



Fort Fraser Despatches, September 2017

Lead up to Battles for Quebec: *Excerpts from "The Fraser Highlanders" – J. R. Harper, 1995*

In July 1629, Thomas Kirke and his brother Louis appeared before Quebec and demanded its surrender. Champlain recognized that resistance would mean useless bloodshed. He surrendered to his courageous adversaries; he and all his officials were transported to France; only some 30 French remained in the colony.

Champlain lobbied for the return of New France, but did not succeed until the signing of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye in 1632. He would return to New France the next year and oversee the establishment of substantial French settlement in Canada before his death in 1635.

Kirke would later become Governor of Newfoundland.

Now, 126 years later, the British were planning to retake the colony.

In England, Pitt was reinstated as Minister of War in 1757 with a free hand to direct the war, and his great administration lasted until 1761. He knew how to exert British combined operations where they could be decisive and how to search out the best leaders. He was determined to capture Canada in 1759 and was prepared to risk his best troops and a quarter of the British Navy to achieve this victory.

The plan of campaign at this time was a two-prong attack on Montreal. General Amherst, the overall Commander in Chief, was to lead the central attack from New York up to Lake Champlain and then on to Montreal. Admiral Saunders and General Wolfe would sail up the St. Lawrence River and attack Quebec, then push on to meet Amherst's column at Montreal.

War Minister Pitt and Admiral Anson gave the naval command of the Quebec expedition to Rear Admiral Charles Saunders and promoted him to Vice Admiral of the Blue. In his mid-forties, he was an experienced sailor and an ideal man to participate in a complex combined operation. Serving under him as second in command was Rear Admiral Philip Durrell, who had served at Louisbourg. Third in command was Rear Admiral Charles Holmes, a courageous sailor in his forties.

Admiral Saunders' flagship was the NEPTUNE, 90 guns; Rear Admiral Durrell flew his flag in the PRINCESS AMELIA, 80 guns; and Rear Admiral Holmes flew his flag in the DUBLIN, 74 guns. In all, 49 fighting ships with 1,944 guns. There were also fireships, bomb ketches, sloops and transports, a total of over 120 sail in all.

It was late in February, 1759 before Admiral Charles Saunders's fleet, convoying General "Pikestaff" Wolfe, his stores and some troop reinforcements, sailed from Spithead. The winds were adverse and the seas ran high and May had arrived before the wild coast of Nova Scotia was seen.

On arrival in Halifax, Major General Wolfe found the troops from the North American garrisons, including the Fraser Highlanders, awaiting him.

There was much to be done with an army brought together from so many various quarters. Wolfe spared himself no effort. He was not only a fighting one but, to the highest degree, an organizing general. Every detail down to the last button on the soldiers' coats was carefully scrutinized.

Seldom had England sent out a body of men so perfect in discipline, spirit, and materiel of war; and none so well commanded since the days of Marlborough.

It was as well it was so, seeing that they were destined to attack one of the strongest bastions in the world, defended by an army nearly twice as numerous as they, and fighting, moreover, in defense of its home and country.

In one of his letters to Prime Minister Pitt, Wolfe wrote, "If valour can make amends for wants of numbers we shall succeed."

Major General Wolfe invited James Murray, George Townshend and Robert Monckton to serve with him as Brigadiers, and Colonel Guy Carleton to be his Quartermaster General.

Halifax, 30 April 1759.

The Grenadier companies of Amherst's and Anstruther's regiments, with a lieutenant and twenty-five men of the light infantry of each of the four battalions in town, to embark to-morrow morning at day-break, at the Slip, where boats will be ready to carry them on board the transports. They are to carry with them their old tents and camp equipage; 200 rounds of powder and ball per man will be delivered to them on the wharf. An officer of artillery, with a proportion of men for two six pounders, with the guns and ammunition, to embark on board McRae's brig this evening.

His Majesty has been pleased to appoint the following generals and officers to serve in the army commanded by Major General Wolfe:

The Hon. Brigadier Generals: Monckton, Townshend, Murray.

Quartermaster General: Colonel Carleton, Adjutant General: Major Barré.

Majors of Brigade: Capts. Gwillim, Spital, Maitland.

Aides-de-camp: Capt. Smyth of Amherst's, Bell.

Assistant to Quarter Master General: Capts. Leslie, Chaldwell.

Engineers: Major Mackellar, subdirector and chief engineer. Capt. Lieut's. Debeig, Williamson; Lieut. Montresor.

Officers appointed to act as Engineers: Lieut. Tonge, Goddard, Bentyal, des Barres.

Captain of Miners: Captain Derecuine

The ten regiments or battalions for this service in three brigades:

Under Brigadier Monckton; Major of Brigade Spittal: Amherst's, Kennedy's, Anstruther's, Fraser's.

Under Brigadier Townshend; Major of Brigade Gwillim: Bragg's, Lascelles', and Monckton's.

Under Brigadier Murray; Major of Brigade Maitland: Otway's, Webb's, and Lawrence's.

Three companies of Grenadiers taken from the garrison of Louisbourg:

Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Murray; Whitmore's, Hopson's, and Warburton's

Commanded by Major Dalling; The three companies of light infantry; one from the garrison of Louisbourg, the two others to be formed from the army.

The following are some anecdotes from Brigadier Townshend's papers, and from some ships' logs concerning the 20-day voyage to Quebec:

On *8 June*, the 78 Fraser Highlanders reported sighting Newfoundland—"

9 June "We entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence."

11 June "Sighted land in the Bay of Gaspé and suffered all night in a N.W. gale."

13 June "Entered the River St. Lawrence."

15 June "Anchored at Isle of Bic."

19 June "Owing to strong ebb tides in the river obliged to anchor at Isle Verte and next day at Isle Rouge."

23 June "First fired on by Indians, but received no casualties."

24 June "Assisted a sloop and a schooner that was near north shore;

saw several muskets fire from the shore, saw the sloop and schooner return fire."

27 June "We landed without opposition on Isle d'Orléans. The French could be seen in eight camps between the River St. Charles and the Montmorency Falls, behind coastal fortifications. Our intelligence informed us that the enemy had about 16,000 men in these camps and fortifications.

Throughout the summer of 1759, the Frasers prodded and skirmished in large and small battles with the French, awaiting Wolfe's plan to land below the city of Quebec.

The Battle:

During the movements of the French troops, and while they were positioning themselves on the battlefield, several militiamen and colonial troops harassed the British on their flanks. These skirmishes caused casualties on both sides.

Meanwhile, Montcalm analyzed the situation and concluded that he should not give the enemy enough time to gain back strength, otherwise it would be impossible to dislodge the British troops. Moreover, a retreat inside city walls was not a solution, since he considered that the fortifications would not hold if there was a siege. In his mind it was clear that he must attack right then and there.

It was therefore around 10:00 a.m. that the General ordered the attack. The troops, divided into three lines, went into action: the first line was made up of regulars, the second one of militiamen recruited into the regiments, and the third was also made up of regulars. Montcalm's decision to incorporate a militia corps into each land forces regiment proved catastrophic: the line came apart very rapidly. A stone's throw from the enemy, the soldiers of the second line fired without the order to do so. The third rank then fired, followed by the first. Faced with this confusion, the British soldiers remained impassive. Their two cannons fired grapeshot, but the soldiers did not budge. Obeying the orders of their General, they formed a line on two rows, which allowed them to cover more surface than the usual three¹¹⁹, and they loaded their guns with two bullets to increase the destructive power of their fire. The order to fire only came when the enemy was at a distance of approximately 40 yards (a little over 35 metres). At the proper time, the first British salvo was heard. Unlike what is often claimed in history books, not all soldiers fired that first salvo, only those belonging to the 43rd and 47th regiments – the ones in the centre of the line¹²⁰. Subsequently, the other regiments opened fire. The first line of the French Army fell, and Sénézergues, Saint-Ours and Fontbonne (French officers) were shot dead. A counterattack was sounded: Monckton was pierced by a bullet and Carleton was wounded in the head¹²¹. The British soldiers advanced a few paces to emerge from

the smoke and carried a second salvo, which completed the work. Montcalm's men beat a retreat. The battle had lasted less than half an hour.

It was only after the battle was over that Bougainville and his men came near the battlefield. To face them, Townshend, who was now in command of the British army since Wolfe's death and Monckton's injury, had the two regiments remaining on the Plains take up their positions. Although Bougainville did not attack, his presence forced Townshend to hold his position and prevented him from chasing after the French Army, which was retreating on the other side of the St. Charles River.



Fort Fraser Scotland Tour: June 3 -17



24 Frasers sing O Canada and raise a glass at the Sir John A. MacDonald cairn near Rogart village in the Highlands north of Inverness.

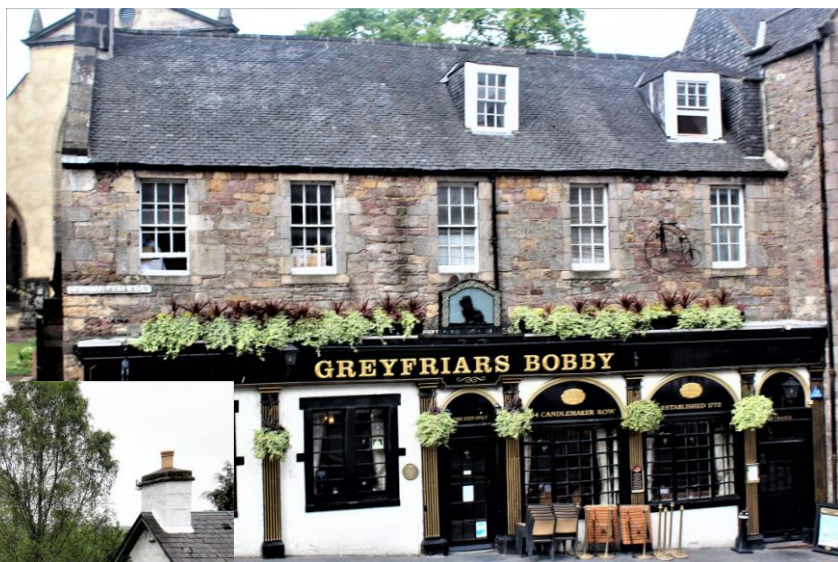


The memorial cairn in Rogart is built on the site of the home of Sir John's grandparents, John and Jean Macdonald. Both families came from Rogart and although Sir John was born in Glasgow, the parish is proud of its connections to him.

The cairn was constructed using stones from the original family home. It was unveiled on the 13th of July 1968 by the thirteenth Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker.

2 weeks, 24 friends and Scotland – what more could one ask?

Our tour took us in a grand loop from Glasgow and included at least one night in Stirling, Pitlochry, Inverness, Fort William, Edinburgh and back to Glasgow via the Borders country.





At Blair Castle



A great trip with great folks!

2017 – 2018 Mess Events planned:

- 23 September 2017 – Plains of Abraham Dinner
 - 25 November 2017 – Feast of St. Andrew
 - 27 January 2018 – Garrison Burns Supper
 - 02 March 2018 – 78th & 15FD Joint Whisky Fundraiser Event
 - 24 March 2018 – Annual general Meeting & Luncheon
 - 21 April 2018 – Battle of Ste. Foy Remembrance Dinner
- (Balance of 2018 events will be noted early in the new year.)



“be kind to one another, we may be in for a bumpy ride”