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“No Great Mischief if They Should Fall”: Scottish Highland Soldiers in the French and Indian War

Douglas Breton
College of William and Mary

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**“No Great Mischief if They Should Fall”:
Scottish Highland Soldiers in the French and Indian War**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in History from
The College of William and Mary

By

Douglas Breton

Accepted for _____
(Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors)

Julie Richter, Director

Paul Mapp

Giulia Pacini

Williamsburg, VA
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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

In the autumn of 1775, the American General Benedict Arnold led an expedition of around 1,200 soldiers from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New England through the wilderness of northern Maine toward the city of Québec. His plan was to attack the city and divert the British forces away from Montréal, which the American General Montgomery would then attack. For about a month, the men paddled and portaged up the Kennebec River, losing a great deal of powder and food in their leaky boats. They lost many more supplies when one of Arnold's subordinates, Lieutenant Enos, elected to return to Brunswick, Maine along with 450 of the soldiers. The resulting lack of rations posed an acute problem when the corps reached the all too fittingly named Dead River. There many of them became sick and died from tainted water and malnutrition. Nevertheless, those who survived the ordeal were able to cross the border into Québec. In almost every settlement, the men received warm welcomes and supplies from the French population. Despite having dwindled to only 500 malnourished men, the column was in fairly high spirits. Undoubtedly, by the time Arnold reached the Plains of Abraham just outside of the city, he must have felt confident that Québec would once again be conquered.¹

If Arnold had known the state of things on the Canadian side, he probably would have been even more sanguine. Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of Canada and commander of British forces within the province, had actually known about the planned invasion since May 20, 1775. Unfortunately, he was helpless to stop it. His forces consisted of less than 600 men fit for duty, and these were scattered throughout the province. With one American column advancing on Montréal and the other pushing for Québec, Carleton had to quickly come up with more soldiers.

¹ George F. G. Stanley, *Canada Invaded, 1775-1776* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1973), 71-79.

Initially, General Carleton proposed reviving the old Canadian militia system that the French had used to great effect throughout the Seven Years' War. It was an excellent idea, but it was poorly executed. Carleton's innate elitism caused him to give commissions only to Canadian seigneurs and other members of the gentry. These he instructed to return home and recruit men from their parishes. When they attempted to do so, they repeatedly encountered stiff resistance. Some were even chased out by their own tenants. The British conquest of Québec had occurred only fifteen years before, and most of the inhabitants were unwilling to fight in the service of their former enemies. Even the British merchants of Montréal and Québec, whom Carleton undoubtedly would have believed to be the most loyal subjects in the province, failed to answer his calls. The Earl of Dartmouth had ordered Carleton to bring 3000 Canadians under arms, but when the militia first mustered in Québec, only seventy merchants and habitants actually turned out.² All around the future of Canada as a British dominion looked bleak.

And yet when Benedict Arnold gazed on Québec's ramparts, he did not see white flags and cheering Québécois. The city was in fact defended, although by a rather unusual group of soldiers. In addition to hastily assembled militiamen there was a regiment of British regulars that was not even a year old. Back in April, as the fervor of Revolution began to grip the thirteen colonies, a Scottish veteran of the Seven Years' War named Allan Maclean of Torloisk received permission from King George III to recruit a regiment to assist in the defense of his majesty's territory and suppress the rebellion. Although many regiments were being created at that time, this one was different from all others because it was formed in the Americas using Highland

² Stanley, 29-31

colonists. The name of the regiment thus came to be known as the 84th Royal Highland Emigrants.³

In the years following the end of the French and Indian War, a number of Highlanders settled in the Nova Scotia, North Carolina, New York's Mohawk Valley, and the former French lands in Canada. Many of these came because they had lost their lands in the first stages of the Highland Clearances. However, many others had actually come over during the war itself as soldiers in the 78th Fraser Highlanders and the 42nd Black Watch. They settled on the land they had received as payment for their service and formed the first British enclaves in former French territory. As soon as the American rebellion began, Allan Maclean turned to them to once again take up arms for their king. Although initially small, the regiment was a tremendous boon to Carleton's meager forces. Whereas many of Arnold's officers had never seen combat before, three captains in the 84th – John Nairne, Malcolm Fraser, and Alexander Fraser – had all fought in the 78th at the last Battle of Québec.⁴ These experienced men would form the backbone of Québec's defenses and keep the city firmly in British hands.

After spending several weeks encamped on the Plains of Abraham in a deadlock, Arnold's forces received support from Montgomery's column, fresh from victory at Montréal. Knowing their light artillery could not breach Québec's walls, the two commanders decided to engage in a full-on assault. On December 31, in the cover of night and a driving snowstorm, the Americans rounded Cape Diamond and attacked Québec from the Lower Town. From the beginning though, their attack was doomed to fail. Captain Malcolm Fraser of the 84th Highlanders, himself a veteran of the French and Indian War, spotted the beginnings of the

³ Stanley, 31

⁴ J.P. MacLean, *Settlements of Scotch Highlanders in America*. (Glasgow: John Mackay, 1900.), 311

onslaught and warned the rest of the garrison. As Montgomery's men advanced on the first barricade, grape and canister shot cut through their ranks. Montgomery was killed, and the rest of the men fell back. Elsewhere, Arnold and Daniel Morgan ran into a company of Highland Emigrants under Captain John Nairne, another veteran of Fraser's. The Highlanders forced many of them to surrender, including Daniel Morgan. Because of them, the city of Québec was safe.⁵

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Scottish Highland soldiers, dressed in their kilts and bonnets, are among the most recognizable and romanticized symbols of Great Britain. Yet this romance belies the true story of the Highland soldier in the British Army, and the reality is not nearly as pleasant as the myth. Although now a common feature of military parades around the world, prior to 1757 Great Britain did not use Highland regiments on a large scale. In fact, the suggestion of creating them would have met with scorn and ire. To many the Highland Scots were barbarians who lived by the sword and resisted practically every attempt to bring civilization to them. The only Highland regiment that existed prior to 1757, the Black Watch, was created using the men from the most loyal clans to police the Highlands and try to bring about a semblance of order. The soldiers who served in the Black Watch believed this was their only duty and resisted attempts to use them like any other line regiment. Likewise, a plurality of Englishmen and Lowland Scots continued to regard all Highlanders potential traitors, an attitude which seemed to be confirmed in the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. For a time the Highlanders gained a number of surprising victories which showcased in the eyes of southern Britons the advantages of their undisciplined nature. But at the

⁵ Stanley, 95-102

Battle of Culloden in 1746, George II's troops soundly defeated the Jacobites and initiated a series of reprisals which destroyed the clan system and devastated the Highlands.

Yet only ten years later, when Britain was engaged in its first global war, the government decided to form two new regiments and enlarge the Black Watch using men from the very same clans that had previously opposed it. More surprising still, recruits turned out by the hundreds, joining the very army that had previously burned and pillaged their homes. The three Highland regiments that were formed or enlarged – Fraser's Highlanders, Montgomery's Highlanders, and the Black Watch – took part in almost every campaign on the North American front. Many times over they distinguished themselves as some of the king's bravest troops. However, this did not come without a price. The casualty figures for these regiments were appalling – well above those of any other regiments. But it was a sacrifice of which their comrades and commanders took note. The deeds of these three regiments convinced the Crown to use Highland regiments in the American Revolution and in each war after that. Many times over these former rebels proved themselves to be among His Majesty's most loyal troops.

The goal of this thesis is to examine how three full-strength regiments came to be recruited from a people that the rest of Great Britain had long despised and recently punished for engaging in a rebellion. Following this it will study the nature of the Highland military experience in North America to analyze how much of a role the three regiments actually played in the campaigns as a whole. In the epilogue it will illustrate the effects the veteran soldiers had on North America following their demobilization. All around this thesis will argue that these rebels turned redcoats played a significant albeit at the time misunderstood role in the French and Indian War.

Chapter I

For several centuries the majority of Britons living south of the Grampian Mountains considered the Highlanders a savage and violent people who lived in a continuous state of warfare and resisted the progress of civilization. To some they were a curiosity, the vestiges of Britain's barbaric past which might in time fade away. To others, however, they were a people to be feared and closely monitored. In the eighteenth century the question of how to handle the Highlands became more acute as a result of two events. The 1707 Act of Union formally brought the region under the control of the British government while the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion demonstrated that not all the clans would submit to that authority. The inhabitants remained highly militaristic and were capable of either overthrowing the king's authority or, if given the proper motivation, capable of becoming his greatest supporters. This dual potential for becoming either rebels or redcoats guided British policy in the Highlands throughout the middle of the eighteenth century, ultimately resulting in both the creation of the first Highland regiment in the British line infantry and the Act of Proscription which set about dismantling thousands of years of culture. These in turn later produced the conditions necessary for the creation of the Highland regiments in the French and Indian War.

Highland culture developed as a result of the harsh landscape that surrounded the clans. The soil was poor and unsuitable for large-scale agriculture, meaning the inhabitants had to turn to herding in order to produce enough food to survive. The rugged mountains also separated clans from one another, keeping a unified society from developing. As a result, each glen became to a certain degree a kingdom of its own, with the clan chiefs serving as their kings. And like kingdoms, the clans naturally developed rivalries as they competed with one another for resources. Cattle were vital for survival, so clans had to conduct raids against one another to

acquire more even as they fought to defend those which they already had. Because of their necessity, these raids and counterraids became affairs of honor in the Highland mind.⁶ All men who were able took up arms when summoned to fight in defense of their clan and its reputation. Such times united them around a common goal and identity, strengthening the bonds of the clans. In the opinion of the eighteenth-century English writer Samuel Johnson, “Every man was a soldier, who partook of national confidence, and interested himself in national honour. To lose this spirit, is to lose what no small advantage will compensate.”⁷ For this reason, the martial nature of the clan needed to be preserved in some fashion or the clan would devolve into a mere collection of tenants and landlords.

As essential as the Highlanders thought this system and way of life was, the Lowlanders and the English took an entirely different view. According to the Scottish historian John Prebble, the Lowlanders believed that the Highlanders were a constant threat to their safety, and being separated by a two-week long journey, the English, including those in the government, knew very little about them.⁸ Those who did attempt to study the Highland way of life often produced biased accounts that focused on its primitive and violent nature. Even more sympathetic observers, such as Duncan Forbes, occasionally did this. Forbes was Lord President of the Court of Session and lived in a house on Culloden Moor, later the site of the Jacobite’s final defeat in the 1745 Rebellion. Shortly after that event, Duncan Forbes recognized that change would soon occur and wrote a brief description of Highland life in order to guide the government’s policymaking. He began it by characterizing the Highlands through contrasts with the Lowlands. For example, he said that the Highlands were a place “where the natives speak the Irish

⁶ John Prebble, *Culloden* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961.), 37

⁷ Samuel Johnson. *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. (London: Penguin, 1984.), 98-99

⁸ *Culloden*, 34

language” and where they lacked industry. The Lowlands, on the other hand, were an area “where some sort of industry has prevailed, and where the soil is tolerable.” As a result of this, the southern inhabitants “have for many years left off the Highland dress, have lost the Irish language, and have discontinued the use of weapons.” Forbes wanted the government to note that thanks to the benefits of civilization, the Lowlanders “cannot be considered as dangerous to the Public peace, and that the laws have their course amongst them.” By contrast,

The inhabitants of the mountains, unacquainted with industry and the fruits of it, and united in some degree by the singularity of dress and language, stick close to their antient idle way of life; retain their barbarous customs and maxims; depend generally on their Chiefs, as their sovereign Lords and masters; and being accustomed to the use of Arms, and inured to hard living, *are dangerous to the public peace*; and must continue to be so, until, being deprived of Arms for some years, they forget the use of them.⁹

This excerpt shows another key element of Forbes’s thought. Introducing civilization to the Highlands would help bring them into modernity, but it could not take root until the area had been disarmed and pacified. Therefore, the Highlands were not an area to lift up but rather to subdue.

Samuel Johnson likewise recognized the necessity of warfare to the Highland identity. While recounting his famous tour of the Highlands in his 1775 work *A Journey to the Western Islands*, Johnson declared that “The religion of the north was military; if they could not find enemies, it was their duty to make them: they travelled in quest of danger, and willingly took the chance of Empire or Death.”¹⁰ This was an oversimplification of the matter since it assumed that the Highlanders would seek adversaries anywhere to fulfill their need for constant combat. By

⁹ Duncan Forbes, *Culloden Papers* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1815), 298

¹⁰ Johnson, 103

that logic they might be used to fight the enemies of the king if they could be convinced to serve him. However, Johnson did not see the situation that way. In the same chapter he wrote,

It must however, be confessed, that a man, who places honour only in successful violence, is a very troublesome and pernicious animal in time of peace; and that the martial character cannot prevail in a whole people, but by the diminution of all other virtues. He that is accustomed to resolve all right into conquest, will have very little tenderness or equity. All the friendship in such a life can be only a confederacy of invasion, or alliance of defence. The strong must flourish by force, and the weak subsist by stratagem.¹¹

This chaos stood in direct conflict with the ideal order of British civilization. If permitted to endure, no social advancement could ever take place. Therefore, laws needed to be implemented to control the north.

But one key factor stood in the way of this. The Highlands were already governed through the absolute authority of the clan chiefs. Their powers were supported by the force of tradition, and within the chief's glen they were practically unlimited. This practice intrigued outsiders in both England and Scotland. John Murray of Broughton, who served as Prince Charles Stewart's secretary during the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion, was among these. After Culloden he went over to the Hanoverian side and wrote a letter advising the government on how to address the Highland question. Possibly because he was anxious to please his new side, his account reinforced many of the stereotypes that southerners had of the lawless clansmen and their autocratic chieftains. For example, he wrote that the common Highlanders were "addicted to theft" as a result of "the indolence of the Chiefs, who, if honest and active, can easily prevent it." Testifying further to his absolute authority, Murray of Broughton referred to the clan chief as more than just the Highlanders' leader but actually "their God." Thus if the king wanted to bring about change in the north, he needed to start with its leaders. Still, there was one limitation on

¹¹ Johnson, 99

the chief's authority. It was determined by his personal strength, and "if weak or of an easy temper [he was] no farther regarded than so far as custom prevails, or interest directs."¹² It did not matter to his clan if he studied in Edinburgh, spoke four languages, and enjoyed imported luxuries. He needed to show them he was a valiant leader or they would not follow him. Many times this came through war.

Of course, there was more to the clan's society than its chief. The chief owned all the land, but he subdivided it for better management. Those who received the initial grants were known as tacksmen, and they became landlords in their own right by subleasing their plots to the rest of the clan. This created a social hierarchy, with each tier being indebted to the one above it. When war broke out, this class structure also had a military advantage because it closely replicated the organization of an infantry regiment. The chief acted as the clan's colonel, the tacksmen served as officers or sergeants, and the subtenants made up the ranks.¹³ Because every member of this unit knew his place and valued the contributions he was making to the cause of his extended family, it was far more cohesive than the British line regiments, which were often recruited by press gangs. The desire to fight bravely and avoid bringing shame to his relatives caused each soldier to fight as valiantly as possible.

Given how the clan structure and culture produced a tribe of warriors, it was only a matter of time before someone put forth the idea of incorporating them in the British Army. The first to do so was the Earl of Breadalbane, himself a member of Clan Campbell. In 1690, while William III was still working to solidify his power, the Earl of Breadalbane suggested that he create four regiments from the loyal clans in order to defend the Highlands against Jacobitism.

¹² John Murray, *Memorials of John Murray of Broughton, Sometime Secretary to Prince Charles Edward, 1740-1747*. Edited by Robert Fitzroy Bell, (Edinburgh: University Press, 1898), 439

¹³ *Culloden*, 40

The king consented, but forbade the Highlanders to wear their traditional dress while in his service. Despite that, this was a big step toward full incorporation in the British Army.

Unfortunately, it suffered a severe reversal when the Campbell regiment took advantage of the disloyalty of their rival, Clan Macdonald, and slaughtered a number of them at Glencoe. Once again clan rivalries perpetuated the belief that Highlanders were lawless.¹⁴

Another British attempt to impose order on the Highlands by using the clansmen themselves came back in 1667 when Charles II authorized the second Earl of Atholl to create independent companies with Campbell, Murray, Grant, Menzies, Fraser, and Munro commanders. These companies wore traditional Highland dress and were collectively known as the Watch. Its principal duties included enforcing the king's laws and preventing rebellion. This latter task proved problematic. In 1717, the Watch was disbanded for failing to stop the 1715 Jacobite Rebellion. Lowland and English troops then took their place, turning the Highlands into occupied territory of a sort. These soldiers only kept a handful of Highlanders on hands to serve as guides.¹⁵

This was not, however, the last time a Highland police force would be used to police the north. In 1724, the government asked General George Wade to create a plan to more effectively enforce its laws in the Highlands. His answer was to assemble officers from the loyal Highland clans and reestablish the Watch. This, he believed, could assist the English in disarming the disloyal clans and preventing crime and rebellion. He lobbied successfully, and a new unit known as *Am Freiceadan Dubh* – the Black Watch – sprang into existence. The name came from one of the most important features of this regiment. Its members wore the king's red uniform, but

¹⁴ John Prebble, *Mutiny: Highland Regiments in Revolt, 1743-1804* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1977.), 21-22

¹⁵ *Mutiny*, 24-25

they also sported dark blue and green kilts. Their tartans were not based on that of any particular clan but rather were unique to the unit.¹⁶ In this way they showed the members of diverse clans were now united under a single Highland identity and loyal to the regiment.

But even when the Highlanders wore the king's red coat, some in the south still doubted their loyalties. These suspicions appeared to be justified in 1743 when certain members of the Black Watch attempted to mutiny. The cause of this disturbance was a fundamental disagreement over the unit's duties. To the Highlanders, they were restricted to enforcing the law within the Grampian Mountains. To the English, however, the Black Watch was now a proper line regiment and needed to serve wherever it was sent. In the middle of the War of Austrian Succession, the army suffered from its usual lack of trained battalions, so the commanders decided to send the Black Watch onto the continent to fight the French. It seemed an excellent idea since, as John Prebble wrote, some in the government believed that the irregular nature of the Highlanders made them superior to the more orderly British battalions. They were also in better physical condition since many English soldiers had been pressed into service.¹⁷ Therefore, they made the decision to send the Black Watch over the English Channel to Flanders.

The Highlanders did not receive this decision well. Among the officers, who actually knew the destination, the main concern was that it exposed their homeland to potential rebellion. Sir Robert Munro, the Black Watch's lieutenant colonel, supposedly asked his superiors what would happen if an uprising should occur while his men were away. In response he was told, "Why, there will be eight hundred fewer rebels there."¹⁸ This ignorant view disregarded the pro-government sympathies of Whig clans like Munro, Grant, and Campbell. In a short amount of

¹⁶ Ibid., 26

¹⁷ Ibid., 34

¹⁸ Ibid., 42

time the British commanders would need them desperately. But at the moment, they had another problem on their hands. The enlisted men of the Black Watch knew they would be leaving Britain but did not know where they were being sent. Rumors spread quickly, and a number of them came to believe the destination was actually the West Indies. If this was in fact the place, it would be a death sentence since disease decimated British garrisons in the Caribbean. Believing that the king had violated their terms of service by sending them away from Great Britain and thus released them from their obligations, 108 soldiers began marching back to Scotland. The English took an altogether different view and arrested the men for mutiny. They were put on trial, but none of the men denounced their leader. Only one even claimed to take part in organizing the disturbance, and he was eventually put to death for it. The 107 men who refused to speak out showed the powerful solidarity that existed within the regiment. Likewise, they stubbornly demonstrated through their actions as a whole that while they would serve the English, it had to be on their terms. If this was permitted, they would prove some of their best soldiers.¹⁹

Indeed, when the Highlanders finally did march into battle under with the king's arms, they distinguished themselves quite well. In 1745 they served under the Duke of Cumberland in Flanders, where they fought the French at Fontenoy. Since this was their first encounter, it is not particularly surprising that this has become a highly mythologized part of the Black Watch's history. Numerous popular histories, such as *Highlander: The History of the Highland Soldier* by Tim Newark, reference it and depict the Highlanders as the saviors of Britain and its allies.²⁰ It is difficult to assess how accurate these portrayals are since contemporary sources referencing the

¹⁹ *Mutiny*, 53-54

²⁰ Tim Newark, *Highlander: The History of the Highland Soldier*, (London, Constable, 2011), 57-59

Highlanders at the battle are difficult to find. Nevertheless, the popular accounts of the Black Watch at Fontenoy are quite valuable because they show what aspects of the unit were revered as time went on. Archibald Forbes's regimental history from 1897 is representative of this.

Forbes's account stressed how unique the Highlanders were on the field standing alongside the English and their Dutch allies. His portrayal had the Highlanders began the battle by flushing out a French entrenchment with their broadswords while the Guards attacked with bayonets.²¹ The difference in arms demonstrates even at this early point the contrast between the Highlanders and the English regiments in Forbes's eyes. But it was nothing compared to what he portrayed as the shining act of the Highlanders. Midway through the battle, the French Irish Brigade initiated a counterattack that forced the hitherto victorious British to fall back from positions. At this crucial moment, the Highlanders received orders to support the withdrawal. In an oft repeated story which Tim Newark includes in *Highlander*, the Black Watch's lieutenant colonel, Sir Robert Munro, received special permission from the Duke of Cumberland himself "to allow the Highlanders to fight in their own way."²² In this case, having the men "fight in their own way" meant allowing them to "clap to the ground on receiving the French fire" and then ordering them to rise up as the enemy neared in order to return a volley. This cycle repeated several times, and throughout it, according to Forbes, Sir Robert Munro remained standing. It seemed an act of gallantry, but the familiar tale states he was actually concerned that his corpulence would prevent him from quickly rising back up once he had taken cover. Under his seemingly valiant leadership, the enemy was turned back and Cumberland's force was spared.²³

²¹ Archibald Forbes, *The "Black Watch": The Record of an Historic Regiment* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897.), 25

²² *Ibid.*, 27

²³ *Ibid.*, 27-28

It sounds like an excellent story, and it very well may have happened exactly as Forbes and others claim. But in this case there is one issue with Forbes's analysis. Many contemporaries, such as the Chevalier de Johnstone, a Jacobite who will be discussed later, commented on the style of Gaelic warfare. Almost all of them characterized the Highlanders as being advocates of the broadsword charge and nothing else. It may be that instead of this tactic developing from centuries of clan warfare that this was actually an invention of the skilled commander Sir Robert Munro. If so, its attribution to Highland nature shows once again that Lowland and English commentators believed all of the Highlanders' abilities came about as a result of some peculiar aspect in their nature.

Many individuals who have written about Fontenoy have emphasized how the Black Watch distinguished itself before non-Highlanders at that battle. Archibald Forbes quotes an unnamed and unfortunately uncited Frenchman who declared that "the Highland furies rushed in upon us with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest."²⁴ A London newspaper from May 11, 1745, mentions the Highlanders in a brief statement recalling how "The Highlanders Regiment, the Regiment late Handafyde's, Duroure's, and many others also distinguished themselves."²⁵ But the account David Stewart of Garth, an early nineteenth-century British general turned Highland historian, is particularly interesting since it describes the suspicion with which the English officers had regarded the Gaelic warriors. He wrote, "The impression was so strong in some high quarters that, on the rapid charges made by the Highlanders, when pushing forward sword in hand nearly at full speed, and advancing so far, it was suggested that they inclined to change sides and join the enemy, who had already three

²⁴ *The "Black Watch"*, 29

²⁵ Whitehall May 11 1745 "An Account of the Action" (London, England, Saturday, May 11, 1745),

brigades of Scotch and Irish engaged.”²⁶ This account should definitely be taken with a grain of salt since, as the Canadian historian Ian McCulloch observes, Stewart of Garth was prone to exaggeration. He was also a former Black Watch officer in the nineteenth century, meaning a great deal of bias.²⁷ But even if the English officers did not actually believe the men of the Black Watch would run off and join the French, they certainly suspected some in the ranks might be rebellious. This belief was erroneous since the Black Watch recruited from Whig rather than Jacobite clans, but it existed nonetheless. By fighting for the king in that crucial moment, the Black Watch helped reverse this notion and distinguished themselves in the face of skeptics.

The Highlanders themselves recognized that Fontenoy had been a victory for them. The Black Watch’s chaplain, Laurence Macpherson, published a prayer which not only asked God for future successes but also heralded the army’s accomplishments. The final section focused on the Black Watch.

May the Courage and Intrepidity of the brave HIGHLANDERS, be a continual Terror to the Enemy, and a distinguished Example to their Fellow Soldiers... And when it shall please thee to put an End to this tedious War, may such of us as shall remain alive, have the Happiness of returning back with Honour to our native country, there to forget our past Toils and Dangers, and wear out the Residue of our Days, in the pleasing Conversation of our Families, our Kindred, and our Friends. And, finally, may we at last exchange this troublesome Life, for a State in which we shall remain for ever undisturbed by the Treachery, the Ambition, the Folly, and Madness, or wicked and distracted Emperors, Kings, or Princes.²⁸

Here Macpherson recognized that the Highlanders have proven themselves before their comrades in arms, but significantly he does not express a desire to remain in their company for too much

²⁶ David Stewart of Garth. *Sketches of the Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland, Volume I* (Edinburgh: Archibald, Constable and Co. 1825), 277

²⁷ Ian Macpherson McCulloch, *Sons of the Mountains: The Highland Regiments in the French and Indian War, Vol. 1*. Fleischmanns, (N.Y: Purple Mountain Press; Ticonderoga, N.Y: Fort Ticonderoga; Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2006.), xv

²⁸ Laurence Macpherson, “A new form of prayer, as used (since the Battle of Fontenoy) by the British troops in the allied army in Flanders.” (London : T. Lion, 1745), 8

longer. Even at this point there is still hope that the Black Watch can return to the Highlands, where they will resume their duty of protecting their homes instead of fighting against ambitious foreign monarchs. This they would do very soon, as they returned to duty in the north of Scotland right as the final Jacobite rebellion began.

As with so many other Highland successes, the Black Watch's accomplishment at Fontenoy was followed by a severe reversal. In the same year as that battle, Prince Charles Stewart, the Young Pretender, abruptly landed in the Highlands and incited those Highland clans which supported the House of Stuart to rise up against the Hanoverians. A few clansmen took up the weapons they had hidden away after the last Disarming Act, but the Young Pretender's force did not grow to a concerning size until after it defeated the British Army at Prestonpans. At that time, recruits poured in and the supporters of George II realized the desperate situation they had in front of them.

For several reasons the Jacobite Rebellion proved particularly challenging for the British Army. The Highlanders were fighting in rugged terrain which they knew but the Hanoverians did not. They could easily conduct small raids that caught a few companies off guard before vanishing back into the mountains. But even when they met on an open battlefield, the Highlanders still had a key tactical advantage over the British. The Chevalier de Johnstone, a Scottish officer who served with the French and with the Jacobites, wrote a description of the way in which Highlanders typically conducted their battles.

If we had remained firing at a certain distance instead of rushing impetuously upon the enemy, two thousand regular troops, regularly trained to fire and unaccustomed to the sword, would have beaten four thousand Highlanders with ease. Their manner of fighting is adapted for brave but undisciplined men. They advance with rapidity, discharge their pieces when within musket-length of the enemy, and then throwing them down, draw their swords, and holding a dirk in

their left hand with their target, dart with fury on the enemy through the smoke of their fire. When within reach of the enemy's bayonets, bending their left knee, they cover their bodies with their targets, which receive the thrusts of the bayonets, while at the same time they raise their sword-arm and strike their adversary. Having once got within the bayonets and into the ranks of the enemy, the soldiers have no longer any means of defending themselves, the fate of the battle is decided in an instant, and the carnage follows – the Highlanders bringing down two men at a time, one with their dirk, in the left hand, and another with the sword.”²⁹

As directly stated in this assessment, Johnstone recognized that the Highlanders' advantage over the English was their lack of discipline. Whereas the English felt it was key to maintain composure in battle in order to prevent a line from giving way, the Jacobites let loose and charged headlong at the enemy in order to catch him off guard and cause him to flee the field. It was a very irregular tactic but it often worked with great success.

The first example of the Highland broadsword charge's effect came at Prestonpans. Here the English commander, Sir John Cope, lined up his men to fight a traditional eighteenth-century battle. Having been disarmed in the years prior to this uprising, the Jacobites were hardly ready for battle at all. Johnstone said that some had only staves, bludgeons, or scythes attached to poles as weapons.³⁰ Despite this, they managed to overwhelm the English through their tactics. In Johnstone's words, the Jacobites under Lord George Murray “advanced with such rapidity that General Cope had hardly time to form his troops in order of battle, before the Highlanders rushed upon them sword in hand.” They quickly threw the English cavalry into disorder by attacking the horses, which quickly turned about and fled. With the horsemen retreating, the Jacobites then fell on the infantry flanks, which in turn also succumbed to panic.³¹ In only ten minutes, 400 regulars

²⁹ Chevalier de Johnstone. *A Memoir of the 'Forty-Five*. Edited by Brian Rawson. (London: Folio Society, 1958.), 82-83

³⁰ *A Memoir of the 'Forty-Five*, 36

³¹ *Ibid.*, 37

were killed and 1,000 were taken prisoner.³² The catastrophic losses testify to the success of this tactic.

It is worth noting that the Jacobite victory occurred not only in the face of superior numbers but also in the face of superior training. Sir John Cope's force contained men who had fought in the War of Austrian Succession, most notable members of the Black Watch. Highland soldiers had fought against one another in support of different monarchs. Not only does this encounter attract attention for its dramatic elements, but its result also reveals an interesting difference between the two Highland groups. The nineteenth-century Scottish historian Stewart of Garth noted both in his romanticized *Sketches of the Highlanders*. In trying to account for why the better disciplined, better trained Black Watch lost the battle, Stewart acknowledged that because the Highlanders did not perform as well here as at Fontenoy, the different outcome might have come about as a result of "the different character of the troops to whom they were opposed."³³ However, this was not what Stewart of Garth actually believed. Succumbing to romantic notions of a pan-Highland identity, he disregarded clan rivalries and said that the Black Watch's enemies "were their former friends and countrymen, and their defence may consequently be supposed to have been less obstinate and determined."³⁴ Given that the Black Watch was recruited from the loyal Highland clans, it seems highly unlikely that its men would withhold any effort to save their own lives just because their enemies came from the same geographic region. Instead, the argument Stewart of Garth passed over so quickly, that the character of the troops was different, is much more likely. Prior to traveling to Flanders, the

³² John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American war making on the frontier, 1607-1814*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005.), 106

³³ Stewart of Garth, 290-291

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 291

Black Watch had been trained in the same tactics as any other British line regiment. This replaced what John Prebble termed “the half-naked storm-charge that had been the only military tactic of their ancestors.”³⁵ This same “storm-charge” had been their undoing simply because the formation and tactics they had been taught were vulnerable to it. It was tactics and not common culture that proved their undoing.

The Chevalier de Johnstone made one other noteworthy observation about the Sir John Cope’s troops at Prestonpans. The Jacobites were by far the inferior soldiers in this engagement, so something had to account for this unlikely victory. In Johnstone’s opinion, the answer was the very makeup of the English regiments. He said the following in his memoirs on this subject:

However, when we come to consider the matter attentively, we can hardly be astonished that Highlanders, who take arms voluntarily from attachment to their legitimate Prince and their chiefs, should defeat thrice their number of regular troops, who enlist from seduction or a love of idleness and dissipation. Such men are strangers to the love of glory, affection for their Prince, the enthusiasm of patriotism, the intense feeling of the justice of their cause, the hope of rich spoil or honourable promotion.³⁶

Johnstone omitted a few considerations in his analysis, such as the possibility that some chiefs impressed their tenants while some redcoats willingly fought for George II. Nevertheless, there is a grain of truth to it. The common British soldier was often either impressed into service or compelled to take up arms in order to address his physical needs. John Prebble notes as much in *Culloden*:

The soldier of George II came to the colours as a result of several pressures. The most common was economic, the simple desire for food and clothing... When economic pressure, or the skills of their recruiters were not enough to fill their battalions, colonels followed their naval colleagues and used the press.”³⁷

³⁵ *Mutiny*, 37

³⁶ *A Memoir of the 'Forty-Five*, 41

³⁷ *Culloden*, 23

The perception that Highlanders were free from this motivation made them seem superior to British troops in respects to morale. It was an idea that would have important consequences after the rebellion ended.

Following Prince Charles's failed invasion of England, the Jacobite Army had another chance to show their tactical supremacy over the Hanoverians when the two armies met at Falkirk. While the outcome was similar to that of Prestonpans, the initial situation was quite different. This time the soldiers were quite experienced since many of them had been at Fontenoy and Dettingen. Johnstone even said that they "might justly be ranked amongst the bravest troops of Europe."³⁸ As the cavalry rode down upon them, the Jacobites might have experienced defeat at the hands of these well-trained veterans. However, Johnstone recalled that the Highlanders had received orders from their commanders "not to fire till the army was within musket-length of them." Thus they waited and "discharged their muskets the moment the cavalry halted and killed about eighty men, each of them having aimed at a rider." Soon thereafter another Highland charge forced the government troops to flee from the field.³⁹ It was a tremendous boon to the Jacobite cause, showing that the shock effect of the charge could overcome seasoned British troops. An anonymous poem published in Edinburgh in 1745 expresses this idea concisely:

That Virtue *Scotia's* Sons doth own,
Which gave their Ancestors Renown,
Her *Highlanders* by far the best,
At *Gladsmuir* and *Falkirk* Express'd
Where Hundreds made ev'n Thousands yield,

³⁸ Ibid., 40

³⁹ Ibid., 87

And quit ingloriously the Field.
 Where *England's* Chosen Troops defeat,
 Fell, or were safe by swift Retreat,
 While *Scotland's* Stewart *Highland* Chief!
 Restores her Glory, brings Relief.”⁴⁰

The Highlanders would not soon forget their victory over “England’s chosen troops.” It seemed to prove that their ancestral tactic was invincible. This notion, however, would prove sadly mistaken when the Jacobites met the government troops one final time.

As successful as the Jacobites had been at Prestonpans and Falkirk, the Battle of Culloden undid everything. It was a battle that the Jacobites almost seemed destined to lose. From its onset, almost nothing went in their favor. Already tired from their long night march, Jacobite troops assembled on Culloden Moor as rain and sleet fell. This made the ground even worse for combat. Lord George Murray, one of Prince Charles’ commanders, had vainly tried to convince the Young Pretender to move to different ground since Culloden’s terrain was flat and open – perfect for the government troops and their cavalry. If they moved to a more rugged area the Highlanders would be much more effective. Unfortunately, Prince Charles ignored all of this advice, determined to command his troops on his own without interference.⁴¹ It was a terrible decision which would cost him dearly. As the Jacobite commander Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat later recalled before his execution for high treason, “None but a mad fool would have fought that day.”⁴²

⁴⁰ *Ad priscos Scotos, scilicet Montanos, in praelia apud Gladsmuir, xxi Septembris, MDCCXLV, et apud Falkirk, xvii Januarii, MDCCXLVI, sub ductu et exemplo Caroli principis, et Scotiae Senscalli.* Edinburgh : 1746

⁴¹ *Culloden*, 57

⁴² *Ibid.*, 66

The Jacobite forces began taking heavy losses from the battle's onset. However, they inflicted almost no casualties on the Government side. This was because all the initial fighting was done with cannon fire. The battle-tested Hanoverians fired at will, keeping up a steady barrage without break. The Jacobite gunners on the other hand were much less experienced and failed to have any effect. Within minutes all of them were silenced, giving the Hanoverians a significant edge as the battle began.⁴³ But cannons were not the traditional way that the Jacobites fought their battles. In every other encounter it had been the Highland charge that won the day. The clansmen themselves chomped at the bit to run forward. Eventually, they had enough of taking losses while standing still and wildly advanced toward the redcoats.

At last the Highland broadsword charge, which had proven so successful in the past, completely faltered. The cannonade remained steady, killing many of the clansmen as they moved unprotected across the open moor. Worse still, even when they reached the redcoat lines, their enemies did not flee in terror. The government troops had developed a new tactic to maximize their firepower against the clans before they could start swinging their swords at them. The men stood in three ranks which fired in sequence. When the Highlanders advanced, the first line fired and then clapped to the ground to reload. The second line, which had already primed and loaded, then made ready and fired. When they had done so they also went to the ground so that the third line could shoot. By that time the first line had completely reloaded and was ready to recommence the cycle. It proved extremely effective. John Prebble notes that the clan which broke into the charge first, Clan Chattan, lost eighteen of its twenty-one officers before reaching within twenty yards of the infantry. Other clans suffered similarly, causing the entire assault to

⁴³ *Culloden*, 84-85

rapidly stall.⁴⁴ Very soon thereafter, the advance turned into a rout. As the Chevalier de Johnstone later recalled, “The same Highlanders, who had advanced to the charge like lions, with bold, determined countenances, were in an instant seen flying like trembling cowards in the greatest disorder.”⁴⁵ Members of the Whig Clan Campbell as well as elements of the cavalry began chasing them down as soon as they turned to run.⁴⁶ Within minutes it was clear that the Jacobites were defeated.

Several key factors determined Culloden’s outcome, and all of these demonstrate the weaknesses of using Highland soldiers. The first was the commander itself. Prince Charles Stewart had insisted on commanding the troops himself in place of more experienced leaders like Lord George Murray. He did not know how to use the Highlanders, as shown by his inappropriate choice of ground. Even though the clan leaders could inspire their troops, they needed an intelligent leader acquainted with strategy in order to be effective. Additionally, the Highland broadsword charge was only useful up to a point. Similar to what John Prebble later believed, Johnstone wrote in his memoirs that the Highlanders and their chiefs “possessed the most heroic courage; but they knew no other manoeuvre than that of rushing upon the enemy sword in hand, as soon as they saw them, without order and without discipline.”⁴⁷ If the enemy became terrified and started to flee, the results could be every bit as devastating as after Prestonpans. But if they stood prepared on flat ground with the protection of artillery, the Highlanders themselves would be the ones who suffered. Johnstone himself acknowledged as much: “It may be said of the attack of the Highlanders, that it bears great resemblance to that of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 96

⁴⁵ *A Memoir of the ‘Forty-Five*, 123

⁴⁶ Peter E Russel, “Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740 to 1760.” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 35, no. 4 (Oct., 1978), 639

⁴⁷ *A Memoir of the ‘Forty-Five*, 33

the French; that it is a flame, the violence of which is more to be dreaded than the duration. No troops, however, excellent, are possessed of qualities which will render them constantly invincible.”⁴⁸ At Culloden they proved Johnstone correct. Still the Jacobite officer felt he had to give the men some credit: “As the Highlanders were completely exhausted with hunger, fatigue and the want of sleep, our defeat did not at all surprise me; I was only astonished to see them behave so well.”⁴⁹ Even when they suffered utter defeat, they still managed to distinguish themselves through their valor. This would remain a common characteristic of Highland units in many wars to come, adding more to their reputation each time.

The government’s triumph at Culloden brought about more than just the final defeat of Jacobitism. Immediately following the battle, redcoats scouring the Highlands for the remains of Prince Charles’s forces seized cattle and luxuries in the name of punishing traitors. Other property such as houses and barns were set on fire. All of this occurred regardless of whether or not the owner had actually rebelled. This caused widespread devastation throughout the Highlands and left many in ruin.⁵⁰ These reprisals may have seemed extreme, but as John Grenier explains in *The First Way of War*, “the English viewed the Scottish Highlands as marchland, a place where traditional rules of civilized behavior did not apply to Englishmen fighting against ‘wild and barbarous’ Highlanders, so long as they permitted greater control of the Highlands.”⁵¹ And in the end, that is precisely what they achieved. The old way of life was abruptly uprooted and the Highlands became occupied territory.

⁴⁸ *A Memoir of the ‘Forty-Five*, 123

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 125

⁵⁰ *Culloden*, 192-193

⁵¹ Grenier, 104

The British Army's pillaging devastated the Highlands, but it did not continue indefinitely. In its place came something which every bit as potent. To ensure no rebellion would ever take place again in the north, the British government issued a series of draconian declarations which stripped the chiefs of their power and destroyed key elements of Highland culture. Perhaps the worst of these was the lengthily titled "Act for the more effectual disarming the Highlands in *Scotland*; and for more effectually securing the Peace of the said Highlands; and for the restraining the Use of the Highland Dress, etc." Commonly called the Act of Proscription, this updated version of a 1715 act sought to prevent any future rebellion by stripping from the Highlanders their traditional broadswords and dirks as well as their clan dress. Anyone who failed to obey and was seen by at least one witness would have to pay £15 and stay in prison until the amount was paid.⁵² Likewise, anyone caught wearing a kilt, tartan, or any other traditional Highland dress would "suffer Imprisonment, without Bail, during the Space of Six Months, and no longer; and being convicted for a Second Offence before a Court of Judiciary, or at the Circuits, shall be liable to be transported to any of his Majesty's plantations beyond the Seas, there to remain for the Space of Seven Years."⁵³ The first part of the law, concerning the armament of Highlanders makes sense in the wake of a rebellion. The second, however, does not immediately seem logical. Why should Parliament concern itself with the attire of a people who will soon be disarmed and cease to pose a threat in the north? Considering that the stated goal of the act is to restore peace in the north, it appears as though they linked the tartan to the martial culture that produced the rebellions in the first place. By proscribing it they

⁵² *Anno regni Georgii II. regis Magnae Britanniae, Franciae, & Hiberniae, decimo nono. At the Parliament begun and holden at Westminster, the first day of December, anno Dom. 1741, in the fifteenth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord, George the Second ... And from thence continued by several prorogations to the seventeenth day of October, 1745, being the fifth session of this present Parliament.* (London, Thomas Basket, 1746.), 589

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 596-597

would remove one more obstacle that was hindering their pacification efforts. And if that did not succeed, they could reduce the possibility of further insurrection by removing offending individuals and sending them overseas. Whether or not they died did not matter. The Highland population needed to be subdued and pacified by any means necessary.

Although aimed at hindering future uprisings, the Act of Proscription punished all clans, even those which had fought for the king at Prestonpans, Falkirk, and Culloden. Duncan Forbes, who had set forth his own ideas on how the Highlanders could be civilized, agreed that the tartan somehow perpetuated the “warlike spirit” of the Highlanders, but also considered the punishment of loyal clans unjust. He told Parliament that the kilt was a very useful garment as it permitted easier travel over the Highlands and allowed one to better withstand inclement weather. Unfortunately, pointing these things out only further convinced the government that it aided would-be rebels.⁵⁴ Decades later, Samuel Johnson likewise recognized this was unjust.

To disarm part of the Highlands, could give no reasonable occasion of complaint. Every government must be allowed the power of taking away the weapon that is lifted against it. But the loyal clans murmured, with some appearance of justice, that after having defended the King, they were forbidden for the future to defend themselves; and that the sword should be forfeited, which had been legally employed. Their case is undoubtedly hard, but in political regulations, good cannot be complete, it can only be predominant.⁵⁵

Johnson’s argument has merit, but unfortunately it was made too long after the act was passed to have any real effect. The loyal clans like the rebellious ones all lost their cultural emblems and weapons. This common fate may have helped to dissolve some of the clan divisions that had existed for centuries. Since the southern Britons considered them one people and treated them as such, the Highlanders slowly began to act in such a fashion. In years to come these divisions

⁵⁴ *Culloden*, 327

⁵⁵ Johnson, 98

would become less and less significant, allowing for all the clans to come together in support of the very king that some of them had sought to overthrow.

Although the Act of Proscription stripped the ordinary Highlanders of weapons, two of its passages did provide a way for them to take them back up again. Curiously, any Highlanders who failed to pay the £15 fine and were fit for military service could be sent overseas “to serve as Soldiers in any of his Majesty’s forces in America; for which Purpose the respective Officers, who shall receive such Men, shall then cause the Articles of War against Mutiny and Desertion to be read to him of them in the Presence of such Justices of the Peace or Judge Ordinary.”⁵⁶ Compulsory military service seems like a very unusual penalty for men who had previously engaged in armed rebellion, and so its institution is quite significant. On one hand it removed potentially rebellious members of the population, but that could be done just as well through indentured servitude as with the clause concerning Highland dress. The real reason for this penalty is most likely that the government realized the Highlanders were excellent soldiers and could be put to use in the service of the king. It was no great matter if they died since the Highlanders had little say in the government or connection to the rest of Britain. But so long as they lived and served, they could be quite useful.

Another passage of the law which expresses a similar idea is the section describing exemptions from disarmament. It stated that peers of the realm, members of parliament, individuals exempted from the 1715 Disarming Act, and anyone the king exempted from the act could continue to bear arms.⁵⁷ One of these groups was the Black Watch, the only Highland regiment then in existence. It continued to bear arms and wear traditional dress throughout the

⁵⁶*Anno regni Georgii II*, 590

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 595

years following Culloden, providing Highlanders with an opportunity for employment and a chance to wear articles which were proscribed by law for the rest of the population. It is unclear whether the politicians in London believed that the regiment's Highland dress and weapons were key to its success, but since they did implemented no changes, it seems they felt it was at the very least a benign component of its character.

The Scottish Highlands had changed greatly as a result of the Jacobite Rebellion. Now disarmed, stripped of traditional dress, and subjects of the king alone rather than clan chiefs, the Highlanders lost a great deal of their identity. It was only preserved through the memory of those who had known life before the rebellion and through the Black Watch. Yet the idea persisted that the Highlanders were somehow superior warriors due to their irregular nature, and in time of need they could potentially be put to use serving the king. That time would come in 1757 and result in the complete incorporation of Highland units into the British Army.

Chapter II

Ten years after the Battle of Culloden, Great Britain found itself embroiled in a far more serious conflict than the Jacobite Rebellion or the War of Austrian Succession had ever been. What began in 1754 with a relatively small-scale border dispute involving French expansion into the British-claimed Ohio Territory developed rapidly after Great Britain issued an official declaration of war in 1756. The struggle which followed was one for which the British were utterly unprepared. Not only did they have to wage war in Europe and their colonies but they also possessed an army that was far inferior to the French. The government needed to find new troops quickly, no matter what the source. That source turned out to be the Scottish Highlands. In a wild scheme, the new prime minister, William Pitt, drafted a plan to create two new Highland regiments to supplement the Black Watch. It initially met with stiff resistance, but when recruitment began it occurred with surprising ease. In only ten years clans which had produced ardent rebels now produced loyal redcoats, and as much as they had shown their prowess at Prestonpans and Falkirk, they would show even more at Louisbourg and Ticonderoga.

Yet this success was somewhat mitigated by the terrible losses the Highlanders sustained. Whereas the overall casualty rate for British forces in the war was nine percent, the Highland regiments collectively lost thirty-two percent.⁵⁸ Explaining these losses is difficult, but in most cases they stem from a fundamental misunderstanding of the Highlanders' capabilities. The English adjusted their old barbarian stereotypes of Highlanders to argue that their uncivilized nature somehow gave them an edge over professional troops and put them on the same plane as American Indians. As a result their commanders failed to use the Highlanders appropriately,

⁵⁸ Colin Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (New York: Oxford, 2008), 96

forcing them to fight under conditions which would be hopeless for any troops. What successes the Black Watch, Fraser's Highlanders, and Montgomery's Highlanders enjoyed was wholly due to their strength as units rather than any innate ethnic abilities.

The creation of the new Highland regiments, the 77th and 78th, could not have occurred had Britain not been in such a desperate situation in 1756. In addition to the losses of Fort Oswego in North America and Minorca in the Mediterranean, Great Britain was at a severe disadvantage in terms of manpower. In May 1756, the kingdom only had a total of twenty-five cavalry regiments and sixty-two infantry. Most of the infantry regiments consisted of just one battalion, meaning about 600 men by peacetime standards.⁵⁹ This produced a total of around 34,000 men. Despite being a substantial increase from the peacetime number of 19,000, it was still only one-fifth the size of France's army.⁶⁰ In a letter to Lord Loudoun, commander of forces in North America, the Duke of Cumberland wrote, "Nothing can be worse than our Situation here at home, without any plan, or even a Desire to have one. great Numbers talked of to be Sent you, but without any Consideration of how, & from whence, without considering what Shoud carry with them..."⁶¹ Moreover, the king's main concern in the war was the defense of his home island, and provisions would have to be made for this. As a result, Britain would be unable to launch any major campaigns in North America unless some major changes were made.

Even though 1756 proved to be a bleak year in terms of military endeavors, it still witnessed the beginning of political changes that would later give Great Britain an edge in the

⁵⁹ James Thompson. *A Bard of Wolfe's Army: James Thompson, Gentleman Volunteer, 1733-1830*, Edited by Ian M. McCulloch and Earl John Chapman. (Montréal: Robin Brass Studio, 2010.), 111

⁶⁰ E.M. Lloyd, *The Highland Regiments in 1757*. *The English Historical Review*, Vol 17, No 67, pp. 466-469. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Jul, 1902.), 367

⁶¹ Letter from Cumberland to Loudoun, St. James's, December 23, 1756. In Stanley Pargellis. *Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle*. (Archon Books, 1969), 262-263

New World. That year, Prime Minister Newcastle was compelled to share power with his rival William Pitt in a coalition government. This displeased many powerful figures, including George II himself.⁶² Yet it was clear from the onset that Pitt had a plan for how to address each of Britain's challenges. The first was to refocus the army's goals. Rather than continuing to tie up men fighting in Germany, Pitt decided to leave the defense of Hanover to the Prussians, Hessians, and Hanoverians themselves, giving them sizable monetary contributions in order to support this endeavor. With that out of the way, Pitt proposed creating a 32,000 man militia force to serve as a sort of home guard. This would protect the island of Great Britain from invasion and allow more military to deploy in other areas. Finally turning to North America, Pitt insisted that Lord Loudoun, the commander-in-chief of North America needed to have at the very least 17,000 soldiers in order to invade Canada. To do this, new battalions would have to be formed.⁶³

Recruiting sergeants had already scoured most counties in England, Wales, and Scotland, and furiously competed with one another just to drum up a few new men. Yet there was one vast source of manpower in the isles that hitherto remained untapped. That was the Scottish Highlands. After Culloden, a number of English commentators noted that these former rebels who had been so effective at Prestonpans and Falkirk could be put to good use fighting for rather than against George II. On June 9, 1751 – only five years after the Jacobites suffered their last defeat, a young officer by the name of James Wolfe wrote a letter to Captain Rickson on June 9, 1751, expressing his belief in the benefits of Highland soldiers.

Brave men, when they see the least room for conquest, think it easy, and generally make it so; but they grow impatient with perpetual disadvantages. I should think that two or three independent Highland companies might be of use; they are hardy,

⁶² Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: the Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 2000.), 172

⁶³ Anderson, 173

intrepid, accustomed to a rough country, and no great mischief if they fall. How can you better employ a secret enemy than by making his end conducive to the common good? If this sentiment should take wind, what an execrable and bloody being should I be considered here in the midst of Popery and Jacobitism!⁶⁴

Wolfe had served in the army at Falkirk, and so he knew from firsthand experience what capable soldiers the Highlanders were. Yet two parts of his letter reveal how little his views differed from common English attitudes at that time. First he stated that the Highlanders were “accustomed to rough country,” suggesting he believed the Highlanders would be useful in any difficult terrain, not just the Grampian Mountains of northern Scotland. This was not necessarily true, as the army would later discover. Second, by saying that they were “no great mischief if they fall,” he overtly declared that the Highlanders were expendable. This does not mean that Wolfe wanted them to serve as mere cannon fodder, but it does imply that since they had fewer connections to the rest of Britain, they could sustain casualties without causing public outcry. If the war was going to be long and bloody, this quality would make them ideal soldiers.

Among the Englishmen who argued for the creation of the new Highland battalions, no one is more associated with the project than William Pitt. As prime minister, he was the one who first proposed the idea, stating: “Two regiments, a thousand men in a corps, may be raised in the North of Scotland for the said service, and on the same terms. No men on this island are better qualified for the American war, than the Scots Highlanders.”⁶⁵ More than mere hyperbole, his second sentence revealed that he like many others earnestly believed the Highlanders could be among the troops needed to change the course of the war. But even if this was so, his motion quickly encountered stiff opposition.

⁶⁴ Beckles Wilson, *The Life and Letters of James Wolfe*. (London: Heinemann, 1909.), 141

⁶⁵ Lloyd, 467

The main issue concerned the men who would command these new battalions. The first selection was Archibald Montgomery, brother to the influential 10th Earl of Eglinton and an experienced, Gaelic-speaking Whig officer. Nothing about his background could raise any concern. The other potential commander, however, was very controversial. He was Simon Fraser, Clan Fraser's chief. During the Rebellion, both he and his father, Lord Lovat, had fought for the Young Pretender. Despite being a somewhat reluctant rebel, Fraser personally led men of his clan at the Battle of Falkirk, an encounter which proved devastating to the English.⁶⁶ After Culloden, Lord Lovat was executed for his treachery. Simon Fraser received punishment in his own right. His title and land grants were stripped from him, and by extension so was his honor. His motivations in fighting the war were obvious: by proving his newfound loyalty to the Hanoverian king, he could once again become Master of Lovat. This could not happen unless his nomination succeeded.

The main opposition to Fraser's appointment came from Lord Hardwicke, the Lord Chancellor of former Prime Minister Newcastle's government and therefore an enemy of William Pitt. On January 7, 1757, he wrote: "I find the measure of raising 2,000 Highlanders alarms many of the best affected, particularly the making councilor Fraser colonel of one of the Battalions... Nothing could more effectually break in upon the plan which has been pursuing for that country, ever since the last Rebellion, and I dare say the scheme is to put an end to it." Two days later, Newcastle voiced opposition. "I most entirely disapprove the method of their Highland regiments. The Duke, I hear, disapproves and submits. It is wholly the duke of Argyle."⁶⁷ In referencing the duke, he meant the Duke of Cumberland himself. Not only was he

⁶⁶ Brumwell, 269

⁶⁷ Lloyd, 469

the son of King George II, but he was also a powerful military leader. If nothing else, he had led the Hanoverians in the Forty-five, and thus his opinions on the Highlanders carried great influence. If Pitt wanted his plan to pass, he needed to secure Cumberland's support.

Exactly what the Duke of Cumberland thought about Pitt's scheme is unclear, and historians are divided over his views. Basil Williams, author of *The Life of William Pitt*, stated that Cumberland implicitly approved of it.⁶⁸ Stephen Brumwell likewise says that Cumberland was a supporter of the plan, and that his backing helped change the King's mind.⁶⁹ However, Ian McCulloch says that Cumberland actually opposed the plan at first but acquiesced when Pitt refused to send more men to join his forces on the continent.⁷⁰ Lloyd adds to this that since the measure had the support of Henry Fox, Cumberland's protégé, it is unlikely that the duke would have voiced his opposition if he actually was against it.⁷¹ Perhaps the most definitive proof that Cumberland was against this idea comes from a letter Secretary of War Lord Barrington sent to the duke on July 8, 1757, after the Highland regiments had already been formed and sent to North America. He wrote that in regard to the formation of Highland regiments, "I remember'd the objections made by your R.H. to a proposal of that kind, & stated them; on which it was agreed that both officers and men should go to America as fast as the companies were raised, and none of either remain in the Highlands."⁷² This account seems quite plausible given the duke's experience and the widespread fear rearmed Highlanders would rebel. But no matter what the duke really thought, his ultimate support was key for cutting through the tangled web of politics

⁶⁸ Williams, 294

⁶⁹ Stephan Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 268

⁷⁰ McCulloch, 22

⁷¹ Lloyd, 469

⁷² Letter, Barrington to Duke of Cumberland, Cavendish Square, 8 July 1757, in Stanley Pargellis, *Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle* (Archon Books, 1969), 381

in Westminster. The Highland plan was adopted and Fraser became one of the two colonels. This would prove quite valuable for the British government. As a former Jacobite and the leader of a powerful clan, he would have no trouble acquiring men for them.

Historians have long judged the Highland plan a success, and the prime minister has received much of the credit for this. Lord Stanhope, one of Pitt's biographers, composed a panegyric in commemoration of this, saying,

Was it not he who devised that lofty and generous scheme for removing the disaffection of the Highlanders by enlisting them in regiments for the service of the crown? Those minds which Culloden could not subdue at once yielded to his confidence; by trusting he reclaimed them; by putting arms into their hands he converted mutinous subjects into loyal soldiers.⁷³

Stanhope practically portrayed Pitt as the savior of the Highlands, gaining their trust and changing them from disgruntled ex-rebels to the greatest soldiers George II ever had. It seems extraordinary, but it is no less so than what Pitt wrote about himself. Ever the self-publicist, in 1766 Pitt made a speech in which he proclaimed this as one of the greatest accomplishments of his regime.⁷⁴

I sought for merit wherever it was to be found. It is my boast, that I was the first minister who looked for it, and found it, in the mountains of the North. I called it forth, and drew into your service a hardy and intrepid race of men – men, who, when left by your jealousy, became a prey to the artifices of your enemies, and had gone nigh to have overturned the state in the war before the last. These men, in the last war, were brought to combat on your side. They served with fidelity, as they fought with valor, and conquered for you in every part of the world. Detested be the national reflections against them! They are unjust, groundless, illiberal, unmanly! When I ceased to serve his Majesty as a minister, it was not the country of the man by which I was moved but the man of that country wanted wisdom, and held principles incompatible with freedom.⁷⁵

⁷³ Stanhope, 466

⁷⁴ *Mutiny*, 93

⁷⁵ Charles Kendall Adams, *Representative British Orations with Introductions and Explanatory Notes* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1890.), 100-101

Through his many comparisons with other regimes, it is clear that Pitt's self-promotion was political in this speech. Pitt was out of power and wanted to show how much he had done to an unappreciative government. According to his view, the previous prime ministers were utterly ignorant of the great resource they had in the north. Pitt found it, and they turned the tide of the war. Interestingly, he defended the Highlanders' reputation since it was to a certain degree tied with his own. This he did for the rest of his life. Only a few months before his death, he remarked, "I remember how I employed the very rebels in the service and defence of their country. They were reclaimed by this means; they fought our battles; they cheerfully bled in defence of those liberties which they had attempted to overthrow but a few years before."⁷⁶ Once again, Pitt showed himself as the sole originator of this idea. But this was not the case. Even limiting his claims to the use of former Jacobites, Wolfe's observations show that Pitt was not the only one to realize their potential. Yet because he was such a strong self-publicist, he continually receives sole credit for this innovation.

Once the measure finally received royal assent, Barrington contacted Montgomery and Fraser to have them begin the recruiting process for their new regiments. Montgomery's would eventually be the 77th Foot and Fraser's would become the 78th. As new commanders, their first step was to find officers for the regiment since these would bring the men who filled the ranks. In most British regiments, would-be officers had to purchase their commissions at steep prices. For the two Highland battalions however, commissions were initially free. Those who wanted to become officers just had to meet several other criteria. First they needed to be able to speak Gaelic since the majority of enlisted men would not understand English. Second they needed to have military experience. Lastly, they needed to be able to raise men for the regiment. Different

⁷⁶ Lloyd, 466

quotas existed for each rank, with majors and captains having to bring in 100 recruits while lieutenants needed a minimum of twenty-five. This requirement would play a vital role in quickly securing a large amount of soldiers for the new battalions.

In addition to the official requirements, the intense competition for commissions meant that prospective officers also had to be socially connected. Ian McCulloch and Earl Chapman write that both Whig officers on half-pay and former Jacobites vied for the limited number of commissions.⁷⁷ For Whigs this could mean an advance in rank, while for ex-rebels this could mean the restoration of confiscated property and lost honor. One might think that the loyal Highlanders had an advantage in this competition, but when it came to Simon Fraser's battalion, they actually did not. Even after the Forty-five, the informal clan hierarchy meant that many of the men Simon Fraser chose to serve as his subalterns came from his own extended family. Of the officers whose commission date is listed as January 5, 1757, four captains, one captain-lieutenant, six lieutenants, four ensigns, the adjutant, and the quartermaster all bore the surname of Fraser.⁷⁸ While not quite the majority of the officers' corps, the Frasers were far better represented than any other clan. This gives some merit to the historian C.P. Stacey's conclusion that "the 87th were really less a British regiment than a war party of Clan Fraser."⁷⁹ But this phenomenon did not occur solely in Simon Fraser's battalion. The Black Watch, which was already serving in North America, counted ten Campbells – and it was not even a clan-based regiment.⁸⁰ One could dismiss this as distasteful nepotism, but it did have benefits. By having so many members of one clan, the regiments were united around a common identity. Unlike other

⁷⁷ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 112.

⁷⁸ J.P. MacLean *Settlements of Scotch Highlanders in America* (Glasgow: John Mackay, 1900.), 255

⁷⁹ C.P. Stacey, *Québec, 1759: The Siege and the Battle* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959.), 78

⁸⁰ Maclean, 253

British units where the officers and men were of totally different classes and backgrounds, the Fraser or Campbell officers viewed themselves as members of one extended family, united to a certain extent even with their men. This would eventually give their units cohesion and strength in battle, but for the time being it proved immensely useful for recruitment.

Common kinship was not the only reason that the Highlanders worked so well under their leaders. The two colonels of the new regiments were respectable men, and an episode which the Scottish writer James Boswell recalled in his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* testifies to this. While traveling through Scotland after the French and Indian War, Boswell joined several Highland gentlemen for dinner. One of these was Donald Macdonald, a lieutenant in the grenadier company of Montgomery's Highlanders. Boswell wrote, "From this gentleman's conversation I first learnt how very popular his Colonel was among the Highlanders; of which I had such continued proofs, during the whole course of my Tour, that on my return I could not help telling the noble Earl himself, that I did not before know how great a man he was."⁸¹ To have gone through so many trials in North America and still maintain such a high opinion for the colonel testifies to his abilities as a leader.

Another key factor in creating strong, new regiments was the quality of its non-commissioned officers. Lord Barrington himself recognized that they would conduct would conduct most of the training and consequently requested a number of Gaelic-speaking sergeants from other English and Scottish regiments to join the new Highland battalions. All were supposed to leave on their own free will, and 105 NCOs volunteered for this reassignment. This number reveals just how prevalent Gaelic soldiers were in the army at the war's onset. Even

⁸¹ James Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (London: Penguin, 1984.), 241-242

though the Black Watch was originally the only all-Highland regiment, Highlanders could be found in practically any other regiment in the British army. In his analysis of the 1757 British Army, Stephan Brumwell found that non-Highland regiments like the 55th and the second battalion of the 1st, had high percentages of Scots – forty-one percent and fifty-six percent, respectively. All other regiments had at least four percent or sometimes as much as seventeen percent Scottish soldiers.⁸² Importantly, not all of these were Lowland Scots.⁸³ Brumwell does not say what the breakdown between Lowland and Highland Scots was, but considering that military service was explicitly mentioned as a punishment for violating the Act of Proscription, it is likely that they were well-represented. This meant that the new battalions would have experienced leaders at the platoon level, once again helping them to perform well in combat.

Another factor which helped the Highlanders was the presence of “gentleman volunteers.” Because so many gentlemen fought for commissions, not every well-born Scot could get one. Additionally, every rank except for ensign required experience. Therefore some gentlemen decided to pursue an alternative route. They joined the ranks as “gentleman volunteers,” hoping that as vacancies emerged in the officer’s corps they would be able to secure commissions of their own. Even then, connections were vital for this. One famous sergeant of Fraser’s regiment named James Thompson joined with the expectation that his good friend, Captain Charles Baillie, would be able to obtain an ensigncy for him later on. Unfortunately, Baillie was killed in the regiment’s landing at Louisbourg, and Thompson remained a member of the ranks.⁸⁴ Yet he and his peers insisted on being treated differently from the other men. They

⁸² Brumwell, 319

⁸³ Brumwell, 266

⁸⁴ *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 113

ate with the officers and sometimes demanded higher pay than their rank allowed them.⁸⁵ Being well-born but still enlisted, gentleman volunteers helped form yet another link between the officers and the men, bringing the typically disparate classes together.

Recruitment for the ranks in these two regiments occurred rapidly, and the reasons for this reveal a great deal about how much the Highlands had changed since the end of the last Jacobite Rebellion. The Highlands now lacked not only jobs for young men but also the natural resources needed to sustain the present population. Brumwell notes that the bleak winter of 1757 left many near starvation, meaning that joining one of the Highland battalions would provide individuals with a relatively steady source of food in addition to pay. So many people recognized this that in the spring of 1757, Montgomery's Highlanders had to turn away 472 men.⁸⁶ Such an excess of manpower would not last forever, but for the time it showed that many men recognized the opportunity before them and wanted to take advantage of it.

One mistaken notion about the recruitment process is that the men joined up out of loyalty to their old clan and chieftain. Ian McCulloch notes in *Sons of the Mountains* that Lieutenant Colonel Simon Fraser only raised 125 men from his forfeited estate. Since he was the commander of one of the regiments, it would seem that if anyone could have success recruiting, it would have to be him. But Fraser himself recognized his shortcoming and attributed his success in gaining men to his friends.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, in some cases these "friends" resorted to impressment in order to meet the quota of troops. Robert Kirk, a young Highlander who served under Montgomery, recalled that his regiment "was mostly composed of impress'd men from the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 116-117

⁸⁶ Brumwell, 274-275

⁸⁷ McCulloch, 27

Highlands.”⁸⁸ This may have been an exaggeration on Kirk’s part, but his inclusion of impressment does show that it occurred. In some ways this was merely an extension of old clan practices. Whenever the chief needed more men, he would call forth anyone in his clan who was capable of serving. Moreover, the Recruiting Acts sanctioned the press of all idle, able-bodied men, and Highlanders were certainly considered both.⁸⁹

The most romantic reason for joining Montgomery’s and Fraser’s battalions was to once again wear the outlawed tartan. Many times the romance of history does not stand up to facts, and there have been scholars who have argued that this was not a major draw for recruits. In *The Fatal Land*, Matthew Dziennik says: “While generations of historians have suggested that the opportunity of wearing tartan was a major draw for Highland recruits, in actuality, many men were forcibly enlisted into the army as punishment for flouting the ban.”⁹⁰ There certainly is some truth to this since military service was one of the prescribed punishments for violating the Act of Proscription. However, as there was only one tartan-wearing regiment in the British army prior to 1757, many of the Highlanders who broke the law would undoubtedly have had to serve in regularly uniformed regiments. And in regard to Fraser’s and Montgomery’s regiments, Dziennik provides no evidence that they raised men who broke the law. It would be counterintuitive to punish a man who wore tartan by sending him to a regiment where he would wear it again. Additionally, there is evidence that men rejoiced in wearing the Highland dress when joining up. In his first anecdote, James Thompson recalled that he and Captain Baillie “staid some days at Inverness walking about the streets to show ourselves, for we were very

⁸⁸ Robert Kirk, *The Memoirs and Adventures of Robert Kirk, late of the Royal Highland Regiment* (Limerick : J. Ferrar, 1770.), 2

⁸⁹ Brumwell, 273

⁹⁰Matthew Dziennik, *The Fatal Land: War, Empire, and the Highland Soldier in British America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015.), 39

proud of our looks.”⁹¹ James Thompson did not enlist solely for the sake of the uniform (as mentioned early, he joined because he expected to become an officer) but his mentioning of the uniform and his pride in wearing it does show that such a unique dress was an added benefit of joining the regiment.

Another example which shows that romanticism was sometimes a factor in recruitment comes from a surprising source. The writer James Boswell grew up in the Lowlands of Scotland but still heard about the new regiments being formed up north. In his later accounts of his youth, Boswell omitted part of an outline that showed he too was affected by the martial spirit and considered joining up: “Although timorous where firearms were concerned, set in a flame, wished to go among the Highlanders to America. It was a frenzy.” Despite being only fifteen and not a Highlander, Boswell actually could have received a commission as an ensign since Colonel Montgomery was the brother of the Earl of Eglinton, a friend of Boswell’s family. Unfortunately for him, his domineering father prevented him from joining. Nevertheless, as the editor of his papers states, “Boswell was deeply stirred by the martial temper of the times, and his response was not originally or entirely selfish.”⁹² The “frenzy” he recalled demonstrates that many others felt similarly, with some ultimately joining up for similarly romantic notions.

In March of 1757, the two Highland regiments reached full strength and received orders to then embark for North America. Still unsure about putting former rebels under arms, Lord Barrington wrote a letter to Cumberland, saying “The only business which I shall have with these Companies is to see that they are well accoutred &c and sent out of Scotland as soon as

⁹¹ *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 116

⁹² Frederick Pottle, *James Boswell, the earlier years, 1740-1769*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985.), 31-32

possible.”⁹³ This he did, and the regiments were out of the country before they had sufficient time to train. As a result the Highlanders were terribly ill-prepared for war as they set off for North America. Although the Highlanders had a reputation for growing up in a martial society, that was no longer the case in 1757. For ten years the clans had been disarmed, and as a result many of the new soldiers had never fought with the traditional broadswords or even muskets that were issued to them. Ian McCulloch notes that the average age of soldiers in the 78th was eighteen, meaning that a large amount of soldiers would have been only eight when the Jacobite Rebellion was suppressed.⁹⁴ Being that young, many of them probably never learned the basics of clan warfare. This would have significant effects once they actually entered combat.

Because they were so inexperienced, the Highlanders desperately needed every minute of training they could get. Fraser’s Highlanders underwent basic marching training after traveling from Inverness to Fort Augustus and Glasgow in late April, 1757, but they were not taught to use their firelocks until they boarded their ships to the New World. A letter Simon Fraser wrote to Lord Loudoun admitted that his battalion was at least temporarily quite inferior to the Black Watch. Nevertheless, he said that “I have no doubt we shall resemble them in more respects when we are disciplined, for as yet we have been for days together.”⁹⁵ For Fraser’s, the first opportunity the whole regiment had to train was after the capture of Louisbourg, at which time, according to Earl Chapman, they likely used the most recent drill manual, the *1756 Regulations*. By extension he believes that it is the same one which the other Highland regiments might have

⁹³ Letter, Barrington to Duke of Cumberland, Cavendish Square, 8 July 1757, in Stanley Pargellis. *Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle*. (Archon Books, 1969), 382

⁹⁴ *Sons of the Mountains*, 33.

⁹⁵ *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 114-115

used.⁹⁶ If this is so, it shows that all three regiments received training in the most recent British tactics. Dziennik concludes from this that “The important consequence of the use of these manuals was to train the Highland soldier in exactly the same manner as other British line regiments; the acid test for the quality of a Highland soldier was not some mythic or innate martial capacity but a hardened professionalism similar to that demanded of other British corps.”⁹⁷ It is true that the Highlanders became more akin to other professional units as the war progressed, but the commanders continued to believe that they had a special ethnic edge even if they actually did not. A brief order from General Amherst said that “The Royal Highland regiment and the 77th (Highlanders) are excepted in order of no swords: the Commanding Officer of those regiments may do as he thinks best.”⁹⁸ If he actually wanted to make the two Highland regiments under his command like all the other English ones, he would not have granted such an exemption. These lingering differences limited the effectiveness of the *1756 Regulations* and how the Highlanders actually fought. The manual went into detail on how various divisions of regiment ought to fire and describes proper care of bayonets, but it makes no mention of broadswords and does not explain how to use them.⁹⁹ Since this was the weapon issued to the Highlanders to supplement the musket, there was no way for the Highlanders to learn to use them except by watching their officers and NCOs. This may explain why once the Highlanders went into battle, the broadsword charges which had been the best tactic of the Jacobites generally failed.

⁹⁶ Earl John Chapman “1916 The Drill Manual Used by the 78th Foot (Fraser’s Highlanders) in North America, 1757-1763” (*Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Summer 2012, Volume 90, Number 362), 123-124

⁹⁷ Dziennik, 66

⁹⁸ Order from Amherst on May 5, 1759. *Knox’s Journal* (l. 460)

⁹⁹ Anonymous, *A New Exercise to be observed by his Majesty’s Troops on the Establishment of Great-Britain and Ireland* (London, Printed: Boston, Re-Printed, and Sold by Green & Russell, in Queen-Street, 1757.), 1-8

Fraser's and Montgomery's would soon be parting ways, with the latter heading for Halifax and the former traveling to Charleston. Their objectives were unknown at the time, but in the new year they would learn that they were to play key roles in Pitt's new offensive strategy. Fraser's would take part in an offensive against the fortress town of Louisbourg in 1758. Montgomery's on the other hand would later be involved in an attack on Fort Duquesne, which had so long proven to be a thorn in the British side. Lastly, the Black Watch, which was already in North America, would join the offensive against Fort Ticonderoga, which facilitated French invasions of the colonies and hindered the British from moving against Canada. If it worked successfully, this three-pronged attack would turn the tide of the war. Since they made up a total of 27.5 percent of the entire British force in North America as of the summer of 1757 and were taking part in all three major campaigns, it was clear that this long despised ethnic group was about to play a pivotal role in changing the war's outcome.¹⁰⁰

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Several months into the 78th's stay in North America, the regiment traveled down to Connecticut for winter quarters. There an incident took place which testifies to the strong ties existing between the officers and men. Just before New Year's, a sergeant in the grenadier company by the name of Alexander Fraser was involved in an altercation with a Corporal Macky. According to the account of another Highland sergeant, James Thompson, Fraser had rebuked Macky for shirking his duties at the guardhouse within earshot of Macky's men. For this Macky became enraged and attempted to attack Fraser with a broadsword. In self-defense, he drew a dirk that Thompson had given him and stabbed Macky with it. Thompson himself heard

¹⁰⁰ Brumwell, 319

the scuffle and entered the guardhouse moments later, seeing both men lying on the floor with grave wounds. Fraser was treated for his injuries, but Macky had been killed instantly. For this incident, Alexander Fraser was hauled in front of the civilian authorities on charges of murder.

Relations between civilians and the military can often be uneasy, and this was certainly the case with the Fraser case. The main issue of contention concerned the involvement, or perhaps over involvement, of the regiment's colonel in the case. The defendant and the witnesses to the trial spoke no English, so a Gaelic interpreter had to be found. Simon Fraser volunteered himself for this position. As he related the evidence, the judge could not help but notice the strong similarities in the testimonies. He immediately accused Colonel Fraser of trying to screen the prisoner, a charge which provoked an uproar from the commander. Fraser replied by demanding that the attorney general of Connecticut himself come down to conduct the trial, a request which was eventually granted. Yet even this did not help Fraser much, since the attorney general worked fiercely to prove that the defendant was a murderer. Fortunately in the end, the jury came to believe the sergeant had acted in self-defense and acquitted him.¹⁰¹ After that, relations between the regiment and the civilians were relatively calm.

There is much significance in Sergeant Fraser's trial, especially as far as his commander is concerned. Simon Fraser went well beyond his usual duties as a colonel to provide an adequate defense for his sergeant, and this merits examination. Why did he devote so much energy and perhaps even distort the judicial process in order to protect a non-commissioned officer? The most likely explanation is that he still felt a sense of duty as chief of Clan Fraser. As the common last name shows, both the sergeant and the colonel would have considered one another distant

¹⁰¹ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 130

relatives. Moreover, because so many Frasers were in the 78th, Simon Fraser likely acted paternally toward all of its members. Just as clan chiefs used to defend their subjects in order to protect the honor of their clan, the Master of Lovat defended Sergeant Fraser. It is a striking example of how tightly knit this large regiment was, especially when compared to the regiments of the south. These familial bonds would later have important effects on the 78th's performance in combat.

The 78th's first combat experience came in the summer of 1758 at Louisbourg, a siege during which numerous interactions between the regiment and non-Highlanders of all races revealed the positive and negative effects of Gaelic stereotypes. Capturing Louisbourg was vital for British strategy. Any attack they wished to make on Québec could not take place until this fortress, which guarded the sea route to the city, fell. This would not be an easy task. Two batteries sheltered the large, partially enclosed harbor, which contained no less than five ships of the line and six frigates.¹⁰² In addition to this, two full bastions and two half-bastions protecting the fortress from attack by land. Combining all the regulars, artillerymen, militia, sailors, and *troupes de la marine*, the town had a defensive force of around six thousand men.¹⁰³ It was not by any means an easy objective.

However, Louisbourg was not invincible. It had been taken in 1745 and could be taken again. If a proper siege were conducted, the fortress would be cut off from external aid and eventually surrender. To expedite this, Amherst assembled a force off the coast of Cape Breton Island that contained 24,000 men total – well above the size of Louisbourg's garrison. Once on land, the siege could go very quickly. The only issue that remained was finding a suitable

¹⁰² *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 137

¹⁰³ Anderson, 250-251

landing spot. Most of Gabarus Bay was rocky or contained swampland. The most suitable place was L'Anse à la Coromandière, a small cove 4,000 yards west of the fortress. The British realized this was a fine place to land, and so did the French. Therefore they had created an elaborate defense along most of its 660 yard length. *Abattis*, sharpened logs, had been placed along the firmer ground where the French dug their trenches. The nearby cliffs essentially forced the British to take this most dangerous route, which could very well destroy the bulk of the invasion force.¹⁰⁴ Unless they found a way to land without taking heavy casualties, the entire assault could fail.

When preparing for the attack, Amherst took into consideration the Highlanders' supposed abilities. Knox records in his journal that the Highlanders were slated to attack the freshwater cove along with the light infantry and irregulars.¹⁰⁵ Since he lumped all those groups together, it appears General Amherst believed there were similarities in their fighting styles. For the Highlanders, the implication was that they could serve as shock troops like the light infantry and engage in guerilla warfare like the irregulars. Amherst had never seen the 78th fight before, so he had no reason to believe this other than from stereotypes of the Highlanders. But once the Highlanders made landfall, his opinions seemed to be confirmed.

The initial landing encountered stiff resistance, and many of the tightly-packed boats were hit by cannon fire. James Thompson recalled that in his boat, Sergeant McKenzie, Lieutenant Cuthbert, and his dear friend Captain Baillie were all killed as the French used canister shot on their wave. So much shot had torn through their boat that they had to use their plaids in order to plug up the holes.¹⁰⁶ All around, the assault was going poorly, and Brigadier

¹⁰⁴ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 136-137

¹⁰⁵ Knox, I. 213

¹⁰⁶ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 143-144

General James Wolfe may have attempted to call for a retreat by waving his hat as a signal. But then a breakthrough occurred. A small force light infantry and grenadiers discovered a small, unguarded cove where they could land without resistance. Others soon followed.¹⁰⁷ According to Daniel Baugh, these Highlanders under Major James Scott were the first British troops to reach the shore.¹⁰⁸ If this is so, it is an added distinction to the Highlanders' noteworthy service at Louisbourg.

Even after the landings, the Highlanders garnered further attention when they disobeyed orders and pursued the retreating enemy. According to James Thompson, the Highlanders saw the French running away in front of them and “could not resist the temptation of giving them a chase (for they were a raw, undisciplined set, just raised, and un-used to restraint) and they stole away after them by two’s and by three’s, and presently, by whole Companies, and there soon remain’d only the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers of our Regiment.” When the quartermaster general told them to form up in a line, he was told that they had already received orders but forthrightly disobeyed them. They said in Gaelic, “What! Are we to stand and form Line, and quietly look at the Enemy running away? No! No! We can’t understand that.” In response, the general apparently remarked “I thought they only wanted an opportunity and this is not more than I had expected of them.” Whether he made this comment based on the notion the Highlanders were undisciplined or because they were savages is unclear. What is certain is that the Highlanders returned with many prisoners. Thompson claimed that after an hour, “almost every man of them brought in his Prisoner, and some had two.”¹⁰⁹ The officers at Louisbourg essentially absolved this show utter insubordination. William Amherst later wrote in his journal

¹⁰⁷ *Sons of the Mountains*, 69-72

¹⁰⁸ Baugh, 344

¹⁰⁹ *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 146-147

that he was actually quite pleased with the Highlanders' irregular behavior since had led to a good result. Wolfe himself may have developed ideas on using them as shock troops based on this.¹¹⁰ In the wake of this victory, Wolfe wrote to Lord Sackville that "The Highlanders are very useful serviceable soldiers, and commanded by the most manly corps of officers I ever saw."¹¹¹ Later during the Québec campaign, he would try to emulate this success by using them in a similar capacity.

At Louisbourg and elsewhere, the Highlanders were seen as more than just skilled irregulars. Although ethnically quite dissimilar, many individuals considered the Highlanders and Native Americans as somehow being related because of their supposed savage customs and nature. It seems incredible from a modern perspective, but this notion was actually quite widespread. In 1743, when the Black Watch visited London, an anonymous writer reported that "When the Highlanders walk'd the streets here, every body must be sensible that there was more staring at them than ever was seen at the Morocco ambassador's attendance, or even at the Indian chiefs, who some people would have passed on us for kings."¹¹² More directly, the historian Colin Calloway notes an instance in which the colonists in New York directly compared the Highlanders to Native Americans:

According to an account from 'a gentleman lately arrived' from New York, published in the *Scots Magazine* and repeated elsewhere, when the Black Watch Regiment arrived in America at the start of the Seven Years' War, Indians reputedly 'flocked from all quarters' to see them, 'and from a surprising resemblance in the manner of their dress, and the great similitude of their language, the Indians concluded they were anciently one and the same people, and most cordially received them as brethren.'¹¹³

¹¹⁰ *Sons of the Mountains*, 69-72

¹¹¹ Wolfe, 363

¹¹² *A Short Account of the Highland Regiment*, 1

¹¹³ Colin Calloway. *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America*. (New York: Oxford, 2008.), 3-4

Whether or not the Indians actually did believe they were related to the Highland Scots does not matter. The real importance of that account is that people outside of both cultures viewed them this way. As a result when they were placed in battle, the army sometimes expected the Highlanders to engage in the same behavior they ascribed to Native Americans.

It is important to note, however, that even with these supposed links, Highlanders and Indians were not viewed as exactly the same. In his study of the Mohawk Valley after the French and Indian War, Colin Calloway notes that Scottish Enlightenment thinkers placed both groups as behind civilized humans in development, but raised Highlanders up above Indians. According to the technical categorizations, Indians were considered “savage” since they still primarily engaged in hunting and fishing to sustain themselves. Highlanders on the other hand were “barbarian” since they relied on pastoral herding. Civilized people, who engaged in agriculture and ultimately sophisticated commerce and manufacturing, then came above them.¹¹⁴ Eventually, the idea of race would complicate this even further. The idea that the Highlanders were beneath the English but still slightly above Native Americans would result in them being used differently from both kinds of soldiers as the war went on.

One very negative effect of this construed identity came very early in their North American experience when the 78th was still in Halifax. John Knox recorded the following incident:

A soldier of another regiment, who was a centinel detached from an advanced guard, seeing a man coming out of the wood, with his hair hanging loose, and wrapped in a dark-coloured plaid, he challenged him repeatedly, and receiving no answer (the weather being hazy) he fired at him and killed him; the guard being alarmed, the Serjeant ran out to know the cause, and the unhappy centinel,

¹¹⁴ Colin Calloway, “Sir William Johnson, Highland Scots, and American Indians” *New York History*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (SPRING 2008), 169

strongly prepossessed he was an Indian, with a blanket about him, who came skulking to take a prisoner, or a scalp, cried out, *I have killed an Indian, I have killed an Indian, there he lies, &c.* but, upon being undeceived by the Serjeant, who went to take a view of the dead man, and being told he was one of our own men, and a Highlander, he was so oppressed with grief and freight that he fell ill, and was despaired of for some days. In consequence of this accident, most of these young soldiers, being raw and unexperienced, and very few of them conversant in or able to talk English (which was particularly his case who was killed) these regiments ordered to do no more duty for some time.¹¹⁵

Here the similarities between Highlanders and Indians were minimal, but they were enough to bring about a death by friendly fire. The soldier who was killed could not speak English and had a certain wild appearance about him. Thus tragedy resulted.

The view of Highlanders as savages also caused both the French to regard them with the same fear they would show to certain Native American tribes. William Amherst wrote that the first Frenchmen the British captured “stood in the utmost awe of our savages and did not dare shew themselves for fear of them. In their expression of Savages they comprehended the Highlanders but to distinguish them from the others they call them ‘les sauvages sans culottes.’”¹¹⁶ Knox also recorded that “They [the French soldiers] also feared lest our Highlanders should not give them quarter; and that the army in general would make reprisals for the inhuman infractions of the capitulation of Fort William-Henry.”¹¹⁷ James Thompson too recalled an incident at Louisbourg which showed how even the French believed the Highlanders were savages. After an Indian was killed, there were claims that his body had been exhumed “for the purpose of giving our Highlanders an opportunity of indulging in their favorite mode of inflicting casualties upon dead bodies, as they were consider’d to be mere Cannibals, and although the French women were constantly teasing our troops for something to appease their

¹¹⁵ Knox, I. 73-75

¹¹⁶ Hugh Boscawen, *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.), 211

¹¹⁷ Knox, I. 267

hunger, they could not be prevail'd upon to come near when any of the Highlanders were to be seen." This view continued until the only non-Scottish soldier in the 77th, who happened to speak French, explained to the women that the Highlanders were not cannibals, after which time they had cordial relations.¹¹⁸ In some ways the incident is comical, but in others it reveals in great detail how mistaken beliefs about Highlanders were. Cannibalism was the ultimate mark of savagery, and attributing such acts to the Highlanders showed that although they were Europeans, they were still barbarians and needed to be feared.

One of the most surprising commentators to attribute savagery to the Highlanders was Olaudah Equiano, an African-born slave in the service of a British naval officer who assisted in the landing. Equiano wrote, "I had that day in my hand the scalp of an Indian king, who was killed in the engagement: the scalp had been taken off by an Highlander."¹¹⁹ Scalping was considered an especially barbaric behavior, and Equiano's claim that a Highlander engaged in it is especially revealing since he too was not considered as civilized a person as the English or French. While the account is valuable for the perceptions it shows, there is great reason to question whether the scalp actually was taken by a Highlander. Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser of the 78th kept a detailed journal of the regiment's experiences after Louisbourg, and in one he recalled witnessing the aftermath of a savage act near Point Lévis in Québec. In late June, 1758, two days after fighting French Canadians and Indians, Fraser discovered "several dead bodies on the road, not far from our Camp; they were all scalped and mangled in a shocking manner. I dare say no human creature but an Indian or Canadian could be guilty of such inhumanity as to insult a dead

¹¹⁸ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 150

¹¹⁹ Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, in The Classic Slave Narratives* ed., Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Signet Classics, New York, 2002), 72

body.”¹²⁰ If the Highlanders actually engaged in such behavior, it would make no sense for the lieutenant to denounce it in such strong language. After all, none of the accounts ever distinguished between the men and officers in mentioning acts the Highlanders supposedly committed. But perhaps the most interesting part of his account is that he attributed the same violent behavior his men were supposed to commit from time to time to two groups he considered inferior – French Canadians and Indians. He expanded on this idea in his July 10th entry, recalling the senseless murder of a Canadian man and child which a group of American Rangers perpetrated:

I wish this story was not fact, but I’m afraid there is little reason to doubt it: - the wretches having boasted of it on their return, tho’ they now pretend to vindicate themselves by the necessity they were under; but, I believe, this barbarous action proceeded from that cowardice and barbarity which seems so natural to a native of America, whether of Indian or European extraction.¹²¹

Despite all the concepts of Highlanders as barbarians, Fraser placed his people above all people born in North America, even those of the same race as him. This shows that the label of barbarian was freely applied to many groups of people as a way of explaining behavior that went against the ideal gentlemanly warfare to which Europeans had previously been accustomed. It also flatly disproves the notion that Highlanders and Indians generally regarded one another as distant relatives. Nevertheless, the British commanders continued to believe in this supposed connection, influencing how they used Highlanders in the remainder of the war.

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¹²⁰ Malcolm Fraser, *Extract from a manuscript journal relating to the siege of Québec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Fraser, then lieutenant of the 78th (Fraser’s Highlanders), and serving in that campaign* (Québec: 1866), 2-5

¹²¹ Fraser, 6

The second Highland regiment to enter into combat was the 42nd Foot, or Black Watch, which fought in a campaign to take Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga to the British) from the French. Capturing it would enable the British to prevent further French invasions of New York while also giving them a spot to prepare invasions of their own. According to William Grant, a soldier in the Black Watch, the force under Lord Loudoun's replacement, General Abercromby, consisted of 8,000 American provincial soldiers, 6,000 regular troops, and a body of rangers, light infantry and Indians totaling 2,000.¹²² This was a sizable force, but the low number of professional soldiers certainly should have concerned Abercromby. Of his 6,000 or so professionals, 1,000 of these belonged to the Black Watch. 400 other Highlanders were serving in Howe's 55th Regiment of Foot, although these wore English tricorns and breeches rather than kilts and tartans. Added together, nearly one-quarter of Abercromby's regulars were Highlanders, making them well-represented and immensely valuable to his campaign.¹²³ Despite being a permanent, professional regiment, Matthew Dziennik argues that the 42nd was still an inexperienced regiment because it had been overwhelmed by raw recruits before being sent to America.¹²⁴ It is true that the regiment added a second division of 600 privates back in 1756 in order to reach wartime strength.¹²⁵ But it is important that this addition came two years before the attack on Fort Ticonderoga. In that time the Black Watch had time to train. When Amherst reviewed the 2nd Battalion of the 42nd, he noted that they "went through their Exercise well," showing that they were not in fact as inexperienced as Dziennik claims.¹²⁶ Furthermore, even if some of the men had never seen combat before Ticonderoga, many others had. William Grant, an

¹²² Nicholas Westbrook, "Like Roaring Lions breaking from their chains" The Highland Regiment at Ticonderoga. In *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum*, Volume 16, pp 16-92. (Ticonderoga, New York: 1998.), 54

¹²³ *Sons of the Mountains*, 86

¹²⁴ Dziennik, 62-63

¹²⁵ *Sons of the Mountains*, 6

¹²⁶ Brumwell, 285

officer in the Black Watch, remarked after the Battle of Ticonderoga that “The affair of Fontenoy was nothing to it; I saw both.”¹²⁷ This would have meant that he had served in the army since 1745. In that time he would likely have witnessed several of the battles against the Jacobites, gaining experience all the while. He was undoubtedly not alone, meaning that between the commissioned and non-commissioned officers, the Black Watch definitely had enough veterans to lead the new recruits.

Having experienced leaders was definitely a necessity in the combat that was to come. Unfortunately, the British army lost one of these before it even reached Ticonderoga. In the light skirmish that followed, Lord Howe, commander of the largely-Highland 55th, was killed. It was a tremendous blow to the army since Howe was a young officer who garnered almost universal admiration. William Grant wrote,

His death was immediately felt, and much regretted, by the whole army. The King had not perhaps a better officer; his genius was very great, but his application to the business he took in hand was extraordinary. Had this excellent young nobleman been spared, he would have been an honour to his country. In short, he was truly brave without temerity, and prudent without weakness. His death is a loss to the common cause. This is not mine only by the opinion of the whole army.¹²⁸

Howe’s death brought more than just a reduction in morale. He had also been a capable commander whom Pitt had selected in an effort to balance out the aged Abercromby’s many flaws. This loss would have significant repercussions during the rest of the offensive, especially for the Highlanders.¹²⁹ Evidence of this came quickly as Abercromby failed to act while the previously outnumbered French prepared their fortifications. At last he planned out an offensive, placing the Highlanders along with the 46th Foot against the French right, where Lévis and his

¹²⁷ “Like Roaring Lions breaking from their chains”, 54

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 54

¹²⁹ Anderson, 241

Canadian militiamen were. Several hours into the fight, General Abercromby had a sense that the tide was turning against the British and issued a command to fall back. Most of his regiments withdrew, but the Black Watch did not.¹³⁰ Either they did not hear his command or they refused to retreat. They only withdrew when they ran out of ammunition. By that time, they had suffered terrible losses. Of the 1,000 officers and men in the regiment, 647 were recorded as killed, missing, or wounded. Twenty-seven out of thirty-seven officers were casualties. No other regiment in North America suffered such terrible losses.¹³¹

It is not easy to explain why the Black Watch suffered a more than sixty-four percent casualty rate. Being the most experienced of the Highland regiments, how is it that they lost so many more men than the others? A lieutenant in Howe's regiment provided his own explanation in a letter which was printed in the Scots Magazine shortly after the battle:

It might be thought that they had a foreknowledge of disappointment, as they seemed rather inclined to die, than to survive to hear our drums sound a retreat; which when it happened was unwillingly obeyed by the surviving part of the Royal Scots highlanders. Impatient for orders they actually mounted the enemy's entrenchments, which, when advancing, and effected, they appeared like roaring lions breaking from their chains: their intrepid courage was rather animated than damped, by seeing their fellows on every side (whose courage could not resist death) fall a sacrifice, in the cause of their King and country; and were they each fighting for a crown, in place of a scalp, could not show more eagerness. I cannot say for them what they really merit; I shall forever fear the wrath, love the integrity, and admire the bravery of Scotsmen. I have only further to say of the highlanders, that the few surviving men of them, though mostly wounded, seem more impatient to revenge the cause of their deceased friends, than careful to avoid coming to the same fate; and by their assistance, we still have reason left that we shall soon give a very good account of ourselves.¹³²

Although an experienced regiment, this lieutenant portrays the 42nd as being every bit as impulsive as the 78th's at Louisbourg. In his opinion they were motivated by a passion to fight

¹³⁰ *Sons of the Mountains*, 101

¹³¹ Daniel Baugh. *The global Seven Years War, 1754-1763: Britain and France in a great power contest*. Harlow, (United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited, 2011.), 353

¹³² "Like Roaring Lions," 44-45

their enemies and would not stay in rank longer than necessary. He subtly attributed this to the Highlanders' uncivilized nature by saying that although they fought king and country, they also could just as easily have fought for the sake of obtaining scalps. It is an inaccurate view which slightly undermines his otherwise noble portrayal of the Black Watch. Likewise, the desire for revenge which he claims the Highlanders felt at the expense of personal safety also demonstrate the Highlanders, like other warlike people, desired honor above everything else. They did indeed have a very high sense of comradery and sought to avenge their friends, but the implication that they wished to fight above everything else suggests they were still a savage people.

A better explanation comes from the officers of the Black Watch. Despite the broad-reaching belief that the Highlanders were unsophisticated, the gentlemen who led the companies were often well-educated and wrote as well as any Englishman. William Grant is an excellent example of this. His very detailed account of the battle described how the Highlanders were caught in a situation from which they could hardly escape. In it he says that the Highlanders "labored under unsurmountable difficulties," being thrust against a breastwork which was nine or ten feet high and protected by felled trees, small arms, and cannon fire. All of this "not only broke our ranks, and made it impossible for us to keep our order, but it put it entirely out of our power to advance briskly; which gave the enemy abundance of time to mow us down like a field of corn, with their wall pieces and small arms, before we fired a single shot, being ordered to receive the enemy's fire, and march with shouldered arms until we came up close to their breastwork."¹³³ This last phrase is quite noteworthy. Not only did the Highlanders take casualties because of the adverse conditions, but they followed their instructions so closely that they did not return fire when it would have been most advantageous to them. This is a clear sign that the

¹³³ "Like Roaring Lions", 57

Black Watch actually was a disciplined regiment, contradicting the words of both the unnamed British lieutenant and the modern historian Matthew Dziennik.

Grant concluded his account with an appraisal of the Highlanders which said much about their behavior:

If you reflect a little on these many obstacles thrown in our way, you will easily see, that the forcing the enemy's lines was absolutely impracticable. The whole weight of the fire fell upon the regular troops, but our regiment suffered more than any other. I have seen men behave with courage and resolution before now, but so much determined bravery can hardly be equalled in any part of the history of ancient Rome. They did not mind their fellow-soldiers tumbling down about them, but still went on undauntedly. Even those that were mortally wounded, cried aloud to their companions, not to mind or lose a thought upon them, but to follow their officers, and charge the enemy, and to mind the honour of their king and country. Nay, their ardour was so very extraordinary, that they could not be brought off while they had a single shot remaining. Indeed they paid dearly for their intrepidity. The remains of the regiment had the honour to cover the retreat of the army, and brought off the wounded.¹³⁴

“Honour” appears twice in the excerpt from Grant’s account – once referring to the king, and the other referring to their final vital action. Beyond this, honor appears to have been central to the Black Watch’s identity. As shown earlier, many of the men were distantly related to one another and to their commanding officers. A letter from Captain Campbell of the Black Watch to his brother demonstrates that this connection even extended to the other Highland regiments. In it he mentioned that his nephew was a major on the campaign against Fort Duquesne, meaning he was in Montgomery’s Highlanders.¹³⁵ As a result such soldiers would be very concerned with behaving honorably and not bringing shame to his family and clan. James Thompson recalled that at the Plains of Abraham, the regimental piper fell into dishonor for refusing to advance under fire with the rest of the 78th. “For this business the Piper was disgraced by the whole of the

¹³⁴ “Like Roaring Lions,” 57

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 61

Regiment, and the men would not speak to him, neither would they suffer his rations to be drawn with theirs, but had them served out by the Commissary separately, and he was obliged to shift for himself as well as he could.”¹³⁶ Fears of such public rebukes as well as a desire to win honor for one’s clan definitely gave men an extra incentive to fight their best. Thus even in their hopeless situation, many in the Black Watch continued to do their duty.¹³⁷

Such a sacrifice as the Black Watch gave at Ticonderoga is worthy of note, and this was the case on both sides of the battle. In addition to the eulogy the lieutenant in Howe’s regiment gave, Louis Antoine de Bougainville on the French side also offered praise in his accounts of how the British attacked his portion of the field:

This column, composed of English grenadiers and Scottish Highlanders, returned unceasingly to the attack, without becoming discouraged or broken, and several got themselves killed within fifteen paces of our abatis. Chevalier de Lévis twice ordered the Canadians and the troops of La Marine to make sorties and take them in the flank.”¹³⁸

Although brief, his specific mentioning of the Highlanders shows that he recognized their accomplishments. He referenced their high morale, their success in coming close to the fortifications, and the actions Lévis had to take in order to subdue them. It demonstrates that on both sides of the battlefield, non-Highlanders noticed the exceptional performance of the Black Watch.

Just before the king had learned of the Black Watch’s terrible fate in New York, he had awarded the regiment the new designation of “Royal Highland Regiment.” In addition to bestowing on the regiment new blue collars and cuffs for its uniforms, this act enabled the

¹³⁶ *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 186

¹³⁷ Brumwell, 281-282

¹³⁸ Bougainville, Louis Antoine de. *Adventures in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760*. Translated and Edited by Edward P. Hamilton. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.),233

regiment to recruit seven companies for a second battalion. The terrible irony in this is that the casualty lists reached Britain only a few weeks later, showing that before a new battalion could be raised, an abysmal 350 vacancies in the ranks needed to be replaced. By October, recruiters managed to attract 840 men – a sufficient amount to fill the ranks, but not enough to create a second battalion. Even the enticement of a £3 levy failed to bring in more men. Other regiments were more successful, but they obtained men described as “Deserters of the Thievish Tribes in the Highlands” who came for a royal pardon. In addition, Highland regiments intended for service in other theaters increased competition. The men of these regiments were desperately needed in North America.¹³⁹

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Further tragedy came to the Highlanders when Montgomery’s regiment went on its expedition to Fort Duquesne. As the column neared Fort Duquesne, Colonel Bouquet, second-in-command of the expedition, gave permission for Major James Grant to lead a small force against the fort in order to scout it out and hopefully provoke a fight with the French that would bring easy victory. In Grant’s force were 1,200 Highlanders from Montgomery’s regiment and a contingent of colonial militiamen. This put the 77th in the minority of regular infantry on the campaign. Unfortunately, this gave them no real advantage as they had never campaigned in North America before this time.¹⁴⁰ Yet no matter how inexperienced the Highlanders were, they were still a professional unit and could have been used to great effect had their commander acted differently. Major James Grant was an officer in the 77th and should have known their capabilities. Yet when his force arrived at Fort Duquesne, he completely misused them. He ordered the men to set fire to a storehouse and drum reveille in order to draw the French out.

¹³⁹ Brumwell, 277

¹⁴⁰ Baugh, 359

This happened, but the result was catastrophic. Not only did the French come out, but their Indian allies did as well. The soldiers were in the open, so they quickly became easy targets. In the end, 271 men of the total column marching toward Fort Duquesne were captured. Many of these were Highlanders. Worse still, Grant himself was captured.¹⁴¹ Being one of the most senior officers on the expedition, this was both a great loss in leadership and an embarrassment to the whole contingent.

Because the Highlanders were inexperienced, it is easy to claim that they were responsible for their own misfortune. Once again criticizing the Highlanders, Matthew Dziennik cites an article in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* to say that the Highlanders adhered too strongly to their training without consideration for the environment they were in. According to the *Gazette*, while the American-born provincials hid behind obstacles, the Highlanders exposed themselves recklessly since they had been taught to take volley after volley of musket fire.¹⁴² The bias in this article is quite evident, since it was an American paper that naturally wanted to present the colonists in a favorable light. But not all Americans felt this way. Even George Washington, who was with the Virginians on the expedition, commented on the failed attack. He wrote in a letter to George William Fairfax in which he described the retreat and then stated, “Hence ensued an obstinate Engagement and the running away of the Pensylvanians, who were just behind, and ought to have Sustained the Highlanders.” In this case, he shows that the militia, which undoubtedly had still less training than the regular 77th, was responsible for so many Highlanders being captured. He also later wrote to Governor Fairfax with another evaluation of the events: “From all the accounts I have yet been able to collect, it appears very clear, that this was either a

¹⁴¹ Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the backcountry: the Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1765*. Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003., 174-175

¹⁴² Dziennik, 66

very ill-concerted or very ill-executed plan: perhaps *both*: but it seems to be generally acknowledged, that Major Grant exceeded his orders in some particulars; and that no disposition was made for engaging.”¹⁴³ It is no small wonder that General Forbes was very angry at Bouquet for granting permission to this maneuver which had brought about catastrophe to the expedition and which he had expressly forbidden.¹⁴⁴ By putting the Highlanders in an unstable position without providing support with regular troops, Grant caused the Highlanders to lose a large portion of their men. In this case, the failure of the Highlanders was the result of a commander not knowing how to use them properly rather than inherent flaws in the men.

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So far in the French and Indian War, the misconception that the Highlanders had some sort of savage nature had been a relatively benign one. Most of the soldiers who wrote about the Highlanders in this light used their uncivilized traits in a positive sense, increasing their esteem as warriors. Yet this falsehood ultimately did eventually have negative repercussions. Those are best exemplified by the failed expedition against the Cherokee in 1760.

Earlier in the war, the Cherokee had fought alongside the British as their allies. Yet the British failed to give them sufficient gifts to maintain their support, and so they gradually began to desert. This happened even during the expedition to Fort Duquesne. At that time, Bouquet was forced to reluctantly admit to his superior, General Forbes, that the Cherokees, “owing to their natural fickle disposition” had abandoned them. In complaining about how much of their force they would lose, Bouquet noted something interesting. He suggested that the only ways to keep them would be to impress them with their cannon and use “their Cousins the Highlanders” to

¹⁴³George Washington, *The Papers of George Washington, Volume VI*, edited by Philander D. Chase. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988., 38-39, 52

¹⁴⁴ Anderson, 272-273

make them stay.¹⁴⁵ This quick phrase suggests that Bouquet, like many other officers, regarded the Indians and Highlanders as somehow related. Out of ignorance, he believed that being savages themselves, the Highlanders were somehow capable of appealing to the natives of North America. More than just thinking this, Bouquet acted on this belief by sending 200 Highlanders to Fort Loudoun in order “to represent to them [the Cherokee] in moderate terms, how Grosly they had abused and imposed upon us for some months.”¹⁴⁶ The diplomatic mission was unsuccessful, and it revealed that this erroneous notion of common savagery could backfire on the British.

Relations with the Cherokee rapidly deteriorated to the point that the governor of South Carolina eventually had to petition General Amherst for regulars to flush them out of the backcountry. A time later, a force of more than 1,300 regulars arrived. This included troops of the 1st Foot and the 77th, with both under the command of Archibald Montgomery. Montgomery led his troops into the Cherokee’s Lower Towns, burning five villages and capturing one hundred of the enemy. Having been thus far successful, Montgomery then called the Cherokee to negotiate surrender terms. To Montgomery’s surprise, they made no reply at all. Rather they just retreated into higher ground, forcing the mostly-Highland force to follow them.¹⁴⁷

As the Highlanders proceeded on the sixty-mile trek to the Middle Towns, they encountered what the historian Fred Anderson termed “some of the most rugged terrain in eastern North America.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore they made provisions to live without wagons, including improvising packsaddles for their horses. Then they began the march on difficult march on June 23. On June 27, they encountered stiff resistance from the Cherokee at the town of Echoe. There

¹⁴⁵ John Forbes, *Writings of General John Forbes* (Menasha, Wisconsin: Collegiate Press, 1938.), 297-298, 117

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 175

¹⁴⁷ Anderson, 462

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 462

they sustained 100 casualties while the Cherokee took only fifty. Worse still, they lost so many of their pack animals they could not proceed any further.¹⁴⁹ After threatening Montgomery's supply train, the Cherokee forced the 77th to retreat. In the end, Montgomery took his men all the way back to Charleston and embarked for the northern colonies.¹⁵⁰

By July 1, the Highlanders had retraced their rough route after suffering defeat. They had encountered stiff resistance in Echoe, one of the middle towns, and sustained more than one hundred casualties. The Indians only suffered fifty. Worse still, they lost so many pack animals they could not proceed any further. A letter dated July 2, 1760 from Ft. Prince George informed General Amherst that the troops had been forced back with heavy casualties. The letter explained why this was the case: "The savages indeed kept firing upon us, &, although often at a distance, as they have a number of rifles, they did execution."¹⁵¹ So hurried were the troops to get back to Charleston that they left those who were sick or badly wounded at Fort Prince George. By mid-August, they were sailing for New York.¹⁵² Montgomery later summarized his feelings regarding his troops to General Amherst after returning to the colony of New York: "Upon the whole I believe no troops in America have undergone so much fatigue as we have done this campaign."¹⁵³

This defeat did nothing to protect the Carolina backcountry. Ironically, that was not settled until Lt. Colonel James Grant, now back from his imprisonment in Canada, led a scorched-earth campaign that destroyed numerous Cherokee villages. Yet even then, the

¹⁴⁹ Anderson, 463

¹⁵⁰ *Breaking the Backcountry*, 196-197

¹⁵¹ *Amherst Papers*, 127

¹⁵² Anderson, 462-463

¹⁵³ *Amherst Papers*, 140

Cherokee withdrew before he could force them to fight, so the final settlement for peace was a very lenient one.¹⁵⁴

Had Montgomery's force merely consisted of English regulars, the defeat would not have been surprising at all. The rugged terrain of the Middle Towns was as familiar and well-supplied to the Cherokee as it was unknown and inaccessible to the British. Yet because this was rugged terrain, the Highlanders should have performed well in it. The reasoning behind Amherst's decision to send the 77th is not explained in his records, but it seems likely that he and the other commanders thought since the Highlanders had fought so well in the rough grounds of northern Scotland during the Jacobite Rebellion, they should do well in the mountains of South Carolina. The fact that the force was almost entirely composed of Highlanders suggests they must have been specially selected for that reason. Yet their failure shows that this was no more than a myth. The Highlanders, like the Cherokee, knew their rugged home well. However, they could not be expected to perform well in every mountainous area. This was simply another example of myths about Highlanders causing their leaders to have exaggerated confidence in their abilities. In this case, they were outgunned in unfamiliar territory, causing them to suffer every bit as much as Colonel Montgomery claimed.

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No matter how unsuccessful the campaigns against Forts Ticonderoga and Duquesne had been, the capture of Louisbourg more than made up for them by providing the British with a means to attack Québec City itself. Once it and Montréal fell, the French would be totally defeated. But taking Québec would prove every bit as difficult as taking any of the other positions. It was a walled city located on very defensible heights. Any chance to draw the

¹⁵⁴ *Breaking the Backcountry*, 199

garrison out into combat would have to be exploited. Therefore the experienced Fraser Highlanders were quite necessary to this expedition. Wolfe and other generals had come to believe that their irregular behavior set them above the supposedly more disciplined units, and this belief influenced their decisions on how to use the Highlanders.

However, Fraser's Highlanders had evolved into a much more disciplined unit by this time. When Wolfe conducted his first attack on Québec's defenses at Montmorency (also known as Beauport Flats), the Highlanders displayed this change as their advance met with disaster. The 78th advanced so close to the French lines that James Thompson of the Grenadiers was able to see the French commander, whom he mistakenly believed was Montcalm himself. This proximity caused the first volley from the French troops to kill many of the men outright. Very soon orders were issued for the men to retreat to the boats. As they did so, the Indian allies of the French emerged from the defensive works to scalp and kill the wounded.¹⁵⁵ Watching this, a number of the Highlanders wanted to break ranks and save their comrades. However, they did not, and their strict willpower shows they had gained a lot of discipline since Louisbourg.¹⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the Highlanders who had not been engaged in the fight refused to withdraw until their comrades had rejoined them. Even though this meant waiting until the tide had made the ford they needed to cross almost impassable, the men felt such a strong *esprit de corps* that they would not do otherwise. Wolfe himself praised the 78th by saying that "Amherst's and the Highland regiments alone, by the soldierlike and cool manner they were formed in, would undoubtedly have beat back the whole Canadian army, if they had ventured to attack them."¹⁵⁷ According to Stephen Brumwell, this praise for the Highlanders was also intended to rebuke

¹⁵⁵ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 181

¹⁵⁶ *Sons of the Mountains*, 182

¹⁵⁷ Knox, II. 4

Wolfe's own grenadiers for their unsatisfactory performance.¹⁵⁸ If the 78th was now performing as well or better than the best elements of English regiments, then clearly they were now a well-disciplined unit.

Nevertheless, the real nature of this unit was greatly overshadowed by the concept its commanders had of it. This had a detrimental effect on September 13, 1759 when the British finally managed to draw the French into combat on advantageous ground. After the initial volleys forced Montcalm's men to retreat, Brigadier General Murray ordered the Fraser Highlanders to pursue them. Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser recorded that the Highlanders maintained their discipline and continued firing for "six or (as some say) eight minutes" until the general ordered a broadsword charge. They were no longer inclined to charge wildly ahead as they did at Louisbourg. But their general appears to have believed they would and ordered them to do so. Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser testified to this in his account of the battle, saying that "Our regiment were then ordered by Brigadier General Murray to draw swords and pursue them [the French]." ¹⁵⁹ They did this until they neared the gates of Québec. Then they ran into serious trouble. In a wood near the city walls, Canadian and Indian riflemen shot at the Highlanders from behind cover. To make matters worse, the Highlanders could not return fire because they had tossed aside their muskets when they took up their broadswords. As a result they had to retrieve them and then reform after losing ground, taking casualties all the while.¹⁶⁰ In commenting on this action, Stewart of Garth recognized that the British had inferior firepower and attributed this to the sharpshooters in the French ranks:

The disproportion in the number of the killed to that of the wounded in this action is remarkable, and must be ascribed to the unsteady and distant fire of the

¹⁵⁸ Brumwell, 284

¹⁵⁹ Fraser, 21

¹⁶⁰ Brumwell, 287

enemy... On the Heights of Abraham, our Army seems to have suffered from the want of sharpshooters, a species of force of which the proper use was not then fully understood. Whilst our line stood waiting the advance of the enemy, many were wounded by the straggling and bush-fire of the Canadians and Indians; but when our line opened their fire, and pushed forward, the enemy were soon thrown into confusion and their fire afterwards had little effect.¹⁶¹

This was partially true, but the more important matter is that the Highlanders had no muskets on them when they went after the French. As a result they were practically defenseless until they withdrew and rearmed.

It may sound absurd for the Highlanders to leave their muskets behind when engaging in a broadsword charge, but this had actually been a standard practice in Highland warfare. The Chevalier de Johnstone recalled as much in his *Memoir of the Forty-Five*. In that work, he even offered up an explanation for this peculiar behavior:

The reason assigned by the Highlanders for their custom of throwing their muskets on the ground is not without its force. They say they embarrass [i.e. trouble or inconvenience] them in their operations, even when slung behind them, and on gaining a battle, they can pick them up again along with the arms of their enemies; but, if they should be beaten, they have no occasion for muskets. They themselves proved that bravery may supply the place of discipline at times, as discipline supplies the place of bravery. Their attack is so terrible, that the best troops in Europe would with difficulty sustain the first shock of it, and if the swords of the Highlanders once come in contact with them, their defeat is inevitable.¹⁶²

The first part of Johnstone's statement makes sense, as it is difficult to swing a broadsword and carry a musket slung over one's back. But the second part no longer applied by the time the 78th fought at Québec. Culloden had thoroughly demonstrated that the broadsword charge could be defeated through superior firepower, and that is precisely what happened in this instance as well. This calls into question why the Highlanders

¹⁶¹ Stewart of Garth, 342

¹⁶² Johnstone, 83

would have used such an antiquated tactic. As shown earlier, most of the men in the ranks had been too young to learn the broadsword charge before the Highlands were disarmed. Therefore the officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, would have had to instruct them in this tactic. But it does not appear that they were responsible for this disaster. According to Stephen Brumwell, many Highlanders had already recognized that the broadsword had become archaic. In *Redcoats*, he records that the lieutenant colonel of the Black Watch told reviewing officers that his men preferred bayonets to broadswords in close fighting. Furthermore, the Highland regiments of the American Revolution discarded the broadsword in 1776, much to the chagrin of the traditionalist and romantic David Stewart of Garth.¹⁶³ Malcolm Fraser makes it clear that General Murray issued the command, and so he must have assumed that the Highlanders all knew how to use the broadsword and could achieve the same effect as at Culloden. He was terribly wrong, and the 78th lost many men as a result.

One would think that after the triumphant capture of Québec the army could finally relax. Sadly that was not the case. The bombed-out town scarcely had sufficient resources for what remained of the civilian population, much less the British occupiers. The winter of 1759-1760 was a hard one for the British army, and the 78th in particular suffered. Malcolm Fraser reported his regiment as having 314 fit for duty and 580 sick. 106 had been dead since September 1759. The amount of sick for the regiment was double that of even the next worst regiment the next – Otway's, which had 285 sick. They were about equal in numbers fit for duty with the other regiments, but that is just because Fraser's had already been an exceptionally large regiment.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Brumwell, 287

¹⁶⁴ Fraser, 29

Exactly why so many Highlanders is unclear. Fred Anderson states that “disease and inadequate nutrition had taken the gravest toll,”¹⁶⁵ but both he and Malcolm Fraser attribute it to an additional source. Fraser wrote on December 20, “The Garrison in general are but indifferently clothed, but our regiment in particular is in a pitiful situation having no breeches, and the Philibeg is not all calculated for this terrible climate.” Like the broadsword, the kilts the Highlanders wore had been important cultural emblems but were now utterly inappropriate for their current situation. Fraser went on to say that Colonel Simon Fraser was doing all he could to acquire trousers for his men so they would be “on a footing with other Regiments in that respect.”¹⁶⁶ It is unknown whether or not they did obtain breeches, but their mere desire for them demonstrates that the Highlanders were willing to put aside the distinguishing features of their regiment when it was more conducive to their well-being.

In the springtime, the 78th was called to once again fight for Québec. This time though, it was in defense of the city. The French returned to Québec in order to take the weakened garrison before the navy could sail down the St. Lawrence and assist it. The situation became desperate, so much so that Malcolm Fraser reported 200 of the 400 Highlanders who went into the field had come out of the hospital on their own accord. Some of these may have been wounded again, as the 78th suffered 60 killed and 40 wounded. Of the 39 officers on the field, 23 were wounded, including Malcolm Fraser and the regiment’s colonel, Simon Fraser.¹⁶⁷ This essentially gutted the regiment’s officer corps. Had it needed to fight another battle, it would have been leaderless.

¹⁶⁵ Anderson, 393

¹⁶⁶ Fraser, 27

¹⁶⁷ Fraser, 33

In spite of the losses, the Highlanders did perform well. The Chevalier de Johnstone, who had once fought with some of the Highlanders during the Jacobite Rebellion, now fought against them as an officer in the French army. Once again he noted their abilities:

The engagement began by the attack of a house (Dumont's) between the right wing of the English army and the French left wing, which was alternately attacked and defended by the Scotch Highlanders and the French Grenadiers, each of them taking it and losing it by turns. Worthy antagonists!—the Grenadiers, with their bayonets in their hands, forced the Highlanders to get out of it by the windows; and the Highlanders getting into it again by the door, immediately obliged the Grenadiers to evacuate it by the same road, with their daggers. Both of them lost and retook the house several times, and the contest would have continued whilst there remained a Highlander and a Grenadier, if both generals had not made them retire, leaving the house neuter ground. The Grenadiers were reduced to fourteen men—a company at most. No doubt the Highlanders lost in proportion.”¹⁶⁸

The chevalier could not have known how many men the Highlanders actually did lose, but his account testifies to the strength they showed in this engagement. Rather than breaking ranks and fleeing as they did at Culloden, the Highlanders were now professional soldiers who fought with discipline and spirit.

The war with the French ended in 1760 at Montréal, an action which for the Highlanders must have seemed like something of an anticlimax. Extensive preparations had been made, with James Murray's army of 2,500 moving southwest from Québec, Amherst's 11,800 men moving up Lake Ontario, and General William Haviland's army of 3,400 advancing through the Champlain Valley. Together they had eight times as many soldiers as the French commander Vaudreuil, who had 2,400 and very few provisions.¹⁶⁹ For this reason it is not surprising that the French capitulated without a fight. The only casualties the British had were among the

¹⁶⁸ Johnstone, 11

¹⁶⁹ Michael R Gadue, "Montreal, 1760--The Siege That Wasn't: "Afaith, 'twas the Highlanmon that still paid the bill." (Military Collector & Historian 66, no. 2: 179-188), 179

Highlanders, who had lost three grenadiers from the 78th when a cannonball hit one of the flat-bottom transport boats and four others in Amherst's division when they drowned passing through some rapids.¹⁷⁰ But this intersection of the three armies at Montréal did produce one interesting result. The 78th Highlanders were quartered near the 42nd, allowing the two regiments to meet for perhaps the first time during the war. James Thompson took full advantage of this and recorded among his anecdotes a description of the men:

Hearing that the Old Highlanders – the 42nd, were in General Amherst's Camp, I had a great curiosity to see them, and after getting leave, I went up accordingly, and I was highly delighted with them. The greater part of the men's heads were nearly the color of my wig, nearly white, but still, they were fine, decent, portly men. I observ'd that almost every man of them wore his silver watch, and that the Officers as well as the private men had silver shoe-buckles, all of the same pattern. Now, our men wore only leather thongs in their shoes.¹⁷¹

These observations are significant because they directly contradict the notion that the Royal Highlanders were mostly young recruits. Evidently the group which Fraser encountered contained a number of veterans – perhaps some having served since Fontenoy like William Grant. The 42nd had received new uniforms as a result of their recently gained royal patronage, but it seems unlikely that silver was as widespread as Thompson claims. More likely he recognized how much his regiment had suffered during the winter and considered the Highlanders substantially better equipped as a result of that. Thompson concluded on a rather humorous note:

I pass'd a very quiet time of it with the old Highlanders, and for a very good reason – we could not procure, either for love or money, the means of making merry together, whilst we lay before Montréal, as the mischief was, that our gill of Rum was stop'd the very day that we took the Town! As Prince Edward said, we ought to have had double allowance that day.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 180-181

¹⁷¹ *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 219

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 220

After all that the Highlanders had been through, they definitely felt they deserved their ration of liquor.

The reunion at Montréal would have been a humorous albeit banal way for the Highland regiments to end their time in North America. However, even after the French surrendered, the Highlanders were not quite finished serving their king. Chief Pontiac's War against the British began just as the French were beginning to negotiate surrender terms. His confederacy of tribes overran numerous isolated and undermanned British positions, threatening to completely overthrow their hold on the frontier. To address this threat, General Jeffrey Amherst sent out orders to combine "the Remains of the 42d and 77th Regiments encamped on Staaten Island" in New York and place them once more under the command of General Bouquet.¹⁷³ "Remains" is an accurate way of describing their current condition. The 77th had recently fought in the Caribbean, and disease had devastated their ranks. Amherst wrote that "the Small Remains of the 77th which Scarce Amount to One Company are so feeble and Weak, with the West India Distemper that I Fear they will not be able to go on Service."¹⁷⁴ They ultimately did, but why Amherst would choose to send such a weakened unit into battle warrants investigation. The best explanation is that despite their failures with the Cherokee, Amherst still believed Montgomery's Highlanders had some parity with the Indians. As shown earlier, they did not, and this decision could have resulted in a disastrous last stand for the two Highland regiments. Fortunately their experience and excellent leadership averted this.

Bouquet's column encountered a group of Pontiac's allies near Fort Pitt (which was constructed around the location of Fort Duquesne.) The specific location where they met was

¹⁷³ Bouquet Papers, vol. 6, 239

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 240

called Bushy Run. The Highlanders chose elevated ground which they could defend and even encircled their convoy with flour bags to gain some protection from the encircling enemies. Nevertheless, the Highlanders could not hold out forever. Bouquet records that the Indians stood roughly 500 yards away, and some even came close to penetrating the camp. With the situation becoming desperate, Bouquet decided to try a new tactic the next morning.¹⁷⁵ He sent out four companies of light infantry to hide along the nearby ridge. Then he faked a retreat. As the Indians moved in to wipe them out, the light infantry flanked and routed them from the field. Bouquet left the field victorious. His column had survived and Fort Pitt was safe. But this victory was hardly decisive. He had lost so many men that the column could not go any further through the backcountry.¹⁷⁶ Yet it was still a victory, especially for the Highlanders. Several times in his dispatch about the battle Bouquet offered praise to the Highlanders. One of these is particularly interesting because it once again addresses a supposed savage behavior of the Highlanders. “Our brave Men disdained so much to touch the dead Body of a vanquished Enemy that scarce a Scalp was taken, except by the Rangers & Pack Horse Drivers”¹⁷⁷ Whether or not he actually believed the Highlanders would do such a thing is unclear. Yet by saying they did not, he once again disproves the notion that the Highlanders did engage in scalping.

Bushy Run showed the Highlanders once again in combat with their supposed “cousins,” but later in December of that year they had a much more positive interaction with Native Americans. Following the Paxton Boys’ brutal attack on the peaceful Moravian Indians in Pennsylvania, members of the 77th Highlanders escorted the survivors to New York in order to

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 342-343

¹⁷⁶ *Breaking the Backcountry*, 230

¹⁷⁷ Bouquet, 343

ensure no more violence occurred. Benjamin Franklin praised them for this deed in a 1764 pamphlet called “A Narrative of the Late Massacres in Lancaster County.”¹⁷⁸ He wrote:

When I mention the Baseness of the Murderers, in the Use they made of Arms, I cannot, I ought not to forget, the very different Behaviour of *brave Men* and *true Soldiers*, of which this melancholy Occasion has afforded us fresh Instances. The *Royal Highlanders* have, in the Course of this War, suffered as much as any other Corps, and have frequently had their Ranks thinn’d by an *Indian Enemy*; yet they did not for this retain a brutal undistinguishing Resentment against *all Indians*, Friends as well as Foes. But a Company of them happening to be here, when the 140 poor *Indians* above mentioned were thought in too much Danger to stay longer in the Province, cheerfully undertook to protect and escort them to *New-York*, which they executed (as far as that Government would permit the *Indians* to come) with Fidelity and Honour; and their Captain *Robinson*, is justly applauded and honoured by all sensible and good People, for the Care, Tenderness and Humanity, with which he treated those unhappy Fugitives, during their March in this severe Season. General *Gage*, too, has approved of his Officer’s Conduct.”¹⁷⁹

Franklin never attributed to the Highlanders the usual stereotypes of being fellow savages with Native Americans. Instead he noted that they had ample reason to despise all Indians since they had so many violent encounters with them. Given how much they suffered during them, this opinion seems justified. But because they performed their duty in spite of this, the Highlanders distinguished themselves as honorable, professional soldiers. This effect was not lost on Benjamin Franklin. He concluded that “Such just and generous Actions endear the Military to the Civil Power, and impress the Minds of all the Discerning with a still greater Respect for our national Government.”¹⁸⁰ Only a few years later Franklin and other American colonists would write scathing denunciations of the unjust practices of both the British military and government, but for the time he believed that the Highlanders had rendered a good service to the people.

¹⁷⁸ Calloway, 104

¹⁷⁹ Benjamin Franklin, *A narrative of the late massacres, in Lancaster County, of a number of Indians, friends of this province*. (Philadelphia: Anthony Armbruster, 1764.), 30

¹⁸⁰ Franklin, 31

Devoted service was a theme of the Highland experience in North America, but it did not come without a price. Adding up all of the killed and wounded for each regiment produces staggering figures. The Black Watch had 406 killed, and 563 wounded. Montgomery's suffered 128 killed and 286 wounded.¹⁸¹ Fraser's lost 123 men killed, and 446 men wounded.¹⁸² Even considering that men might be wounded multiple times, the casualty rate is an appalling thirty-two percent. For the rest of the British Army, it was only nine percent.¹⁸³ There are numerous reasons why so many Highlanders perished in the war. As in so many wars, disease resulted in many Highland deaths. This was especially true of the 77th, which was sent to Caribbean. But many of the deaths in these units were actually the result of combat. Ticonderoga, Fort Duquesne, and the Plains of Abraham all resulted in large numbers of Highlanders being killed, wounded, or captured. In many cases the losses were the result of fundamental misunderstandings regarding the nature of the Highlanders. The belief that the uncivilized Highlanders somehow possessed a special edge over their enemies, whether French or Indian, caused them to be placed in situations which were unsuitable for their actual abilities. Even when they had become experienced, disciplined units, these ideas persisted. They may have gained the Highlanders fame, but they also brought a great deal of tragedy. Samuel Johnson summarized their experiences succinctly:

Thus England has for several years been filled with the achievements of seventy thousand Highlanders employed in America. I have heard from an English officer, not much inclined to favour them, that their behavior deserved a very high degree of military praise; but their number has been much exaggerated... Those that went to the American war, went to destruction. Of the old Highland regiment [i.e. the Black Watch], consisting of twelve hundred, only seventy-six survived to see their country again.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 283

¹⁸² *Settlement of Scotch Highlanders*, 283

¹⁸³ Calloway, 96

¹⁸⁴ Johnson, 104

It is a poetic account which relates the tragedy of the regiments in emotional terms. But it is not quite correct. Even though many Highlanders did not return home, that did not mean they all “went to their destruction.” Many stayed in America, and their experiences after the war provide a fitting epilogue for their story.

Epilogue

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, it was clear that the large army that Pitt had created would have to undergo a series of reductions. This has been standard practice after many wars, and unfortunately since the 77th and 78th had been later additions to the British line, they were slated for disbandment while the 42nd would remain in existence. A few returned to Britain, but many other Highlanders decided instead to settle in the New World. Here they created large Gaelic communities which lasted for many years. More importantly, they produced a source of loyalist manpower which King George III used throughout the American Revolution. Even though the Highlanders had fought to their last full measure in the French and Indian War, they continued to contribute to the British Empire well after it had ended.

Despite all the valor they displayed during the war, some Scottish Highlanders who returned to Great Britain continued to encounter prejudice. James Boswell recorded a personal encounter with this in the December 8, 1762 entry of his London journal. While attending a play at Covent Garden, he saw two Highland officers come in. Rather than receiving praise for their service, the audience members in the upper gallery, which Boswell termed a “mob,” began to shout at the officers “No Scots! No Scots! Out with them.” They even pelted the two gentlemen with apples. Boswell then decided to intervene:

My Heart warmed to my countrymen, my Scotch blood boiled with indignation. I jumped up on the benches, roared out, ‘Damn you, you rascals!’ hissed and was in the greatest rage. I am very sure at that time I should have been the most distinguished of heroes. I hated the English; I wished from my soul that the Union was broke and that we might give them another battle of Bannockburn.

The most interesting part of Boswell’s nationalist fervor is that he was a Lowlander but claimed kinship with the despised Highlanders. As shown through earlier examples, even sympathetic

Lowland Scots often considered the Highlanders as inferiors. But here in his fit of passion, Boswell was willing to mount another rebellion in support of his northern brethren. Clearly a transformation in how the Highlanders were to be regarded had taken place. While many English still hated the Highlanders, some Scots like Boswell had started to feel otherwise. This prefigured the idea of a British rather than Scottish or English identity which would emerge a few decades later during the wars with Napoleonic and Revolutionary France. Following this dramatic stand, Boswell went up to the officers and learned they had just returned from serving with Lord John Murray's Black Watch in Havana. They expressed their outrage to Boswell by saying, "And this... is the thanks that we get – to be hissed when we come home. If it was French, what could they do worse?"¹⁸⁵ Their indignation was certainly justified.

Even in the Highlands, many former soldiers found it difficult to return to their old way of life. John M'Naughton served in the 42nd Highlanders and was wounded while in action. After a lengthy recovery in the hospital at Chelsea, he discovered that his pension was "but a scanty subsistence" and decided to resume his former profession as a shoemaker. However, he encountered a great deal of resistance in the Highland town of South-Leith since other shoemakers denied he was truly a practitioner of their trade. Since their guild alone had the right to produce shoes in the town, a group broke into his house and stole his tools in order to prevent him from working. This resulted in legal action, and John M'Naughton was ultimately successful in taking advantage of an act which protected soldiers who wanted to resume their former trades from harassment.¹⁸⁶ Despite this aid from the government, M'Naughton's experience

¹⁸⁵ James Boswell. *Boswell's London Journal 1762-1763*. Edited by Frederick A. Pottle. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950.), 71-72

¹⁸⁶ John M'Naughton *Answers for John M'Naughton late soldier in the Royal Highland regiment* (Edinburgh: 1765.), 1-3

demonstrates how difficult it was for many common soldiers to return to their old lives in Great Britain.

Still, many Highlanders did return to Scotland to be disbanded. Earl John Chapman found three newspaper accounts describing how this occurred on Glasgow's green. Two of them remark that the Highlanders were capable of speaking French, with the *Gazetteer & London Advertiser* saying that "most of them had learned French during their residence at Québec." Only two hundred privates were present on the green, and the *St. James Chronicle or British Evening Post* stated that 400 of them joined the Regiment of Royal Americans.¹⁸⁷ For many it was undoubtedly in their interest to continue their lives as soldiers rather than returning to the poverty they had known before the war in Scotland. In the Highlands they were no longer the proud subjects of a clan chief but rather just impoverished tenants of an increasingly greedy landlord. According to Matthew Dziennik, the Highland elites pressured the government into demobilizing the 77th and 78th in the Highlands so that the men could return to working for them and keep their lavish estates afloat.¹⁸⁸ But transporting men across the ocean was very expensive, and even after that the army had to provide them with sufficient pay to reach their Highland homes. John Fraser, a soldier of Major Abercrombie's company in Fraser's Highlanders, received an incredible 14 days' subsistence pay once he returned to Scotland.¹⁸⁹ Clearly it was not in the army's interests to do this for all soldiers, meaning another solution needed to be found.

At the same time, the North American command had another problem on its hands. With the Treaty of Paris Great Britain had gained nearly all of France's North American possessions,

¹⁸⁷ Earl John Chapman "'Ordered Home... To Be Broke': The Disbandment of Fraser's Highlanders." *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, Winter 2010, Volume 88, Number 356, 291

¹⁸⁸ Dziennik, 129

¹⁸⁹ Chapman, 291

meaning that the Protestant English-speaking colonial officials now had to govern 120,000 francophone Roman Catholics.¹⁹⁰ According to English law, Catholics could not vote or hold civil office, meaning that the Québécois would be forced to abandon the government that they had used for more than a century and accept one in which they could play no active role.¹⁹¹ Undoubtedly such a change would bring trouble. Québec's British-imposed governor, James Murray, was tasked with finding a way to avert any potential unrest. One of his solutions involved the Highlanders.

Following the war, Murray had purchased a number of *seigneuries* or large estates in Québec which used to belong to wealthy Frenchmen. Believing that many soldiers would want to acquire land of their own in North America, Murray decided to diffuse the French presence by settling British soldiers among them. From most regiments the proposition did not receive much of a response. The one exception was Fraser's Highlanders. According to Lucille Campey, about 158 men accepted the offer to settle former French lands, with most of these being from Jacobite clans.¹⁹² These men had few prospects back in Scotland, where the economic situation was bleak. But in America the land was fertile and the men who took the estates might be able to make their fortunes. Interestingly, Earl John Chapman refers to the Highlanders who settled under Murray as "tacksmen" – the title given to the tenants of a clan chief. In a way, they were reproducing the old clan system in North America since many leased land from the officers under whom they had served during the war.¹⁹³ But this comparison only lasted for a short time, as James Murray returned to England in 1766 after having been charged of acting too

¹⁹⁰ Lucille H. Campey, *Les Écossais: The Pioneer Scots of Lower Canada, 1763-1855*. Toronto: Dundurn Press. 2006., 3

¹⁹¹ Anderson, 568

¹⁹² Campey, 20

¹⁹³ Chapman, 292

conciliatory toward the Québécois.¹⁹⁴ However, the Highlanders remained on his estates and did much to improve the colony in the coming years.

One of the first benefits of the Highland settlement in Québec was improved relations with the French colonists. Scotland had long maintained a cordial relationship with France called “the auld alliance.” Effects of this had lasted into the Jacobite Rebellion, when Prince Charles Stewart secured French aid in order to land in the Highlands and fight the Hanoverians. This historic legacy already helped the veterans of the 78th to enjoy a close connection with the French colonists. But most importantly, many of them were also Catholics who spoke French. This allowed them to serve as a vital link between the Protestant British administrators and the Catholic French *habitants*.¹⁹⁵ Since many of them took seigneuries and became the landlords of Québécois farmers, this quality was very valuable in keeping the province at peace.

Many prominent commissioned and noncommissioned officers from the 78th settled in Québec after the war, including Malcolm Fraser, his friend John Nairne, and James Thompson. James Thompson stayed on as a civilian member of the Engineers Department in Québec City while Nairne and Fraser both acquired seigneuries in the countryside.¹⁹⁶ Although it might seem that they did not play as active a role in changing the province as Thompson, who would have actively worked to improve Québec City’s defenses, Lieutenants Nairne and Fraser both contributed quite a bit through the settlements they created. In 1762, while Québec was still under military authority, Fraser and Nairne became the only officers to receive territorial grants from Murray while still under the military regime. The language used in this grant was somewhat

¹⁹⁴ Jeannine Ouellet, « Des Écossais au Canada et jusqu’à Rivière-du-Loup du XVIIe au XXe siècle » Histoire Québec, vol. 10, n° 2, 2004, p. 24

¹⁹⁵ Campey, 5

¹⁹⁶ *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 27

covert so that Murray would not attract too much attention to this action which may have overstepped his powers.¹⁹⁷ Other grants would follow, but these early ones put Nairne and Fraser ahead of other officers. Lucille Campey used them as her principal examples for exploring the Highland legacy of Québec, and they shall serve a similar function here. Both of these officers became large landowners, but their experiences show the unusual cultural interactions which took place when Highlanders and French Canadians mixed.

Malcolm Fraser became a part of French Canadian society very early on when he married a Québécoise woman. Fraser was not alone in this. As Jean-Claude Massé observes, many Highlanders who settled in Québec married French Canadians and started families following their demobilization.¹⁹⁸ This is not surprising since there were few British women in the colony at that time. Still it is worth noting because it allowed Malcolm Fraser to easily enter into French Canadian society. In 1766, Fraser acquired 3,000 acres of land at Rivière-du-Loup from James Murray, who would soon depart permanently for London.¹⁹⁹ This was an important acquisition as it allowed him to enter into the fur trade. With another Scottish merchant from Québec named Simon Fraser, he founded the Madawaska Company in 1768.²⁰⁰ This was a very significant creation since his new company employed both Scots and French Canadians as fur traders, bringing the two groups together. Moreover, it made Malcolm Fraser wealthy. In time he became a major property owner in the upper town of Québec.²⁰¹ Other Highlanders and their descendants eventually followed his example, later occupying key roles in the fur trading North West

¹⁹⁷ Jean-Claude Massé. *Malcolm Fraser: De soldat écossais à seigneur canadien. 1733-1815*. (Sillery, Québec : Septentrion, 2006)., 48

¹⁹⁸ Massé, 42

¹⁹⁹ Oullet, 24

²⁰⁰ Massé, 65

²⁰¹ Campey, 24

Company.²⁰² They faded into the francophone society around them, but they continued to occupy prominent places in business.

John Nairne's experiences in Québec differed from Malcolm Fraser's largely because he maintained a Scottish focus throughout his endeavors. Whereas many if not most of the Highlanders who remained in Québec married French women, John Nairne chose a bride who was Scottish, showing from the beginning he would resist assimilation into the dominant French culture. More than that, he hoped to overcome it by converting the families on his property to Presbyterianism. However, he ultimately failed in that goal. He never managed to bring a clergyman to his property and only counted five Protestant families in that area by 1791. Only a decade later, this reduced to three.²⁰³ The Canadians' traditional religion and culture remained dominant. Perhaps most disappointingly of all, Nairne's family was actually absorbed into it. His children only spoke French when they were young, and even after years of studying in Scotland, they continued to do this when they returned to Québec.²⁰⁴ This meant that Nairne's efforts met with total disappointment.

Nairne was not alone in this failure to turn Québec into a British, Protestant province. Few of the other Highland veterans in Canada sought to recruit Scottish settlers for their properties.²⁰⁵ The main exception was on Prince Edward Island, where eleven Fraser Highlanders together owned 39,000 acres. Three of the island's four townships had a majority of

²⁰² Campey, 5

²⁰³ Campey, 22

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 22-23

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 20-21

Scottish citizens, likely because the Highlanders who owned them encouraged settlement there.²⁰⁶

Ultimately the Highlanders of Québec assimilated into the French population, but that did not mean that they left no legacy. According to J.R. Harper, individuals bearing Scottish last names can still be found in Québec, especially in the old seigneuries of Fraserville and Rivière du Loup.²⁰⁷ More than just possessing Scottish ancestry, for a long time these descendants of the 78th dominated commerce in Montréal and Québec. According to Campey, Scots only represented four percent of Québec's population in 1871, but they dominated business, education and politics.²⁰⁸ Earl John Chapman argues though that while they may have played important roles in all of these fields, many of the descendants left Québec in the mid-nineteenth century to go to western Canada or the United States. The rest, he says, were gradually assimilated into francophone society.²⁰⁹ Yet they did leave a cultural legacy. Perhaps the most noticeable of these are two sports which are strongly associated with Canada – hockey and curling. Curling was first played in Canada in the winter following the capture of Québec, and its first participants were men in Fraser's Highlanders.²¹⁰ Moreover, the Highlanders also brought the game of Shinty to Canada, which was eventually adapted to the ice to create hockey.²¹¹ These two sports came about as a result of Highland settlement in Québec, showing an unusual legacy of Fraser's Highlanders.

²⁰⁶ Campey, 21

²⁰⁷ J.R. Harper, *78th Fighting Frasers: A Short History of the Old 78th Regiment*. (Laval: Dev-Sco, 1966.), 74

²⁰⁸ Campey, 152

²⁰⁹ Chapman, 292

²¹⁰ Ouellet, 23

²¹¹ Campey, 159

Canada benefitted greatly from the settlement of Highlanders, but it was not the only destination for Gaelic veterans. The second most popular place was another area in which the Highlanders fought during the war – the colony of New York. Earl John Chapman reports that eighty Highlanders from the 78th chose to settle along the New York frontier, and he adds that this was a decision which the high command immediately appreciated. In a correspondence with General Murray, Jeffrey Amherst said,

I am Glad to find that so many Men of the 78th have Chose to come to Albany, where I hope they will be able to fix on Places to settle in, to their liking, nothing could be more reasonable than your allowing them provisions to that place, the Quantity will be much Less than they must have had, to have taken them to England.”²¹²

Many of the Highlanders chose to settle here because they had seen how fertile the lands were and realized they could start a new life here. Officers from all three Highland regiments and Highlanders in other units all petitioned for land around the Hudson River. The size of the parcel was determined by rank, with captains receiving as much 3,000 acres and privates receiving about fifty. Most petitioned individually but some applied for block grants. For example, Colin Calloway notes that Allen Cameron and three others from the 77th applied for land on February 28, 1764. This would have allowed them to have more land which they could cultivate together. All around it made a great deal of sense. As Calloway observes,

With bleak prospects awaiting them back in Scotland, many soldiers and half-pay officers opted to remain and take up government land grants when their regiments were disbanded. They encouraged friends and relatives at home to join them. Lands were rich and plentiful and America was a good country for poor men to make a good living, they said. Emigrants from the Highlands gravitated to regions where the Highland soldiers had campaigned, including the Hudson, Mohawk, and St. Lawrence Valleys.²¹³

²¹² Chapman, 292

²¹³ Colin Calloway, “Sir William Johnson, Highland Scots, and American Indians” (New York History, Vol. 89, No. 2), 164

Of these, the settlers in the Mohawk Valley had particularly interesting experiences and shall serve as the example for Highlanders in New York.

The Mohawk Valley became a popular destination for Highlanders through the efforts of Sir William Johnson, who among other things had long served as Britain's representative to the Mohawk people. Johnson believed the Highlanders were industrious people who would quickly cultivate the forests around them into arable land. Twenty veterans of the 78th accepted Johnson's invitation and settled in the Mohawk Valley with their families, whom they brought back from Scotland. Other Highlanders followed, with the last group arriving from Scotland in 1773.²¹⁴ As the settlement grew, the Highlanders began to have increased interactions with the nearby Mohawks. The significance of this was that, as shown earlier in this thesis, many observers believed some sort of kinship existed between these groups. Now that they were living alongside one another in peace rather than fighting each other in war, this belief would be tested in new ways. According to Colin Calloway, some Scots sympathized with the Indians they encountered since they recognized that they too had been exploited through colonialism. Many of them learned to conduct business and diplomacy with the Indians, and quite a few were even adopted into tribes.²¹⁵ But this was not always the case. Many Highlanders were just as likely to shoot at or exploit Indians as other Europeans.²¹⁶ They too had their prejudices, as Malcolm Fraser's comments on Indians and Canadians engaging in scalping demonstrate. Still, even if similar backgrounds were not enough to bring them together, mere proximity sometimes did this. The bonds they forged would become important several years later during the American Revolution.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 165

²¹⁵ Calloway, 173

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 172

The last major settlement for Highland veterans of the French and Indian War was the Cape Fear Valley of North Carolina. Rather than being a colony which the veterans themselves created, as in Québec or New York, this one had been existence since the 1730s. The first settlers arrived there in 1732 aboard a ship called the *Thistle*, and it grew steadily thanks to the efforts of Governor Gabriel Johnston and his successor, Josiah Martin.²¹⁷ Martin was in power just as tensions between the American colonies and Great Britain were beginning to increase. As a result he decided to ensure the loyalty Highlanders of the Cape by making new colonists swear an oath to the crown. He then settled them around older Highland properties in order to keep those landowners from going back on their word. But this was just an extra form of protection. Martin specifically sought out Highlanders for the colony because he believed they were already especially loyal to the crown.²¹⁸ Importantly, the Highlanders of the Cape Fear remained culturally distinct from those around them. They did not maintain the individual clan identities that Celeste Ray says existed on Prince Edward Island, but they did keep up a pan-Highland culture which was markedly different from those of the Irish or Germans around them.²¹⁹ This meant that the Highlanders were more likely to make a unified decision for or against the crown as the Revolution began. In the case of the Cape Fear Highlanders, Martin was proved correct and the vast majority of colonists decided to support the crown.

In fact, at all three of the major Highland settlements, the Gaelic colonists decided to take up arms for the King George III. Those clansmen who had come from once rebellious clans had indeed become the government's most loyal defenders within a span of thirty years. This was a

²¹⁷ Highland Heritage, 3-4

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6

surprising change which several individuals, including James Boswell, noticed. While touring the Hebrides, Boswell commented on this:

I am happy that a disputed succession no longer distracts our minds; and that a monarchy, established by law, is now so sanctioned by time, that we can fully indulge those feelings of loyalty which I am ambitious to excite. They are feelings which have ever actuated the inhabitants of the Highlands and the Hebrides. The plant of loyalty is there in full vigour, and the Brunswick graft now flourishes like a native shoot.²²⁰

The Highlanders in Great Britain were indeed about to prove their loyalties again by once again joining Highland regiments, including a second Fraser's Highlanders. This one, now numbered the 71st of Foot, was raised in Inverness, Stirling, and Glasgow in 1775. It originally contained an incredible 2,340 men and even acquired a third battalion in May, 1777. As before, this Fraser Highlanders experienced quite a bit of difficult fighting. During the southern campaign one of its battalions was captured at Cowpens, and the entire unit surrendered at Yorktown.²²¹ Its existence shows that the British government had been impressed enough with the Highland performance in the French and Indian War that they considered the project worth trying again. If this was not impressive enough, the veterans of the old Highland regiments would join a new British regiment in the Revolutionary War, demonstrating once and for all how loyal some of these former rebels had become.

As mentioned in the introduction, the American invasion of Canada imposed a serious threat on the undermanned British defenders. From the beginning of this crisis, the Highlanders did all that they could to support Carleton's forces. According to Campey, Nairne's seigneurie of 500 inhabitants contained 100 men who could bear arms.²²² Being tasked with gathering

²²⁰ Boswell, 279

²²¹ Philip R. Katcher, *Encyclopedia of British, Provincial, and German Army Units – 1775-1783*. (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1973.), 67-68

²²² Campey, 23

militiamen for Carleton, Nairne traveled around trying to convince the Québécois not to support the Americans. On some occasions he claimed the Americans would take their provisions and offer worthless letters of credit. On others he intimidated the *habitants* by saying that if America did take Québec and they assisted in it, the British navy would soon sail down the St. Lawrence and initiate a second conquest which would be far less benevolent than the first one.²²³ Of course, as stated earlier, the militia idea utterly failed and the British had to look for another ready source of troops. Here the experienced Highlanders stepped in once again. Lieutenant colonel Allan Maclean of Torloisk, a former officer of the 77th, recognized the large amounts of Highland emigrants who had settled in North America and acquired permission to raise a regiment against the rebellion. He decided to specifically appeal to those with influence over other Highlanders when choosing officers, meaning that John Nairne, Malcolm Fraser, and other veteran officers all obtained commissions.²²⁴ Their main success was the defense of Québec, allowing the city to remain in British hands and ending the American presence in Canada. This was a major boon to the British cause, and it would not be the only example of Highland veterans once again proving their loyalties.

In the Mohawk Valley, Highland veterans also fought again for their king and country. Once again this showed a major shift for the members of formerly rebellious clans. The Macdonnells for example had been Jacobites during the Forty-Five, but they were loyalists during the Revolution. So strong was this affinity for the crown that they gained notoriety among independence-minded New Yorkers. General Schuyler is said to have remarked, “These people have been taught to consider us in politics in the same light that Papists consider Protestants.”²²⁵

²²³ Massé, 90

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 91

²²⁵ Meyer, 150

Because they had all declared their loyalty to the crown, the inhabitants of Sir William Johnson's estate was chased from their homes in 1775. Many of them rejoined Johnson in Canada, where he had formed the King's Royal Regiment of New York to continue the fight. This unit contained both Highlanders and Mohawks, who had joined together around their common cause. Both had lost their lands to the Americans, creating yet another commonality. But when the war ended, they remained scattered across New York and Upper Canada. The lands they received for their support were separate, bringing an end to their coexistence. For the Highlanders though, this brought about a positive change as many of them entered the fur trade like their comrades in Québec, often making fortunes along the way.²²⁶

The Highlanders of the last major North American settlement, the Cape Fear Valley, also proved every bit as loyal as their governor had believed. But the decision to stay on the British side was not an easy one for the settlers to make. When Brigadier General Donald McDonald issued an order for Highlanders to join the British Army, only a few from the Cape Fear Valley turned out at the first muster. A week later however, the general obtained a much larger force. There were several possible reasons for this shift. First, the Highlands of Scotland had recently witnessed several years of development which brought the wider world into the glens just as the clan system was breaking down. Roads and English language schools in particular created stronger ties between the Highlanders and England, possibly strengthening their loyalties. These changes can account for the sentiments of recently arrived emigrants, but they do not explain why some older Highlanders would have been loyalists. The second possibility is that since Governor Martin proclaimed that those who failed to stand with the king might lose their property or lives, the Highlanders may have feared reprisals like those that came after Culloden.

²²⁶ Calloway, 173-175

Duane Meyer claims, “Even those Highlanders who were too young to remember the Forty-five had heard many stories of the brutalities, atrocities, and destruction inflicted by the British Army under the Duke of Cumberland.” This is possible, but they also would have been quite aware that many patriots would have been just as likely to punish them for taking the king’s side as loyalists would if they proclaimed independence. In such a no-win situation it would have been in their interest to simply remain neutral. Yet they did not, and something must account for this decision.²²⁷

The final factor which broke the tie was the large amount of Highland veterans in the Cape Fear Valley. Several of the leading men of this settlement were officers who had fought in the French and Indian War and were now retired on half-pay. Like in the northern colonies, these Highland officers had fought for the king’s cause more than a decade earlier in regular regiments, meaning they had much stronger ties to the military and the British government. Among the most influential of these was Allan McDonald, husband of the famous Jacobite heroine Flora McDonald. Once known for assisting in Prince Charles Stewart’s escape from the Highlands, Flora McDonald later emigrated from the Hebrides and became a strong supporter of George III. It was an incredible change which had a great effect on the other settlers. Allan McDonald also had a lot of influence, meaning that when he became among the first residents of the Cape Fear to join the loyalists, others would have followed him. This they did in fairly surprising numbers.²²⁸

It is unknown whether any of the Highlanders in the Cape Fear Valley joined the Royal Highland Emigrants, but Duane Meyer believes it is possible. At the very least the government

²²⁷ Meyer, 146-152

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 154-155

planned to organize a second battalion using men from North Carolina, showing they believed there was enough royalist sentiment for them to do so. Indeed, on one occasion the Highlanders showed they supported the king even more strongly than colonists of other ethnicities. On February 4, 1776, a call went out for troops to supplement General Macdonald's contingent. Only 1,500 men answered that call. However, of these 1,300 were Highlanders, demonstrating just how devoted they were to this cause. Unfortunately, the newly-mustered unit had a very short existence. At Moore's Creek Bridge, eighteen miles above Wilmington, patriot forces trapped the Highlanders by removing the floorboards of the bridge and greasing the beams. After just one volley of cannon and rifle fire, 50 Highlanders were killed. Another 880 were captured. The patriots by contrast lost only two men. It was an ignominious end for the unit. Even so, it is not too surprising since the majority of men within it likely had no prior combat experience. Some of those who escaped would later gain this though since patriot pillaging of their lands meant they had to join other British units rather than returning home. Fortunately they, unlike the loyalist Highlanders of the Mohawk Valley, were able to remain in the Cape Fear Valley after the Revolution, as the 1790 census indicates.²²⁹ Thus the Highlanders here maintained their distinct culture for many years to come.

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The Scottish Highlanders changed a great deal through the course of the eighteenth century, turning from disgraced rebels to honored soldiers in the British army. The continued use of Highland soldiers in the British army testifies to how strongly they managed to impress their commanders and officials in the government. Nevertheless, the initial impressions many of these

²²⁹ Meyer, 157-161

men formed were every bit as stereotyped as the ones they had before and during the Jacobite Rebellion. Prior to 1745 the English and Lowlanders had generally regarded the Highlanders as a barbarian people which needed to be civilized for the sake of the country's security. The Black Watch owed its existence to this fear since it was originally formed as a Highland police unit. But from there its duties changed, and its experiences abroad demonstrated to all that Highland units might faithfully and effectively serve the king. The Jacobite Rebellion which came soon after the Black Watch's triumph at Fontenoy likewise displayed the Highlanders' prowess in combat before the British officer corps. Once the uprising had been crushed, men like James Wolfe reflected on what they had seen and concluded that the Highlanders had to possess some tactical edge over the British because of their barbaric nature. In reality this advantage was due to one tactic which for a while succeeded against the British solely because they had not found a way to overcome it. When they did, they were able to crush the rebellion and force some of their ideas of civilization on the Highlands.

No matter how useful the Highlanders seemed to Wolfe and others, they would not have been incorporated into regiments had Britain not been placed in such a desperate position at the start of the French and Indian War. At that time Pitt and others came to believe that something about the Highlanders might give them an advantage over the civilized French troops and allow them to fight as equals with the Native Americans. Once again, these ideas were all based on stereotypes. Some believed that the undisciplined nature of the Highlanders made them valuable troops, while others went so far as to label them as savages and distant relatives of American Indians. Both notions caused the Highlanders to be used inappropriately, resulting in devastating losses.

All the same, the Highland military experience did not consist solely of pyrrhic victories and costly defeats. As the war progressed all three Highland regiments became disciplined units which were united around clan bonds and a common heritage. The esprit de corps which resulted from this allowed the Black Watch to hold its own at Ticonderoga. At Bushy Run as well the Highlanders demonstrated that they could be extremely useful troops if they were only led properly. The real significance of the Highland regiments in the French and Indian War was not that they dressed, spoke, and fought differently from other English units but rather that they changed from undisciplined former rebels to some of the most loyal, valiant, and well-disciplined soldiers in the British army. Though they went through some of the fiercest fighting of the war, these qualities sustained and distinguished them. For these reasons they are worthy of remembrance.

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