantry officer serving at the siege of Havana, 1762 confessed in a letter home: 'We grew familiar with the Scorpions, Toads, Santipedes, & Tarantulas or rather Spiders as large as my Hand.' In the North American woods, black flies, deer ticks, leeches and other parasites made life miserable for the soldier, mosquitoes being the most despised. John Knox wrote:

The tormenting musketa ... carries its sting in its head and not in its tail as bees, wasps and other insects do; they are so inexpressibly teasing that I have known many people thrown into fevers by their virulence, and a person's head, face and neck so swelled and inflamed as not to have a feature distinguishable; for this cause we always wore long linen trousers, with crepe or green gauze nets sewed to our hats, which hung down loose before and behind, with a running string at the bottom to gather it round the neck occasionally.

Knox added 'no-see-ums' to the list of tormentors, 'a diminutive kind of black fly which also stings most intolerably ... scarce perceptible to the naked eye, and one would think it was a pupil to the musketa, giving us little quarter whenever he comes.'



**LEFT** Winter wood-gathering party, Quebec, 1760. Collecting fuel on sleighs was a mundane but dangerous task for troops of any fort or camp in the North American winter and Light Infantry was frequently tasked to provide daily protection parties. The woodcutters and their guardians were paid five shillings per cord and usually returned frostbitten for their troubles. (Private Collection)

Sometimes men encountered snakes with Robert Kirkwood even recording an alleged visit (probably an embellishment) to Snake Island on Lake Superior: 'this island so full of Snakes of all kinds, that you may hear the hiss a quarter of a mile from the island'. On landing 'one of the Indians came to me with a large rattle snake on the point of a spear, he cut off the head, and having ript it open, presented me with the heart and made me swallow it yet alive, telling me that it was a charm against all snakes, and that none of them would ever attempt to do me the worst injury'. Kirkwood noted sceptically that 'whether this was a real charm or not, I cannot tell', but the backwoods soldier avered that 'I never was bit by any snake after'. Highlander John Campbell wasn't awed by snakes and wrote to his brother: 'I have killed rattle snakes about four feet long and as thick as the small of one's leg ... When touched they make a great noise with their rattles. Their bite is not so bad as called, for it can be easily cured with oil or salt.'

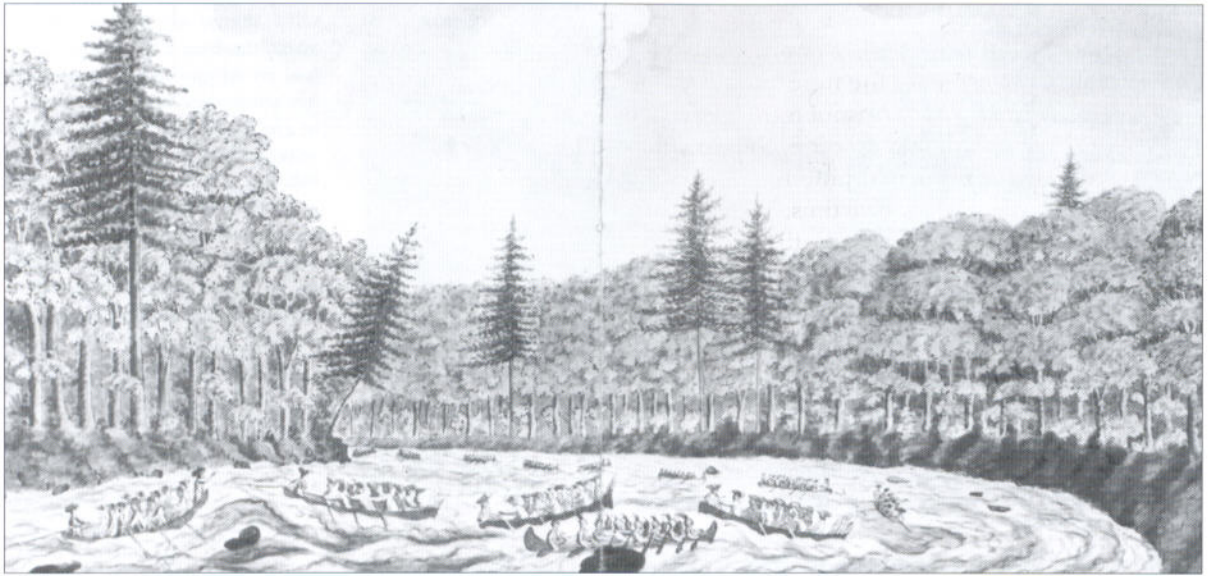
Camps were also prone to vermin such as rats and mice if garbage and refuse was not properly buried and records of the time are full of directives reminding commanders to enforce camp cleanliness strictly. When on garrison in Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia, Knox reported: 'it is inconceivable what quantities of mice we have on this ground, insomuch that one can scarce walk a few paces without seeing or treading on them'. Orders from Quebec 1759 explicitly warned all soldiers issued with snowshoes to hang them up after use or they would be eaten by 'Rotts and meace'.

### **Terrain**

Terrain could also be unforgiving, necessitating a Light Infantry soldier to wear leggings to protect his legs from poison ivy, poison sumac and brambles when moving through the woods. Numerous men drowned traversing thin ice in spring or met an

**BELOW** British encampment at Crown Point. This view shows tent lines and more permanent huts erected to house Major General Jeffery Amherst's victorious army at Crown Point for the winter of 1759-60. A contemporary watercolour by Lieutenant Thomas Davies, Royal Artillery. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-13314)





'We lost a hundred men on our passage'. A contemporary watercolour by Lieutenant Thomas Davies, Royal Artillery, c.1760, depicting Amherst's army shooting the Long Sault rapids on the way to Montreal. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-577)

accidental death doing duty on the constant boat service required to ferry supplies up and down the lakes and rivers.

Robert Kirkwood in his *Memoirs* notes several instances of the perils faced on North American waterways. Sudden thunderstorms on any of the Great Lakes meant certain death for men in small whaleboats or batteaux. Kirkwood warned that on Lake Erie 'you meet with a long range of highlands, which is very dangerous in passing, for if a storm should arise, your boats will inevitably be dashed to pieces and every soul lost'. Two years after Kirkwood's successful passage of this stretch, a sudden November storm devastated a British fleet of batteaux carrying 600 troops and much-needed supplies from Niagara to Detroit. Many of the boats were shattered like matchwood, 70 men drowned and vast quantities of ammunition and provisions were lost. Equally dangerous was the practice of shooting rapids instead of portaging, the latter a long and laborious process of unloading boats and carrying them and their cargoes manually overland until a quieter stretch of water could be reached.

On its approach to Montreal in 1760 Amherst's army shot the rapids near Montreal, the result being 'we lost a hundred men on our passage'. Kirkwood added that their deaths 'were occasion'd by their not being careful to keep their boats in the right channel, which can only be distinguished by the smoothness of the surface and it is always fatal to anyone who deviates from this rule'. A fellow Highlander who braved the same rapids with Kirkwood that fateful day sadly recalled, 'fellow creatures floating on the wrecks and you passing them not being able to assist'.

### **Scalping and Torture**

The few journals and memoirs of private soldiers that survive today are replete with tales of scalping and torture, a horror that weighed heavily on all soldiers' minds. Robert Kirkwood saw friends scalped and tortured before his eyes, an experience that no doubt brutalised the young Scot and steeled him for future combat in the Americas. After being taken prisoner by the Shawnee at Fort Duquesne in 1758, he was 'scourg'd, and



tortur'd the entire day' with nine other prisoners. Then Kirkwood sadly recalled, 'to my unspeakable grief and terror I saw five of the nine burned in the most cruel manner'. The prisoners were tied to posts in the centre of heaped pine boughs, then their captors stuck sharpened pine roots 'into the fleshy parts of the unhappy victims, [which] they set ... on fire which consume[d] them in a slow and lingering manner'.

Many soldiers preferred killing themselves before submitting to such a death. Private Allan Macpherson of the 77th Foot, also at the same battle as Kirkwood, tried to kill himself before capture but was disarmed and taken prisoner. Macpherson, like Kirkwood, witnessed friends in excruciating agony and decided to take action. He made signs to the Indians that he wished to communicate and an interpreter was found. The Highlander told them that before he died, he wished to show them a very powerful medicine that, if applied to the skin, would cause it to resist the strongest blow of a tomahawk. He persuaded them to let him go into the woods under guard where he collected the requisite herbs and plants to make the potion for a demonstration.

On his return, Macpherson boiled his herbs, made a paste, then rubbed it all over his neck. Laying his neck across a log, the Highlander dared their strongest warrior to take up his hatchet, boasting that the potion would prevent the least hurt. David Stewart of Garth, who heard this anecdote from one of his old soldiers who had served with Montgomery's Highlanders recorded that 'An Indian, levelling a blow with all his might, cut with such force that the head flew off to the distance of several yards. The Indians were fixed in amazement at their own credulity, and the address with which the prisoner had escaped the lingering death prepared for him, but instead of being enraged at the escape of their victim they were so pleased with his ingenuity that they refrained from inflicting further cruelties on the remaining prisoners.'

A Light Infantryman, in addition to adopting the 'Indian howl' as his own, took up the practice of scalping any Indians he killed. Wolfe sanctioned the scalping of Indians or 'Canadians dressed as Indians' at Quebec in 1759 as irregular warfare flared on the peripheries of his encampments on a daily basis, and a bounty of £5 was offered for every Indian scalp brought in. In one skirmish on 23 August 1759, a number of Canadians painted and dressed as Indians were taken prisoner and according to a Highland officer were 'butchered in a most inhuman and cruel manner'. To one Light Infantryman present, however, it was sweet justice after seeing so many friends cut down in the nasty little war 'of skirmishing, cruelty and devastation' around Quebec. Private Richard Humphreys noted laconically in his journal how he and his Light Infantry comrades 'kill'd and Sculp'd the whole party, Returning about three O'clock in the afternoon to Camp with their Sculps'.



**'Scourg'd and tortur'd the entire day'. Light Infantryman Robert Kirkwood witnessed with horror the torture of nine British prisoners taken at Fort Duquesne in 1758, 'then to my unspeakable grief and terror I saw five of the nine burned in the most cruel manner'. This contemporary painting graphically depicts a captured soldier, his face painted black and body showing poker burns, being burned at the stake. (Courtesy of the Seneca County Museum, Tiffin, Ohio)**

Quebec conquered – daily routine. A contemporary print by Richard Short of British Infantry parading on the Place d'Armes in the captured city of Quebec, c.1759. Note the bombed-out houses and buildings in which British troops were quartered during the harsh winter of 1759–60 and subsequently were looted as a result. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-361)



### Looting

Light Infantrymen had to travel light, so weighing themselves down with loot was not advisable if they were to survive in the forests. On one occasion during the siege of Quebec in 1759, the men serving in Major Dalling's Light Infantry corps resorted to looting Canadian homes whilst in hot pursuit of prisoners. 'None taken,' one anonymous Light Infantryman recorded in his journal, but 'the partys brought in several sheep, hogs, fowls, etc., with a great quantity of household furniture and wearing apparel, at which conduct Major Dalling seem'd greatly offended!' The animals were considered valid spoils of war but all loot of a personal nature was ordered to be deposited inside the village church.

One soldier after the battle of the Plains of Abraham unabashedly admits he 'travers'd the battlefield' in search of loot and found more than he counted on! The field was 'strewn with bleeding carcasses, and covered with unemployed arms, a neat silver-mounted hangar [small sword] fastened to the side of an apparently headless trunk ... attracted my attention,' he wrote. 'When the body was turned over to unbuckle the belt, my astonishment was indeed great; his head lay underneath his breast, one stroke upon the back of his neck having cut thro' the whole, except a small part of the skin of the throat by which it remained connected to the body.'

Normally soldiers were quickly punished for looting or stealing from the civilian populace as in the case of Corporal Thomas Knipe of the 48th Foot who was sentenced to 1,000 lashes and reduced to private for ripping a pair of silver earrings from a Spanish woman's ears on the 1762 Havana expedition. And while soldiers were prohibited during the Caribbean expeditions from plundering, the same apparently did not apply to camp followers and army wives. John Grant remembered clearing houses on the outskirts of Havana only to return some time later and find the houses ransacked. Outside he found 'Soldiers wives and camp followers' capering about in their plundered finery, being 'equipped most amuzingly [sic] in their borrowed plumes'.

### Medical Services

The Light Infantry soldier, if wounded in set-piece battles such as Ticonderoga, 1758, the Louisbourg landings, 1758, or the Plains of Abraham, 1759, at Quebec, could reasonably expect some form of

rudimentary care from the primitive medical system that the 18th century British Army had in place. More often than not, however, the detached nature of the service in which patrolling, skirmishing or raiding meant travelling fast and light, any seriously wounded Light Infantryman had to be left behind. Kirkwood's first scouting patrol was an eye-opener for him in this regard as a friend was badly wounded 'whom we were under the necessity of leaving behind, with such quantity of provisions as could be conveniently spared'. He added wistfully: 'We never heard anything of him after.'

Medical services were organised along regimental lines, each regiment having its own hospital with a hospital sergeant and orderlies belonging to the regiment. Field hospitals of a kind, with special officers attached to them, were established in time of war to take over the sick and wounded overflow from the regimental hospitals such as the General Hospital established at Albany early on in the Seven Years' War or the taking over of French hospitals as was done at Quebec in 1759. Barracks in New York, Elizabethtown and Amboy were converted into hospitals in an attempt to treat the huge numbers of fever-ridden men coming back from the Caribbean operations. A sick and wounded Light Infantryman's recuperation would have been left to the care of the inhabitants of the colony in which an army was campaigning. Kirkwood spent time with a family in Connecticut recuperating after the St Francis Raid of 1759.

Gunshot wounds during the Seven Year's War were stuffed with bandages moistened with wine or brandy, and if infection and suppuration threatened, antiseptics such as tincture of myrrh, hot turpentine, balsam of Peru or camphor were sometimes applied. Trephining as a routine procedure in head injuries was maintained as was cauterisation of blood vessels after amputation, though the reckless 'lopping off arms and legs by the dozen', as Frederick the Great termed it, was actively discouraged. A British Army surgeon gives a standard account of what kind of wounds could be expected in an 18th century battle as well as their treatment:

It's impossible to describe the variety of wounds from cannon shot, small arms, swords and bayonets. My first intention in dressing wounds was to stop bleeding, which I did by stitching the vessels, dry dressings, bandage etc. Having no assistant, I avoided amputations as much as possible, the necessity obliged me in some cases ...The night passed amidst the groans of the dying and the complaints of those who survived them ... Slight wounds were dressed with Balsalm Traumatic ... Contusions from cannon-balls seldom recover...soon spread upwards and downwards commonly attended with large emphysema over the whole body ... Drought (dehydration) is the most universal complaint from all the Wounded and surgeons would do better in filling their medicine chests with proper liquors for this purpose, than stuffing them with apothecaries drugs.

Sergeant James Thompson of Fraser's Highlanders had a close call with a cannonball between his thighs at the 1758 Louisbourg landings at Gabarus Bay, and 'although this shot did not touch me, the thighs and calves of my legs were affected and became as black as my hat, and for some weeks I suffered a great deal'. After the Battle of the Plains of

Abraham in 1759, Thompson assisted in carrying wounded off the battlefield 'where casualties lay on the field as thick as a flock of sheep and just as they had fallen'. He noted that the French had suffered the most and commented with some pity, 'it was horrible to see the effect of blood and dust on their white coats'.

The skill and mercy shown by the Augustine nursing sisters of Quebec after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 has already been remarked upon. Four days after the epic battle and with the capitulation of the city, all British wounded from the outlying camps or with their regimental hospitals were centralised in the Hôpital-General under the care of the Augustine Sisters. This remarkable facility and its trained staff probably saved many wounded men's lives on both sides for it appears to have anticipated Florence Nightingale's reforms during the Crimean War 100 years later. Knox praised the nuns as 'exceedingly humane and tender' and described their hospital in glowing terms:

No man can lie down more clean and comfortable ... each patient has his own bed with curtains allotted to him ... The beds are ranged in galleries on each side, with a sufficient space between each for a person to pass through; these galleries are scraped and swept away every morning and afterwards sprinkled with vinegar, that a stranger is not sensible of any unsavoury scent whatever.

If too disabled to serve, a Light Infantryman, like other British regulars, was discharged and sent home, many abandoned to fend for themselves. Some who were lucky could re-enlist in invalid companies which traditionally garrisoned port and harbour defenses in Britain. Others, if fortunate enough to have had more than 20 years service before being incapacitated, could apply to the Royal Hospitals at Chelsea in London or Kilmainham in Dublin as potential pensioners. The majority, however, became beggars on the streets of the cities, visible reminders of Britain's overseas wars.

## MOTIVATION

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From the outset of their hard service in North America, Robert Kirkwood and his colleagues saw themselves as avenging angels. Any notions of honour and glory they may have had upon their recruitment were wrenched from their system on their first march through western Pennsylvania, viewing 'the horrible situation' of a once-beautiful country. Kirkwood recorded their shock in his journal as they passed:

Houses deserted, the Corn fields, Orchards, and well filled Haggards yet smoking, melancholy proofs of the barbarous enmity of the merciless Indians. This scene continued for the extent of eighty miles ... from Shippensburg to Bedford ...and whoever was so unhappy as to fall into the hands of these inhuman wretches was either scalped and burnt or otherways barbarously used.

A year after Kirkwood's capture and escape from the Shawnee, he was serving in the 77th Foot's light company at Crown Point and did not

hesitate to volunteer for the St Francis Raid which razed a defenseless Abenaki village to the ground in October 1759. Kirkwood's decision was not difficult:

I went upon this party being stimulated with the hope of revenge [against] a den of the most mischievous and inveterate enemies the English ever had ... Numberless are their scenes of bloodshed and rapine, these lawless savages had committed on our people, but thank God a period was shortly put to their cruelty.

## ESPRIT DE CORPS

### *'The Most Honourable Virtue'*

The strong sense of community and group loyalty was strongest among the Highland units in which Kirkwood served, their dress and language distinguishing them from the rest of the redcoats. According to that great chronicler of the Highland soldier, Stewart of Garth, Highlanders were 'taught to consider courage as the most honourable virtue, cowardice as the most disgraceful failing'. Thus Kirkwood proudly recorded the bravery of the Black Watch who fought alongside the 77th at Bushy Run in 1763, the regiment to which he was transferred the following year on disbandment of the Montgomery Highlanders: 'The light company of the 42d Regt ... withstood the enemy with a resolution that will always be remembered to their honour.' He also noted with some satisfaction that it was his company entrusted to take possession of the French forts in the 'Illinois country' for the King in 1765 as a result of the failure of 'the 22d regiment who had been sent upon the service the year before, but was defeated and drove back by the Indians after they had reached the banks of the Mississippi'.

The 1762 expeditions against Martinique, Dominica and Havana interestingly enough brought the hard-bitten veterans of the 'American



Gallantry at Bushy Run. Kirkwood proudly recorded the bravery of the Black Watch who fought alongside the 77th at Bushy run, the regiment to which he was transferred the following year on disbandment of the Montgomery Highlanders: 'The light company of the 42d Regt', he wrote, attacked 'the enemy with a resolution that will always be remembered to their honour'. Print after an oil painting by C.W. Jeffreys. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-43726)

Army' face to face with several British battalions fresh from Europe. Ironically, it was the former corps in their cut-down uniforms and hats, and sporting tomahawks and rifles who looked down their noses at the clean, neatly dressed redcoats, some of their officers still carrying spontoons! Lieutenant John Grant of the 42nd noted wryly that these newcomers 'who had lately arrived from the taking of Bellisle landed in white Spatterdashes, Gorgets & spontoons and sashes, and trusted their provisions to their servants. We older campaigners accustomed to backwoods expeditions took care to equip ourselves with haversacks containing our provisions and were ridiculed by the gay gentlemen for doing so.'

One soldier remarking on the esprit de corps of the 'American Army' at Martinique observed that neither disease nor the rugged terrain could affect morale: 'The climate was very fatal to the troops, and the whole army was visited with sickness, but neither these or any other dangers which could prevent itself was able to allay that ardor or desire of victory which seemed to reign predominantly throughout the whole.' That confidence and 'ardor' was noted disapprovingly by some commanders, especially the Earl of Albemarle, commander of the land forces at the siege of Havana in 1762. He wrote to his friend 'Jeff' Amherst:

Your army is a fine one, brave to the last degree, almost spoilt by the expedition up the River St Lawrence ... They have conquered in a few days the strongest country you ever saw, in the American way, running or with the Indian [w]hoop. That manner of fighting will not always succeed, and I dread their meeting of troops that will stand their ground.

But the Light Infantryman of the 'American Army' would never be called upon again to face French heavy infantry before the 1763 peace, the only exception being a surprise dawn attack and rout of French grenadiers from the fortified hill-top of Signal Hill in St John's, Newfoundland in September 1762. A Light Infantryman's principal enemy from the winter of 1762 onwards would be the Indians of the Great Lakes under their accomplished war chief Pontiac. They would have some spectacular victories such as Bushy Run in 1763, but also suffer some discouraging defeats at Niagara and Detroit the same year, the latter outcomes directly attributable to overconfidence and poor march discipline.

On the whole, the professionalism and confidence of the Light Infantry was so well established by 1762 that Amherst's confident prediction to his light troops five years earlier that once they 'had by practise & experience, acquired as much Caution & Circumspection as they have Spirit & Activity, the howling Barbarians' would 'flee before them' was fully realised.



ABOVE The Battle of Bloody Run, 1763. (Courtesy of Gary Zaboly)

## FACE OF WAR

### **Robert Kirkwood's Last Battle**

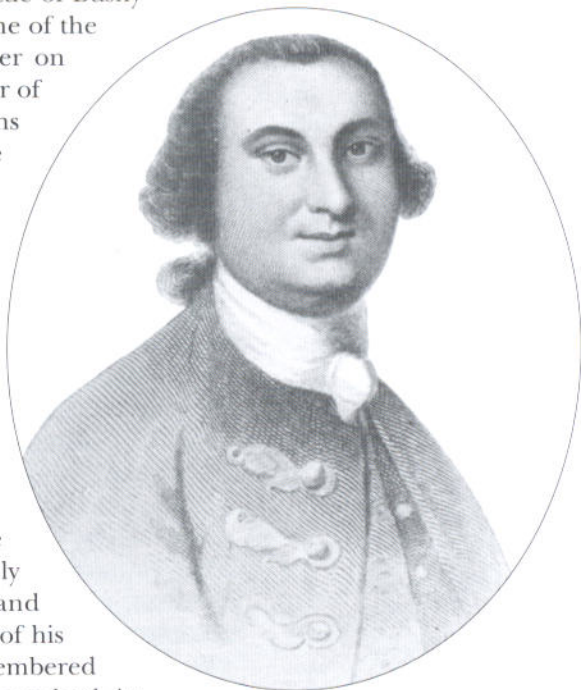
Without a doubt six years of campaigning in the North American wilderness helped prepare Private Robert Kirkwood of the 77th Foot (Montgomerie's Highlanders) for his final battle in 1763. In the words of one of Britain's most renowned historians, the Battle of Bushy Run still stands in the annals of military history as 'one of the fiercest fought with Indians'. Kirkwood's commander on this occasion was the well-respected trainer and leader of men, Colonel Henri Bouquet of the Royal Americans who, J.W. Fortescue claims, was the right man in the right place at the right time. 'Had any man of less experience in such warfare been in command, he states, 'its issue might well have been disastrous.' Bouquet, at the time, was modest and unassuming, attributing the lion's share of credit to the presence of experienced men like Kirkwood and their 'cool and steady behaviour'.

Kirkwood's first introduction to the bush fight had been in 1758 when he was selected to be in a 20-man scouting party towards the French-held Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh), a small fighting patrol reinforced with 60 Cherokee warriors under the chieftain Attakullakulla or 'Little Carpenter'. Only versed in the rudimentary skills of shooting and marching, Kirkwood had travelled light like the rest of his colleagues and covered many miles each day. He remembered mostly the extreme fatigue, the sudden savagery of an ambush in which they destroyed a French and Shawnee Indian war party, then their terrifying pursuit back to Fort Ligonier by a larger enemy war party hell-bent on revenge. He recalled that his patrol was 'so much harassed in our retreat' and the enemy so close that 'we could plainly distinguish their halloos'.

Several weeks later he was captured by the same Shawnees at the failed surprise attack on Fort Duquesne, laid low by painful buckshot in his leg as he tried to escape the massacre. Spared immediate death by an Indian warrior, he was adopted into the tribe and dressed in a breechclout, shirt and had his hair cut into a scalplock. Kirkwood bided his time over the next year, gaining his tribe's trust and respect as an able hunter. Buying himself a rifle from French traders with beaver pelts, Kirkwood was finally included as a warrior in a raid against the Cherokees, ironically the Indians who had first trained him on his arrival in western Pennsylvania. But Kirkwood never had to fire a shot in anger at his former allies for he slipped away unnoticed with another white captive and made his way back to his unit in time for General Amherst's 1759 Ticonderoga expedition.

While serving at Crown Point, Kirkwood was singled out by the famous Major Robert Rogers as a skilled bushfighter and taken along on the 1759 St Francis Raid. Kirkwood's experiences on that grueling expedition taught him the benefits of stealth, surprise and how to live and forage off the land. His survival and reliability caused him to be temporarily

The victor of Bushy Run, 1763.  
A portrait of Colonel Henri  
Bouquet. (Private Collection)



attached to Rogers' Rangers who were assigned to take possession of Fort Detroit and other western French posts that became the possession of the Crown with the surrender of New France. Kirkwood spent weeks in canoes and whaleboats and has left us detailed accounts of his exploits on the Great Lakes and the wildlife he encountered there.

On his return in the autumn of 1761 Kirkwood got drunk in Albany and deserted, but was subsequently arrested and confined at Fort Ontario on 2 December 1761. In the summer of 1762, Kirkwood the rogue received a welcome reprieve. All able-bodied men from garrisons in North America were being assembled to form a fighting force to retake Newfoundland from the French. St. John's had fallen in a daring raid by a combined French force whilst the majority of British forces were still in Cuba besieging Havana. Kirkwood found himself mustered with men who had been convalescing in New York hospitals as part of a provisional force under Colonel William Amherst, the same officer who had commanded Kirkwood's Light Infantry corps on the approach to Montreal two years previously. Again using stealth, speed and surprise over almost inaccessible terrain, Kirkwood and his comrades were victorious at Signal Hill against a much superior force.

On his return Kirkwood spent the winter in Philadelphia with the remnants of his disease-shattered regiment; many of his former friends died from yellow fever contracted during the successful conquest of Havana. In the spring of 1763, the Pennsylvanian and New York frontiers were ablaze as the Ottawa war chieftain, Pontiac, took up the hatchet and many disaffected tribes joined his uprising. They laid siege to Fort Detroit, sacked five smaller forts and killed most of their garrisons. Shawnees, Mingoies and Delawares besieged Fort Pitt (the re-named Fort Duquesne) and over 2,000 men, women and children were killed, scalped or taken prisoner in the western settlements. Kirkwood wrote:

In order to force relief to the inhabitants at Fort-Pitt, the remains of the 1st and 2d battalions of Royal Highlanders and the residue of our regiment were formed into one. We marched with the

**The siege of Fort Detroit.**  
*An Harpers Illustrated Weekly engraving of Pontiac's Indians besieging Fort Detroit from an oil painting by Frederick Remington. As the Indians had no artillery their only strategy was to bottle up the defenders and prevent any reinforcement or resupply. On hearing that French aid would not be coming many of Pontiac's native allies lost patience and returned to their families for the winter hunt in the fall. By mid-November, Pontiac was forced to lift the six month siege. (Private Collection)*





greatest expedition 'till we reached Carlisle 100 miles above Philadelphia where we arrived the 19th of July and waited for an escort of 1500 pack-horses laden with flour, 500 bullocks and a few sheep. This convoy was destined for Fort-Pitt ... which was block'd up by the Indians and 300 of the inhabitants, besides the garrison in a starving condition.

Colonel Henri Bouquet's command consisted of about 460 men in total – the light and grenadier companies of the 42nd & 77th, 18 Royal Americans, a company of Virginia Rangers and 60 packhorse drivers. Bouquet proceeded to Fort Ligonier, the last British-held fort closest to Fort Pitt, many of his men who were still sick from the West Indian campaign falling out along the way. On 5 August 1763 Bouquet and his small relief column set off to force-march 18 miles to the creek at Bushy Run, where he intended to pause briefly before attempting to run the dangerous Turtle Creek defile by night.

One mile short of his objective, Kirkwood and other Light Infantrymen performing their role as scouts 'came within sight of the enemy's fires and could by the tracks we fell into, be certain of their approach'. On the alert now 'our van descry'd the Indians [who] when they were convinced that we saw them, immediately begun the attack in the front, which is contrary to their maxims in war; they being accustomed to begin an engagement in the rear'.

Kirkwood and the 77th light company, in tandem with the 42nd light company, took careful aim with their rifles and dropped several of the running warriors. They then fixed bayonets and, instead of retreating, went forward screaming their own war cries to drive off the advancing Delawares, Mingoes and Shawnees. The Indians melted away only to reappear on the flanks of the strung-out column. Bouquet brought up the main force to support the hard-pressed light companies and the action was joined, but soon Indian war whoops could be heard in the rear of the column. Bouquet ordered the entire force back into a defensive circle on Edge Hill, drawing the packhorses and their sacks of flour into the centre.

'Having made a kind of breastwork with the flourbags,' recalled Kirkwood, 'we waited their approach [and] when they came close up, we gave them our whole fire and rushed out upon them with fixt bayonets.' Kirkwood recorded with some satisfaction that 'the Indians were not very well used to this way of fighting [and] therefore took immediately to their heels and left the field of battle'.

This hard-won respite gave them time to organise their defenses in the gathering twilight, for, as Kirkwood noted, the enemy 'hovered in the woods about us ... which made the commanding officer not to think it expedient to leave that situation for that night'. Surrounded by the enemy, Bouquet ensured his perimeter was in good order and put out listening posts, before calmly sitting down to write a detailed dispatch to General Amherst. He singled out Major Allen Campbell of the 42nd, commanding Kirkwood's vanguard, for praise and commended the gallantry of the Light Infantrymen who had not panicked in the first contact. He had less praise for the packhorse drivers, most of whom 'Stupefied by Fear, hid themselves in the bushes, or were incapable of hearing or obeying any Orders'. Casualties already exceeded 60 killed and wounded and five drivers were missing.

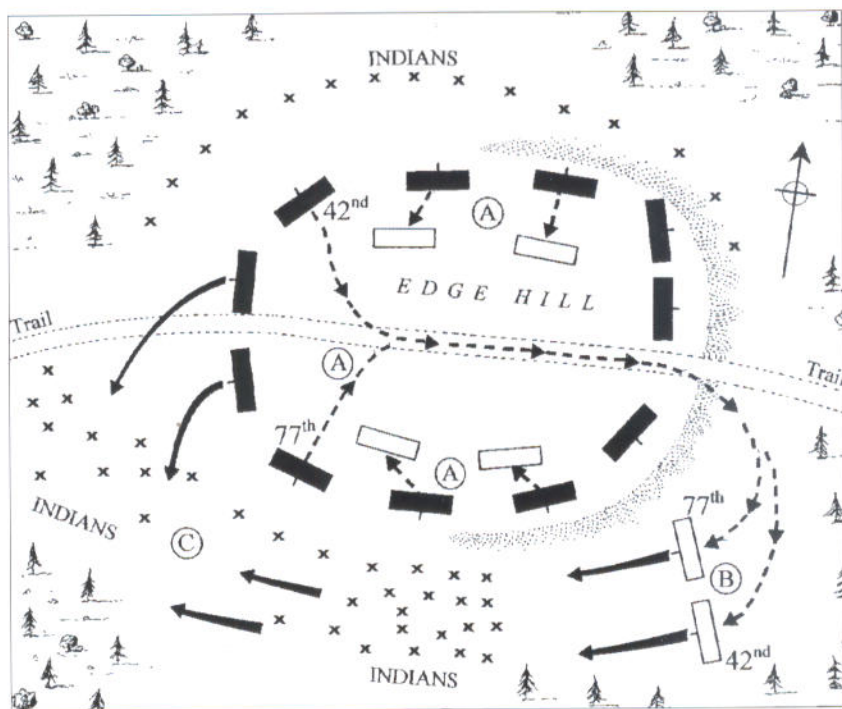
Light Infantry bayonet charge. 'We gave our whole fire and rushed out upon them with fixed bayonets'. On the first encounter with the attacking Indians at Bushy Run on the afternoon of 5th August, Kirkwood and his fellow Light Infantrymen gave the enemy cold steel. A detail from Robert Griffing's painting *One Mile to Bushy Run Station*. (Courtesy of Robert Griffing and Paramount Press)



'We begun to look after our wounded,' remembered Kirkwood, 'many of whom we found so faint for want of water that they must have inevitably perished if they were not relieved'. Kirkwood and a small party courageously crept out of the flour bag fortification in the darkness, avoiding the Indians who had surrounded them. 'We could find [water] but was very muddy,' he confessed, 'but [the wounded] were glad to get it any way.' None of the troops got any sleep that night and when morning dawned, the Indians 'advanced and begun to fire upon us'. Kirkwood and his comrades made every shot count and preparations were made behind the flour bag barricades to make horse stretchers for carrying the wounded men.

'At noon the firing was very hot,' recorded Kirkwood, 'and the Indians became so insolent that they told our Colonel who commanded that they would have his scalp by night.' Colonel Bouquet knew he had to find some way 'to entice [the Indians] to come close upon us, or to Stand their ground when attacked'. He ordered Kirkwood's light company as well as that of the 42nd to withdraw precipitously from the perimeter as if retreating in fear, then to exit quickly on the southern side of the defenses and regroup as a mobile counter-attack force. The other companies were to close the gap whilst exhibiting signs of panic and despair.

'The Indians thought we were going to break and run away,' recorded Kirkwood, 'and being sure of their prey came in upon us in the greatest disorder.' The two light companies outside the perimeter now used some dead ground and came up unseen on the right flank of the massed Indian attack. 'They soon found their mistake,' crowed Kirkwood, 'for we met them with our fire first, and then made a terrible havock amongst them with our fixt bayonets and continuing to push them everywhere, they set to their heels and never after were able to



Colonel Bouquet ordered Kirkwood's Light Infantry company as well as the Lights of the 42nd to withdraw precipitously from the perimeter as if retreating in fear (A) then to exit at the southern end of the defenses. The other companies were to shrink the perimeter to close the gap and also exhibit signs of a defensive collapse (also A). The Light Infantry, unseen by the Indians, formed up in dead ground at B. They then counterattacked and rolled up the Indians' right flank from east to west, joined by two perimeter companies at C when the Indians were completely routed.

rally again.' Four companies pursued the Indians for two miles while the rest of the main body moved down to Bushy Run for much-needed fresh water. The casualties for two days' fighting were 50 killed, 60 wounded and 5 missing, one-third of Bouquet's entire force. Bushy Run was a decisive action in spite of the small numbers engaged, as it proved to be the turning point in putting down Pontiac's Uprising.

Bouquet's tired column reached Fort Pitt on 10 August but the besieging tribes had gone. 'We at last arrived at the Fort,' Kirkwood wrote, 'and relieved the inhabitants with provisions and every other necessary.' He added, 'Our arrival gave new life to the whole.' This was to be Kirkwood's last battle, though the skirmishing, patrolling and convoy duties would continue for at least another year. 'We staid but a short time at Fort Pitt, having to escort the inhabitants down the country and come back with more provisions. We continued employed in this manner till the first of January [1764].'

During this time Kirkwood's old regiment, the 77th Foot (Montgomerie's Highlanders), was disbanded and he transferred to the senior and sole remaining Highland regiment, the 42nd Foot. He subsequently participated in Colonel Bouquet's expeditions to the Muskingum River that summer to intimidate the Shawnee and other Ohio tribes and, the following year, took part in Captain Thomas Stirling's expedition down the Ohio and Mississippi to Illinois country to take possession of Fort de Chartres.

Kirkwood could rightly claim in his Memoirs that 'few Men have traveled more than [me] in the back parts of North America'. From Niagara Falls, to Newfoundland and the Carolinas, to the great western plains flanking the Mississippi, this Light Infantryman covered some 5,000 miles by foot, canoe, whaleboat and transport ship in the course of his ten years' campaigning.

BELOW Lieutenant Colonel William Howe, Wolfe's Light Infantry commander. A portrait of the youthful leader of the Light Infantry that landed first and led the British Army up the cliffs leading to the Plains of Abraham. Lieutenant Colonel 'Billy' Howe was deemed to be the best battalion commander in all America by General James Wolfe, and his Light Infantry were extremely successful in skirmishing and patrolling against the Indians and French irregulars that constantly harassed the British siege camps. (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-96946)



## CONCLUSION

### *'I conceive they know no difficulties'*

A Light Infantry soldier was 'a chosen man', the most 'active marcher', an 'alert, spirited soldier able to endure fatigue', an 'artificial savage' and 'expert at firing ball'. He was proficient at scouting and skirmishing and could scrap with the best the French and their Indian allies could muster. Like Kirkwood, he was at ease in canoes, whaleboats, and batteaux, shooting rapids or on portage, but was equally adept at leading the way on major amphibious assaults in conjunction with the Royal Navy. He was extremely fit and agile, could use snowshoes, scale crags while under fire using the terrain, or make his way through swamps and jungle terrain by day or night. In essence, the Light Infantryman was the most resilient and motivated redcoat of Britain's 'American Army' during the Seven Years' War.

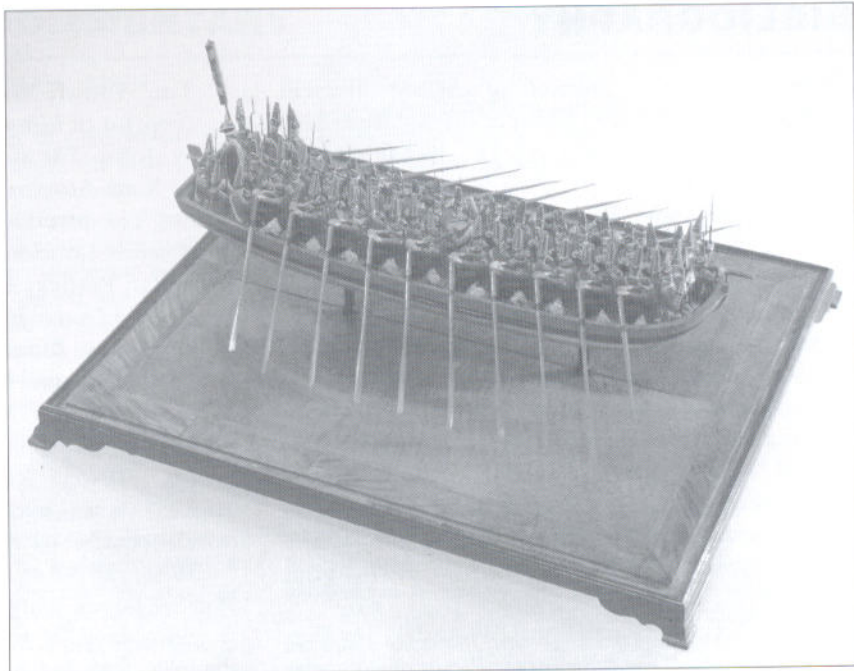
Robert Kirkwood's *Memoirs* not only serve to highlight the evolution of the British Light Infantryman into a professional, all-purpose soldier, but are also very much the story of the 'American Army', an army adapting itself into a tough, flexible and innovative force whose victories ultimately won the respect of Britons and Americans alike during Britain's first global conflict. The achievements of men like Kirkwood, and many others like him, caused Major General Jeffery Amherst to say of his old 'Americans' that it was an honour to command such soldiers whose 'constant steady good conduct and unwearied exertion of their abilities in carrying on the extensive and successful war in this country' entitled them 'to his most sincere acknowledgements' and claimed that 'their happiness and glory [would] always be inseparable from his'.

His younger brother, William Amherst, said it best of all, when he was put in charge of Kirkwood and his comrades for the approach march on Montreal in 1760. The young Amherst proudly wrote that on one forward reconnaissance-in-force: 'we lost our way [back] & did not reach the Camp until after dark, through swamps & the thickest wood we could meet with'. He confessed to be glad of it 'as it shewed the temper of the Corps, expecting to lay out all night, without any covering or anything to eat or drink. The bon volenté and cheerfulness I had before met with amongst them still subsisted, & I conceive they know no difficulties. It was a pleasure serving with such a Corps.'

## MUSEUMS, COLLECTIONS AND RE-ENACTMENTS

Museums which depict the role of the Light Infantryman in North America during the Seven Years' War can be found in Canada, the USA and the UK. In all cases, the museums and their respective

websites listed below have exhibits and collections that highlight the equipments, weapons and everyday life of all 18th century soldiers, and in the case of the North American historical sites, the history of French and Indian participants as well. Details and specific dates for North American re-enactment weekends known as 'grand encampments' can be found at the museum websites, the largest being those conducted annually at Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Niagara and Fort de Chartres respectively.



A replica of a British landing craft. From the collection at the National Army Museum, which features exhibits on the life and times of the British soldier during the Seven Years' War in North America. This is a scale model of the boat used to transport Wolfe's Light Infantry down the St Lawrence River and land below the Heights of Abraham. (Courtesy of the National Army Museum)

#### CANADA

Fortress Louisbourg, Cape Breton, Parks Canada,  
<http://fortress.uccb.ns.ca/>  
 Halifax Citadel Museum, Nova Scotia, Parks Canada,  
[http://parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/halifax/index\\_E.asp](http://parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/halifax/index_E.asp)  
 Signal Hill, St John's, Newfoundland, Parks Canada  
[http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/signalhill/index\\_e.asp](http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/nl/signalhill/index_e.asp)  
 Quebec Fortifications & Battlefield, Quebec,  
[http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/fortifications/index\\_E.asp](http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/qc/fortifications/index_E.asp)

#### USA

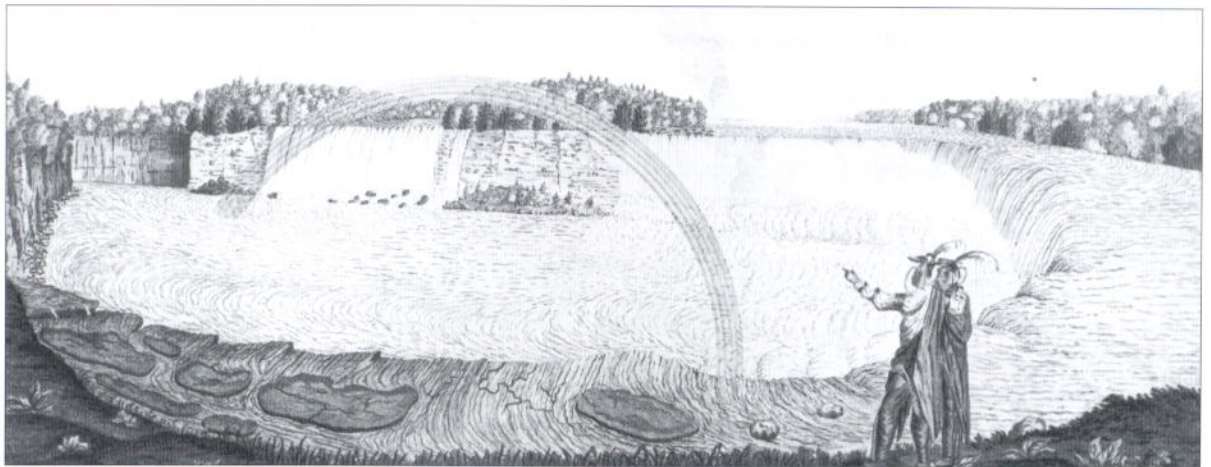
Fort Ticonderoga Museum, New York State,  
<http://www.fort-ticonderoga.org/>  
 Fort Niagara Museum, New York State, <http://www.oldfortniagara.org/>  
 Fort Ligonier Museum, Pennsylvania,  
<http://www.fortligonier.org/tour.htm>  
 Bushy Run Battlefield Park, Pennsylvania,  
<http://www.bushyrunbattlefield.com/>  
 Fort de Chartres, Illinois,  
<http://www.state.il.us/hpa/hs/DeChartres.htm>

#### UK

Light Infantry Museum, Winchester,  
<http://www.hants.gov.uk/discover/places/light-infmuseum.html>  
 National Army Museum, Chelsea, London,  
<http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/>  
 National War Museum of Scotland (formerly the Scottish United Services Museum) <http://www.nms.ac.uk/war/main.htm>  
 Imperial War Museum, London,  
<http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk/overview.asp>

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- Niagara falls by Thomas Davies, c.1762. The falls as Robert Kirkwood would have seen it in his western travels. ('I saw that amazing piece of creation' he told his readers, 'I mean the great Falls of Niagara, the largest cataract in the world'). (National Archives of Canada, NAC C-41051)**



## COLOR PLATE COMMENTARY

### PLATE A: LIGHT INFANTRYMAN, 55TH REGIMENT 1758

Under the leadership and example of Lord Howe, this soldier's appearance has changed drastically from official regulations, the main goal being functionality in the American wilderness. The coat has been shortened and the lace removed. Although still shown here, in some cases even the colored facings were removed. While there is also evidence that the waistcoats were often left behind, our figure still wears his, although he has discarded his neck cravat. His tricorne has been cut down into a "round hat" with a brim about 2 1/2 inches wide, and he wears Indian style leggings of blue wool to protect his legs in the woods.

The soldier carries a cut-down Brown Bess musket, and wears a linen haversack containing rations and personal effects. To reduce glare, his issued tin canteen is covered with wool, and the metal parts of his musket are browned. The standard issue buff leather waistbelt holds his bayonet scabbard, but a tomahawk replaces his traditional sword. A black "belly box" usually replaced the over the shoulder cartridge box, although our figure wears both. He also wears a powder horn, and carries extra musket balls in addition to his paper cartridges.

We also see a variety of issued and personal items that might have been carried during a warm weather campaign. While it is not likely than any one soldier would have all the items shown here, they probably would have been found among a group of such men.

1. Brass sundial compass, similar to an example found on Rogers' Island
2. Lead pencil and journal book with marbled paper cover
3. Sausage, hardtack, and cloth bags containing corn & peas
4. Fishing kit
5. Stoneware plate and silverware based on examples found at Fort Ticonderoga, along with a common horn cup. Stoneware was inexpensive, surprisingly durable, and was frequently used by soldiers in the field

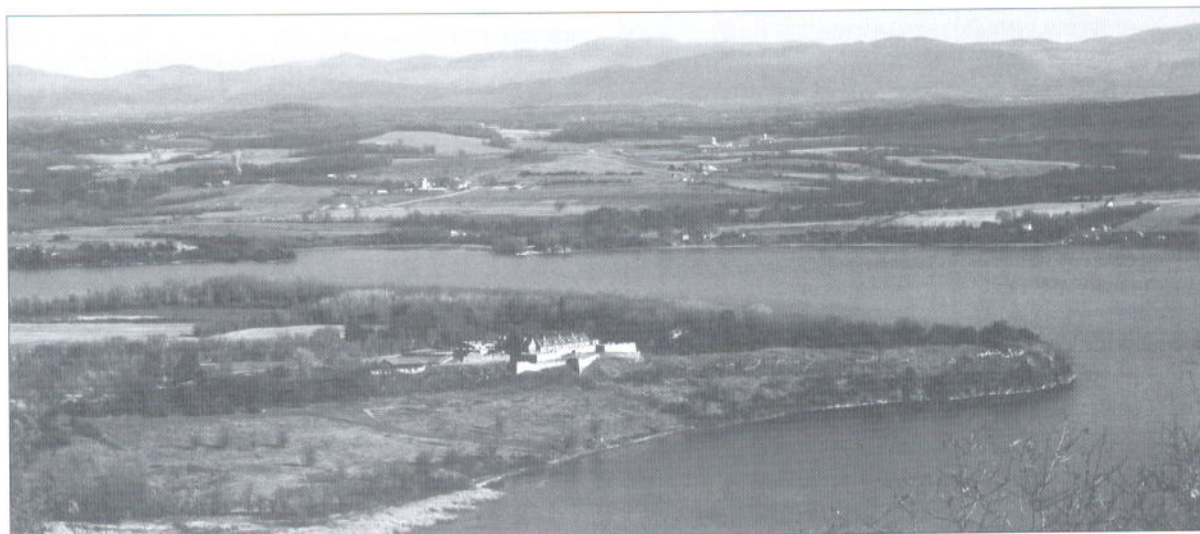
6. Ivory dice
7. Leather bag with coins and currency
8. Brass button stick, to protect the soldier's clothing when polishing his buttons
9. Horn comb
10. Clay pipe and tin tobacco box
11. Shaving brush, soapblock, and straight razor
12. Small mirror
13. Toothbrush
14. Leather wallet
15. Tinder box with fire steel, flint, and tow for fire lighting (some covers were plain, while others held candle stubs)
16. Folding knife

### PLATE B: TRAINING FOR A WINTER SCOUT, QUEBEC CITY, WINTER 1759-1760

North American winters were severe, and soldiers who remained in service required specialized clothing, training, and equipment in order to survive. Snowshoes were especially important when traveling in deep snow. Captain John Knox recorded that Light Infantrymen were required to "practise walking on snow-shoes . . . to this end five pair of these rackets are delivered to each corps . . . some of Captain Hazen's New-England Rangers are appointed to instruct our soldiers in the use of them."

Here, Light Infantrymen of the 15th Regiment are being instructed in the use of snowshoes by an N.C.O. of Rogers' Rangers (far right), as a junior officer watches. The American Army, and the Light Infantry and Rangers in particular, adopted a combination of white and Native American dress to enable them to survive during the difficult winter months.

**A view of Fort Ticonderoga from atop Mount Defiance, or Rattlesnake Mountain. This is a view that Rangers and Light Infantrymen scouting the French fort would have seen. (Courtesy of Fort Ticonderoga Museum)**



In addition to gear previously described, they wear woolen capotes, and carry bearskins and full field packs with the equipment necessary for survival.

### **PLATE C: DAILY LIFE AT FORT CROWN POINT, 1761**

This scene shows typical summer garrison life for soldiers and their families.

In the foreground, three members of the 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment clean their rifles, while a corporal of the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment inspects one of his men. Although the smoothbore musket was the primary firearm, there were also a very limited number of rifles, presumably issued to the best marksmen. Alexander Money Penny notes in his orderly book for June 12, 1758 that ten rifled-barreled guns were to be issued to each regiment, but the exact specifications are unknown. It is known that on March 2, 1757, 100 rifles were purchased in Germany by Jacques Prevost of the 60th Regiment for use in North America, and that they came equipped with bayonets and other special tools, including their own bullet molds.

The soldiers of the 27th wear two types of headgear, the fatigue cap and flap hats (basically tricorns with most of the brim removed and the front flap turned up). For greater versatility, the Light Infantry companies in existing regiments removed the sleeves from their regimental coats and sewed them to their waistcoats. This resulted in a sleeved waistcoat and a sleeveless regimental coat, which could be worn in various combinations depending on the weather. Both standard military shoes and Indian moccasins were worn, depending on availability, the weather, and the terrain. The dress of the Highland soldiers also shows adaptation to North American conditions, such as the lace being removed and leather pockets sewn on the coats.

In the middleground, we see a typically dressed camp follower with her daughter, and two boys carrying firewood on a hand-barrow. The top sections of the walls of Crown Point are visible in the background.

### **PLATE D: A WILDERNESS AMBUSH**

A mixed group of Light Infantrymen from the 80th (Gage's), which was specifically raised as Light Infantry, a Regular regiment, and 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment are preparing to ambush a party of French-allied Indians that have just landed their canoes on the shore of Lake George.

The 80th's coat were made especially for them, and not converted from previously issued ones. Therefore, they are one piece, without the shoulder wings of the two-piece coats of the Light Infantry companies of the Regular regiments. The 80th men are also wearing military issue brown canvas gaiters rather than woolen leggings. The Highlanders are wearing their standard dress with Light Infantry modifications, and in this case, blue Indian style leggings which give far more protection than their traditional checkered stockings.

The corporal of the 80th, identified by the white cord on his right shoulder, is holding a wooden whistle to his lips, about to give the signal to open fire.

Since these soldiers are out in the field, they all have a day or two's growth of stubble on their faces. Although most British soldiers of the period were clean shaven, Light Infantrymen were encouraged to develop a "smutted" appearance for better concealment in the woods.

### **PLATE E: THE HAVANA CAMPAIGN, 1762**

A Light Infantry soldier of the 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment purchases drinking water from a Cuban woman, while another member of his regiment stands by, awaiting his turn. Tropical heat and disease took a terrible toll of the troops in the Caribbean Campaigns. The soldiers in this scene are well tanned, but also fatigued and dehydrated. Their uniforms are all faded from the tropical sun, and their weapons and equipment have seen hard service but are not neglected.

To their rear, a squad of Highland soldiers is being drilled by an N.C.O. They are regular battalion company soldiers, not Light Infantry. High on the hill, a Spanish fort stands majestically against a tropical background.

### **PLATE F: LOUISBOURG 1758-KENNINGTON COVE**

Just after daybreak on June 8, 1758, Major George Scott's Composite Light Infantry Battalion stormed ashore in a crashing surf, at what is now called Kennington Cove on Cape Breton Island.

In the foreground, several boatloads of Light Infantrymen from the 60th (Royal American) Regiment in blue facings are

**Fort Niagara from the Niagara River. (Photo by Tim Todish)**





just hitting the beach. The men are jumping out into the surf and starting up onto the rocky shoreline.

Beyond them, Light Infantrymen of the 35th (Otway's) Regiment in buff facings have already landed and are charging up a small brush-covered hill to engage French irregular soldiers and their Indian allies.

The defending force of French irregulars and Micmac Indians was quickly overcome, and the British soon had a firm hold on the landing site. This resolute amphibious assault by the British Light Infantry paved the way for the eventual capture of the important French seaport of Louisbourg.

#### **PLATE G: THE STORMING OF SIGNAL HILL**

In the late summer of 1762, the British mounted a campaign to recover Newfoundland and its valuable fishing waters from the French. The expedition's commander, Lt. Col. William Amherst, recorded the capture of Signal Hill, one of St. John's most formidable defenses, on September 15: "The enemy gave them a fire and we never returned a shot, till we had gained the summit and these two Companies drove three Companies of the French Grenadiers and two pickets from the most advantageous ground I ever saw, —really almost inaccessible."

Here we see a composite Highland company of Montgomerie's 77th (green facings) and Frazier's 78th (buff facings) Regiments, along with some 60th (Royal Americans) and Massachusetts Provincial Light Infantrymen (in blue coats),\* storming Signal Hill, which is defended by Grenadiers of the Regiment de la Marine. In the center, Highlander Robert Kirkwood bayonets a French Grenadier as he and his fellow Light Infantrymen penetrate the French lines. At the upper right, Captain Charles MacDonnell slashes with his sword just before being fatally shot in the thigh.

#### **PLATE H: 80TH (GAGE'S LIGHT INFANTRY): LATE WAR**

A corporal with a twisted white cord on his right shoulder is inspecting the rifle of one of his men. His 1761-1763 coat is lighter brown than earlier ones, the facings are off-white, and the buttons are yellow instead of brown. The waistcoat is shorter than earlier issues, but both it and the breeches are the traditional dark brown color. He wears standard brown canvas issue gaiters over his breeches and leather shoes.

The private standing at attention wears a dark brown coat of the old pattern of 1759-1760. The facings are orange-brown, dating it to 1760-1761. His waistcoat and breeches are dark brown in color. He wears blue woolen leggings over his breeches, and Indian style moccasins.

Both soldiers wear the black leather flap hat with feathered plume that was standard throughout the regiment.

While the "exploded kit" in Plate A shows an early Light Infantrymen, and focuses on the weapons and personal equipment of soldiers armed with smoothbore Brown Bess

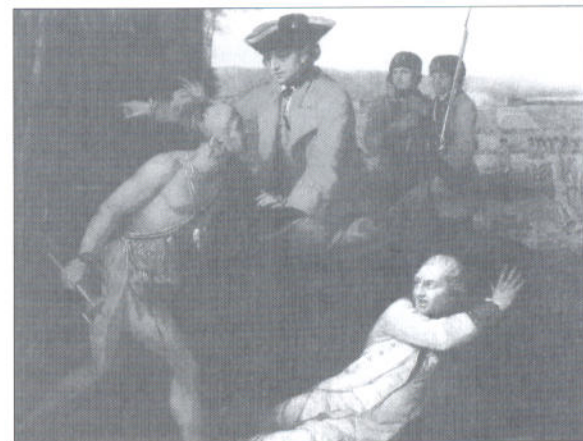
muskets, this plate features the rifles and corresponding equipment issued to a limited number of hand-picked troops throughout the war. The rifle is one of those procured by Jacques Prevost in 1757, discussed previously in Plate C.

The items in the "exploded kit" show the unique aspects of the rifle and the specialized equipment needed to operate and maintain it.

1. The barrel of a smoothbore (left), as the name implies, is completely smooth, while a rifled barrel (right), has a series of spiraling grooves cut into it, which grip the ball and cause it to spin, giving it greater accuracy and range
2. Whisk and pick set, used to keep the pan and touch hole clean
3. Tin oil bottle
4. Wooden loading block with holes that would grip a patched ball tightly enough to hold it in place, but still loosely enough so that it could be pushed on through and into the barrel using the ramrod or short starter
5. Flints and lead wrappers, used to hold the flint securely in the jaws of the lock
6. Small priming horn, which holds a finer grained powder to prime the pan for better ignition
7. A paper cartridge, shown ready to roll and finished
8. The steps in loading a rifle:
  - a. Powder is poured down the barrel from a torn-open cartridge
  - b. A cloth patch and lead ball are partially rammed down the barrel with a short starter, then fully seated with the ramrod
  - c. A small amount of fine powder is placed in the pan from the priming horn
9. Hand forged screwdriver
10. A "turn-key," a type of British military issue screw driver

Note: Little is actually known about the military rifles and accoutrements of the French and Indian War era. It is possible that the loading block and short starter may not have seen military use, although they were used by other riflemen of the period.

**Scalping – A barbarous practice. An 18th century painting by Benjamin West depicting two Light Infantrymen in their cropped caps and jackets, watching as a British officer prevents an Amerindian ally from scalping a cowering French officer. (Courtesy of the Derby Museum)**



\*Authors' Note: After this plate was completed, our friend and colleague Robert Andrews discovered information in General Amherst's papers indicating that in 1762, the Massachusetts Provincials may have been uniformed in all brown, rather than the blue-faced-red shown here. It is hoped that further research will be able to clarify this matter

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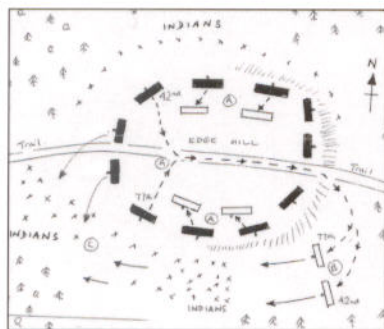
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