Warfare in Colonial America: Prelude and Promise

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WARFARE IN COLONIAL AMERICA:
PRELUDE AND PROMISE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
David M. Corlett
2000
APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is presented in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

David M. Corlett

Approved, January 2000

James Axtell

Leisa D. Meyer

Dale E. Hoak
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ABSTRACT

This study examines eighteenth-century British warfare and the commonly held perceptions of its inapplicability to the North American wilderness. Ever since independence over two hundred years ago, many Americans have held the opinion that the fledgling United Colonies won their independence through the superior military skills of the Continentals and the inability of the British Redcoats and their officers to adapt to a new form of warfare in America. Their low opinion of the British developed during the Seven Years’ War, particularly when General Edward Braddock and his army suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of several hundred Indian warriors in the forests of western Pennsylvania.

Contrary to these allegations, England’s army was well versed in irregular warfare. An examination of the centuries of direct experience in partisan warfare in Ireland, Scotland, the European continent, and vicariously through England’s colonists in North America, reveals a long-standing involvement with la petite guerre and a thorough understanding by British officers of its nature and dangers. Though oftentimes disdainful of this “ungentlemanly” way of war, British officers like Braddock did not ignore alternative warfare nor did they disregard the warnings of their colonial brethren. In fact, Braddock conducted his campaign in accordance with doctrine developed from centuries of British experience (frequently as the victim). His defeat was the result of simple error, not the result of any inherent flaw in British military doctrine.

Regardless of the reasons behind Braddock’s defeat, the battle unsettled both the colonies and the British military establishment. Responding to necessity, the British army adapted its well-founded tactics to the American wilderness and emerged victorious in 1759. However, the colonists were shocked by the overwhelming defeat of the heretofore “invincible” Redcoats. Losing confidence in their European overlords, many colonists began to believe that they would be better off without the bumbling British, and from Braddock’s rout in 1755 emerged early rumblings for independence.

DAVID MICHAEL CORLETT

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

JAMES AXTELL

WARFARE IN COLONIAL AMERICA: PRELUDE AND PROMISE
WARFARE IN COLONIAL AMERICA:
PRELUDE AND PROMISE
INTRODUCTION

The weather was warm and pleasant on the morning of May 10, 1755. On a wilderness road in the backcountry of Maryland, a detachment of sailors from His Britannic Majesty’s navy, under the command of Lieutenant Charles Spendlow, R.N., marched along the bank of the Potomac River toward Fort Cumberland, the rendezvous point for the expedition against Fort Duquesne. Undoubtedly some of the sailors wistfully gazed at the water and wondered why they were so far from the familiar landscape of a man-of-war patrolling the ocean. Instead of manning a ship, the sailors were manhandling 3,200-pound cannon through the North American wilderness.¹

Around noon, the clattering of hooves startled the sailors, who turned and saw a spectacle more fitting for the tidewater of Virginia than the frontier. A company of Virginia Light Horsemen, festooned in deep-blue uniforms faced with red, galloped down the road in two columns. In their midst rolled a light carriage carrying a thick-set British officer, resplendent in his scarlet uniform, white, lace cuffs, and tall, black boots. A shiny gorget hung below an unremarkable face. A powdered wig, tied at the nape of his neck by a brown ribbon, crowned his head, and a black tricorne hat perched on top. Nearby, the redcoated drummers of the Forty-eighth Regiment of Foot rattled out the Grenadier’s March in salute as the carriage whisked by. A short while later, the slow booming of

seventeen cannon broke the air, announcing the arrival of Major General Edward Braddock at Fort Cumberland.²

Braddock’s entry into Fort Cumberland signaled the beginning of Britain’s 1755 campaign to regain sovereignty over the Ohio Valley, destroy the French fort at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers, and avenge the pride lost at Fort Necessity the previous year. The sad conclusion of Braddock’s segment of this campaign resulted in one of the most famous battles in American history and one of the most infamous defeats in the annals of the British army. As the first large-scale battle in North America pitting British regulars against irregular forces, the Battle of the Monongahela seemingly demonstrated the inflexible nature of conventional European tactics and the unsuitability of British regulars to the wilds of North America. To many colonials, Braddock’s insistence on formality, pomp and ceremony, and textbook maneuvers, coupled with disdain for all things colonial, including wilderness warfare, caused his calamitous defeat.

For over two hundred years, American nationalism has fostered this belief, latching on to “obvious” British error as further proof of America’s righteousness and justification for the rebellion. But closer examination of previous British military experiences and Braddock’s campaign reveal that the British military was well-versed in the ways of “alternative” warfare. Braddock conducted his campaign in accordance with solid doctrine, developed and tested during two centuries of conflict against French partisans and the Celtic warriors of Ireland and Scotland. Though circumstances and conditions in

America, such as the harsh terrain and the "new" Indian foe, would force a degree of adaptation and adjustment, British tactics were suited to the guerrilla warfare found in the American wilderness. Simple mistakes and the skill of Braddock's Franco-Indian foes led to defeat, not any flaws inherent in the British military. Despite this reality, public perception of Braddock's defeat had far-reaching consequences. Beyond the flurry of accusations bandied about by politicians and army officers and the explosion of violence along the American frontier, American colonists began to doubt the invincibility of their imperial parent. With their potentate's vaunted regulars unable to defend themselves from "savages" and "papists," many provincials ventured to believe that the colonies might be better off without imperial shackles. From this defeat in the summer of 1755 would emerge rumblings of independence and a developing sense of being Americans instead of Englishmen.
I

THE IRREGULAR EDUCATION OF JOHN BULL: THE BRITISH ARMY
AND LA PETITE GUERRE, 1558-1755

On the morning of May 11, 1745, a French army under Maurice, comte de Saxe, awaited the approaching allied army in southern Flanders. Saxe's 53,000 men stretched in a two-mile-long line between the villages of Anthoin and Fontenoy. Down a gradual slope and across a half-mile of open ground stood the scarlet and blue battle line of the allied army under William Augustus, duke of Cumberland, son of George II of England. As the French artillery fired round after round into the allied line, the British, Dutch, and Austrian soldiers stood immobile, shifting left and right only to fill the gaps left by careening cannon balls. On order, 15,000 men stepped forward in unison and maintained a slow, measured step to the beat of the drums. Stiff and silent, the allied soldiers continued to march in perfect order, halting only when within pistol shot of the French. The French battle line erupted in a single volley and disappeared in the smoke, yet few allied soldiers fell. On the command of officers and sergeants, the British soldiers leveled their muskets in one fluid motion and began pouring volley after volley into the packed French ranks, which writhed and finally broke. The allied soldiers pursued the French and repulsed three desperate charges by the French cavalry. Only after significant losses and the threat of envelopment did Cumberland's troops retreat. In the same precise manner, the allied soldiers retraced
their steps down the slope, leaving the field strewn with thousands of their dead and dying comrades.³

Conventional battles with long lines of soldiers trading volleys at close range, such as the battle of Fontenoy, dominated European warfare in the eighteenth century (fig. 1). The goal of conventional armies was to secure geographic locations, such as cities, fortresses, crossroads, or mountain passes to gain advantage over their opponents, not necessarily to destroy the enemy army. Armed with highly inaccurate muskets, soldiers had relatively little chance of hitting an enemy soldier, and thus massed formations and firepower were necessary to guarantee any damage to the enemy. Such large formations were unwieldy, requiring both constant drilling of soldiers and a great deal of open space to conduct maneuvers. Therefore, most battles occurred on large tracts of open land where troop formations and wheeled artillery could move with relative ease.⁴

While such tactics would continue to dominate the battlefield until the twentieth century, a different form of warfare, known as la petite guerre or irregular warfare, grew in importance in the eighteenth century.⁵ As in the meaning of “irregular” (not according to rule), irregulars avoided the large formations and open battles of traditional armies. Rather than long lines of troops in open fields, slow evolutions, and massed fires, irregular soldiers formed small, independent groups capable of speed and mobility. They used raids and ambushes to achieve their goals, “to damage the enemy force at the least possible cost to

⁵ Although “guerrilla” and “irregular” were not associated with warfare until the 19th century, for the purpose of this paper, these words and “partisan” are used interchangeably.
themselves” or to deny the enemy needed supplies. Because their foes often outnumbered them, irregulars chose their battles, striking when advantageous and fleeing when not.6

American Indians used irregular tactics of their own similar to this European model. Ambush was their preferred method of fighting and was a direct extension of their hunting practices. However, before and for a short period after European colonization, Indians periodically engaged in open field battles (fig. 2). Captain John Underhill of Massachusetts Bay recorded his impressions of this formal Indian warfare, similar to European set-piece battles, and relegated the Indian version to mere recreation. “They come not near one another, but shot remote, and not point-blank, as we often do with our bullets, but at rovers, and then they gaze up in the sky to see where the arrow falls, and not until it is fallen do they shoot again. This fight is more for pastime, than to conquer and subdue enemies.” The leisurely path of the arrows, fired in a high arch, allowed the Indians to dodge most of the arrows, resulting in relatively few casualties. Underhill scoffed at such battles, claiming “they might fight seven years and not kill seven men.” The introduction of deadly European firearms to North America eliminated this almost ceremonial form of battle. The Indians were quick to realize the deadly potential of firearms, especially when aimed at individual targets instead of pointed in the general direction of the enemy as in the European fashion. Other characteristics of firearms made them far superior to the bow and arrow. “Bullets flew much faster than arrows and took a more direct route to the target. The heavy lead projectiles were less susceptible to deflection . . . almost impossible to dodge, and more damaging on impact.” Unlike Europeans, who to the Indians seemed to


When British regulars arrived in the colonies in great numbers during the 1750s, they encountered a new enemy, who by then was highly skilled in irregular warfare and the use of firearms. After General Edward Braddock suffered his catastrophic defeat in 1755 at the hands of a largely Indian force using irregular tactics, the British military was universally perceived as a pack of empty-headed fools, ignorant of irregular warfare and tactics. Such generalizations were false. Although Braddock was defeated by a band of “partisans,” ignorance of guerrilla warfare was not the cause. From the Irish wars of the sixteenth century to Charles Stuart’s failed bid for the English throne in 1745, the British army constantly experienced irregular warfare. Whether as victims or employers of guerilla warfare in Ireland, the American colonies, Scotland, or the European wars of the 1740s, or reading of it in popular and professional publications, the British army was thoroughly familiar with irregular warfare long before Braddock arrived in Virginia in 1755. Although the conditions and foes differed in America, the practical experiences in battle and the printed theories of scholars provided British officers and soldiers a solid foundation of knowledge applicable to war in the North American wilderness.

England began its long association with irregular warfare in 1170. After receiving Ireland from Pope Adrian II in the Bull 'Laudabiliter,' Henry II invaded the island to bring his “gift” under control. Six Henrys and three hundred fifty years later, Henry VIII
redoubled English efforts to control the wayward island, both to expand his empire and to spread the Protestant reformation. Although both he and Henry II had sent Anglo administrators backed by military might to govern Ireland, neither king truly extended his power beyond the Pale, a relatively small area around Dublin that was truly anglicized.  

Henry VIII took an active interest in Ireland after 1519 and sought to “devise howe Ireland may be reduced and restored to good order and obedience.” Henry’s policies included reviving the loyalties of the great Anglo-Irish lords (through a system of surrender and re-granting of lands), recalling outlying areas to obedience, establishing an island-wide tax collection system, extending his religious reforms, and introducing more English-born nobles to the government and administration rather than relying on Anglo-Irish lords. Henry extended his Act of Supremacy to Ireland, but it had little effect except to link the advance of Protestantism with the growth of English plantations and the ongoing conquest. It was a “fatal alignment of religion and political attitudes.” Henry was too busy with continental disputes and intrigues to harshly administer his policies, and he had little money and time to spend on a war of conquest.  

Henry’s daughter Elizabeth used different methods to suborn Ireland. Previous Anglo administrators and nobles often adopted Irish customs and were gradually “hibernicized,” and became “degenerate English.” To truly anglicize the island, Elizabeth sought to overwhelm Irish customs by encouraging English families to settle in Ireland and provide the Irish with a “civilized” example to emulate. Furthermore, rather than tolerate their “wild Shamrock manners,” Elizabeth sought to stamp out the traits of the culturally

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“inferior” Irish. Elizabeth and her counselors felt the conquest and subjugation of the Irish justified. “The government of these princes was neither politique nor civil, but meer tyranical,” wrote an English government official, “for the princes or Lord use at their pleasure their tenants, spend upon them with their trains, rule after their own lust, commanding all, and not to be gainsaid by any.” More than the supposed tyranny of Irish lords, the English despised Irish culture, and in order to “transform Ireland from a menage of petty independent lordships into an exploitable appendage,” they would have to destroy the Irish cattle-based economy and replace it with Anglo agricultural methods. However, the poor Irish soil encouraged transhumance, or “booleying,” frequent movements of herds, herdsmen, and escorts (collectively known as creaghts). Based on this, the English declared the Irish to be nomads (“[They] run roving about the country like wild men.”) and thus fit only for subjugation and reduction to civility. Faced with the institutional destruction of their culture, the Irish resisted, and a war of incredible ferocity and destruction ensued that raged on and off for the rest of Elizabeth’s reign.10

While the Irish passionately resisted, the English had overwhelming military superiority, both in equipment and training. Lacking a formal army other than the personal warbands of each chieftain, the Irish resorted to the method suited to their culture: guerrilla warfare. Because the Irish were mobile by nature and inclined toward hit-and-run tactics used in cattle raids and inter-clan feuds, guerrilla warfare was a natural extension of their daily existence.11

9 Ibid.
11 Axtell, “Beyond the Pale.”
Besides inherent ability, English superiority in weaponry forced the Irish to adopt irregular warfare. Gaelic weaponry and tactics had not kept pace with changes in European weaponry that occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Lacking siege equipment, stirrups for horses (a centuries-old improvement), and modern firearms, the Irish could not compete in a formal, open-field battle. On smaller horses and without stirrups, the Irish cavalrymen were not fitted for shock action and were thrust off their saddles if they attempted to joust with their English opponents. Sir John Norris held the Irish cavalry in such contempt that he declared them fit only to catch cows. The typical Irish foot soldier, a kernagh, or kerne, was also lightly armed and possessed no armor save for his “glibb,” a thick lock of hair combed over his forehead that might blunt the force of a blow (fig. 3). His was “no different in his apparel when fighting or herding cattle.” A contemporary English foe described a typical kerne as “a foot man, slightly armed with a skayne [a type of dagger], a target of wood, a bow and shefe or else 3 darts which they cast with wonderful facility and nearness, a weapon more noisome . . . than it is deadly.” Their bows were half the length of the English longbow and hence had roughly half the penetrating power. Lightly armed and armored and possessing inferior weapons, the kerne were vulnerable in pitched battles against English armies, whose soldiers carried arquebuses or heavy fifteen-foot pikes and wore burgonets, corselets, pouldrons, vambraces, tasses, and gauntlets.12

Despite such disadvantages, the Irish were wonderfully suited to guerrilla warfare. Lacking the heavy armor that weighed down English soldiers, Irish kerne moved swiftly

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12 Ellis, Tudor Ireland, 118; Hill, Celtic Warfare, 24; Cyril Falls, Elizabeth’s Irish Wars (London: Methuen and Co, Ltd., 1950), 40, 69-70; Axtell, “Beyond the Pale;” C. G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth’s Army,
and skillfully through rough and marshy terrain. Where Englishmen feared drowning, "the Irish kerne hopped like a goat from one tussock to another." With such mobility, the Irish often chose their battlefield and fought on their own terms, attacking the English "in passes, bogs, woods, forests, and in all places of advantage." According to a captain writing to Robert Cecil, Elizabeth's secretary of state, if a battle turned against the Irish, "they held it no dishonor to run away; for the best sconce and castle for security is their feet." The overburdened English soldiers, suited to open plains and valleys, could not keep up with the Irish, who sheltered in the "heavily wooded, marshy or mountainous country which typified Gaelic Ireland." Large English armies that managed to penetrate such rough terrain seldom found anyone to fight, and smaller detachments suffered continuous ambushes and frequent defeat.13

Using irregular tactics, the Irish enjoyed some successes against English armies. In 1595, Hugh O'Neill and his Irish army, mostly irregulars, nearly destroyed Sir Henry Bagenal's English army at Clontibret. Using marksmen hidden in "woods and thickets, deep and dangerous bogs, steep and craggy hills and mountains," O'Neill lured the English into a trap, sniping at the English soldiers but never allowing a full battle to develop. As their wounded increased, the English column slowed and finally ground to a halt at nightfall. Short of powder and ball, the English army survived only because of O'Neill's aversion to night attacks. An English relief column escorted Bagenal's shaken army to shelter the next morning, carrying at least 31 dead and 109 wounded. Other Irish successes mirrored O'Neill's victory at Clontibret, and in fact, with the exception of

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Yellow Ford in 1598 where the unlucky Bagenal met his death, not one Irish victory “was gained in any other circumstances.”

Such tactics infuriated English officers, leading Thomas Burgh, briefly viceroy of Ireland, to complain of “barbaric” tactics employed by the rebel leader O’Neill. “For, as he is the dishonestest rebel of the world, so is he the most cowardly, he never making good any fight, but bogring with his shot and flying from bush to bush.” At night “he lodgeth dispersed in the thicks and holds no firm guards, but throws himself and all his into sundry groves, lurking scattered like wolves or foxes, fitter to hunt with dogs than to find with men.”

Seemingly hapless in the rough terrain preferred by the Irish irregulars, the English armies had great difficulty bringing their foes to battle. However, English officers were not bungling fools, and despite their distaste for Irish ways, several officers sought to adapt English methods and adopt Irish means in order to defeat their wily enemy. Recognizing the advantage of light, mobile troops, English commanders adapted their weapons and armor to the terrain. Some discarded the heavy and ponderous arquebuses for pistols; shorter spears replaced fifteen-foot pikes, difficult to wield in forests; and heavy armor gave way to leather, mail, or simply no armor at all to allow soldiers to cross marshy ground (fig. 4).

Despite these changes, the English army continued to suffer serious setbacks. In 1599, the queen’s favorite, Robert Devereaux, second earl of Essex, was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and given 16,000 infantrymen and 1,300 cavalrmen to subdue O’Neill. Four months after his arrival and after suffering defeats at Maryborough and

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14 Hill, Celtic Warfare, 25; Falls, Elizabeth’s Irish Wars, 188.
Glenmalure, Essex’s force was reduced to only 4,000 effectives. He was soon replaced by Charles Blount, eighth Lord Mountjoy. Mountjoy took several steps to reorganize the English army in Ireland after becoming viceroy of Ireland in 1600. Instead of relying on heavy English horses, Mountjoy switched to hobelars—small, light horses similar to those used in the marches of Scotland—which could traverse rough terrain or bogs with relative ease. Mountjoy also systematically recruited and employed contingents of Gaelic troops from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. These men, used to the Gaelic ways of war, could follow, find, and fight the Irish rebels on their terms. Such border troops became so indispensable that one of Mountjoy’s subordinates claimed that “without them no notable exploits can be done.”

Mountjoy also made strategic changes. Instead of penetrating enemy territory and leaving an isolated garrison to “pacify” the region, Mountjoy created mutually supporting outposts along O’Neill’s border to hem him in. The English lord also waged total war on the Irish rebels and sought to destroy their food supplies with a series of raids, often waterborne, that devastated the countryside, destroying crops, herds, and people. His lieutenant, Sir Arthur Chichester, reported the results of one such raid. “We have burnt and destroyed along the Lough [Neagh], even within four miles of Dungannon, from whence we returned hither yesterday; in which journeys we have killed above one hundred people of all sorts, besides such as were burnt, how many I know not. We spare none of what quality or sex soever, and it hath bred much terror in the people who heard not a drum nor saw not a fire there of a long time.” These raids also disrupted traditional

15 Ibid., 75.
16 Axtell, “Beyond the Pale;” Ellis, Tudor Ireland, 118, 124-25, 127; Hill, Celtic Warfare, 30-31; Falls, Elizabeth’s Irish Wars, 253-58; Morton, Elizabethan Ireland, 86-87.
planting periods. "Being thus troubled in the Seede time, [they] could not sowe their ground."  

Lord Mountjoy also studied his foe and turned their strengths into weaknesses. Recognizing the Irish dependence on terrain for shelter and sustenance, he chose to attack in winter, and by immobilizing the creaghts, reduced the Irish army's mobility and ability to feed itself. "In Ireland the winter yieldeth best services, for there the trees are bare and naked, which use both to clothe and house the Kerne, the ground is cold and wet which useth to be his bedding, the air is sharp and bitter which useth to blow through his naked sides and legs, the Kine are barren and without milk, which useth to be his only food." Lacking the natural cover of the leafless woods, exposed to the elements, and short of food, the Irish were vulnerable to attack and defeat. Though Mountjoy did not experience success immediately, his changes and adaptations (and foolish moves by the rebel O'Neill at the battle of Kinsale in December 1601) allowed the English to effectively counter the Irish irregulars and eventually defeat them.  

England's irregular education continued in the American colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, although regulars were largely absent before 1755. Many colonists immediately drew parallels between the Indians and the Irish based on perceived similarities in "barbaric" lifestyle and methods of warfare. In 1646, the Puritan minister Hugh Peter, an eye-witness to the Pequot War in 1637 and the Irish campaigns of the 1640s, recommended fighting the Indians in the same way as the Irish. "The wild Irish and the Indians doe not much differ and therefore would be handled alike." Early Indian

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conflicts, such as the Pequot War, demanded little change in European methods of war because of quick victory. But the Indians' frequent and decisive victories in King Philip’s War in 1675-76 forced colonists to adapt.¹⁹

When hostilities broke out between Philip’s allies and the New England colonies in the summer of 1675, the colonists expected and sought to fight the Indians in conventional, open-field battles. Colonial militia units marched out to fight with flags flying and drums beating. But the Indians refused to oblige the colonists and instead “would immediately fly an hundred ways at once into swamps, so as our men could not follow them, or if they did, could not see two of them together.” The English derided such apparent cowardice, complaining that the Indians would “seldom or never” dare “to meet our Soldiers in the open Field, unless when they have a very great Advantage as to their numbers, or Covert of the Woods and Bushes.”²⁰

Using lightening-quick raids, “fast-moving, forest-wise Indian war parties were able to repeatedly baffle the ponderous English units, retreating successfully when necessary.” Able to avoid serious entanglements with colonial troops, Philip’s Indians attacked with impunity, ambushing, raiding, and retreating with little consequence to themselves. Like the Irish, the Indians retreated to the safety of the swamps, where the English could not follow without fear of ambush. These bogs were “so full of trees that a parcel of Indians may be within the length of a Pike of a Man, and he cannot discover them; and besides, this as well as all other swamps, is so soft Ground, that an Englishman can neither go nor stand

¹⁸ Axtell, “Beyond the Pale;” Ellis, Tudor Ireland, 118, 124-25, 127; Hill, Celtic Warfare, 31; Falls, Elizabeth’s Irish Wars, 253-58.
thereon.” What made this even more frustrating was the apparent ease with which the
Indians traversed such terrain. “These bloody Savages will run along over it, holding their
Guns cross their arms (and if occasion be) discharge in that position.” Samuel Gorton,
recalling the Irish wars, complained that swamps were “more pernicious to valiant souldiers
then are bullwarks, towers, Castles, and walled cities. I remember the time of the warres in
Ireland . . . where much English blood was spilt by a people much like unto these . . .
where many valiant souldiers lost their lives, both horse and foot, by means of woods,
bushes, boggs, and quagmires.” Many colonial leaders believed it fruitless to even attempt
to enter the swamps in pursuit. “It is ill fighting with a wild beast in his own den.”

Despite the apparent futility of their own tactics, New Englanders were initially
unwilling to adopt any Indian methods of war. Viewing the war as a battle to prevent their
own degeneration into “savageness,” many colonists refused to adopt Indian ways, fearing
this would be the first step toward losing their English identity. Opponents of change
acquired moral ammunition when Indians destroyed Captain Thomas Lathrop’s company
on September 18, 1675. While escorting a supply train from Deerfield to Hatfield,
Lathrop’s eighty men fell into an ambush set by a large force of Indians. In a well-
intentioned attempt to fight the Indians on their own terms, Lathrop ordered his men to
scatter among the trees and fight individually. Targeted one by one by the elusive Indians,
fewer than ten of Lathrop’s men escaped with their lives. Reverend William Hubbard

20 Axtell, “Scholastic Philosophy,” 138-41; William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New-
21 Douglas Edward Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip’s War (Hyannis, Mass:
Parnassus Imprints, 1958), 71; Samuel Gardner Drake, The Old Indian Chronicle: Being a Collection of
Exceeding Rare Tracts Written and Published in the Time of King Philip’s War . . . (Boston: Boston
Antiquarian Institute, 1836), 14; Samuel Gorton to John Winthrop, Jr., 11 September 1675, The Winthrop
Papers, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 4th Ser., vol. 7 (Boston: Massachusetts
lambasted the dead Lathrop for such foolish actions, claiming that if the captain had led his men forward en mass, he would have lost very few men. "For the Indians, notwithstanding their Subtleties and Cruelty, durst not look on Englishmen in the Face in the open Field, nor ever yet were known to kill any Man with their Guns, unless when they could lie in wait for him in an Ambush, or behind some Shelter, taking Aim undiscovered."22

Fortunately for New England, Hubbard’s opinion was not universal, and various government leaders and private citizens made attempts to adapt Indian methods or entirely new ways of fighting. Governor John Leverett of Massachusetts Bay openly advocated adaptation, urging that the soldiers “bee commanded to attend the Enemies method, which though it may seeme a rout to ours, is the best way of fighting the Enemy in this brushy wilderness.” Some ideas, such as armored chariots, were ludicrous and represented the frustration and desperation felt by the colonists. Others brought in dogs for “finding out the enemy in their swamps,” to prevent ambush, and to warn settlements of intruders.23

The introduction of dogs was not a stroke of inspiration on the part of the English settlers. Dogs had long served as weapons of war and defense and as forms of bloody entertainment. It was traditional in England to train mastiffs to fight, primarily “to baite the Beare, to baite the Bull and other such like cruell and bloudy beastes.” Aside from the Irish Wolfhound, the mastiff was the “lord of the hounds” in Britain, weighing over 150 pounds and towering above other dogs at 30 inches in height. In his book Of Englishe

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23 Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 93; George Madison Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip’s War: Being a Critical Account of that War (Leominster, Mass: 1896), 27, 63;
Dogges, Johanes Caius described the mammoth breed as “vaste, huge, stubborne, ougly, and eager, of a hevy and burthenous body . . . and frightfull to beholde . . . capable of . . . striking colde feare into the harts of men, but standing in feare of no man.”

The Spaniards were the first to let loose the dogs of war on the American natives, and the Iberians quickly turned the mastiff’s brutal nature and immense physical power to terrorizing the Indians. Numerous contemporary historians, such as Bartolome de Las Casas, recorded the conquistadores’ successes with hounds, and English translations of these works appeared in the publications of the cosmographer Richard Hakluyt and the historian Samuel Purchase in the early seventeenth century. English sailors, traders, and settlers applied the tactics pioneered by the Spaniards in their own conquest of the new world, and dogs became an effective tool to counter the Indians’ advantages in forest warfare.

Though writing twenty-five years after the conclusion of King Philip’s war, Reverend Solomon Stoddard recognized the usefulness of dogs that Governor Leverett’s contemporaries must have seen as well. “If dogs were trained up to hunt Indians as they doe Bears: we should quickly be sensible of a great advantage thereby . . . [The Indians] are not much afraid of us, they know they can take us and leave us . . . But these dogs would be such a terrour to them.” With sharp-nosed hounds to warn of ambush, the militia “would follow their dogs with an undaunted spirit, not fearing a surprise.” However,

Stoddard must have felt a tinge of guilt for subjecting the Indians to such horrible treatment, and he justified the use of mastiffs by equating Indians with animals and accusing them of acting as “thieves and murderers.” “They act like wolves and are to be dealt with all as wolves.” And thus they were. On October 16, 1675, after capturing an Indian woman near Hatfield, Captain Samuel Moseley ordered the woman “to be torn in pieces by Doggs and she was soe dealt with.”

While dogs may have frightened the Indians, the New Englanders’ greatest successes against Philip’s irregulars came from using friendly Indians as scouts, much as Mountjoy did with Irish, Scots, and Welsh natives. Indian allies minimized the threat and fear of ambush, inspiring greater confidence among the colonial troops. Indians also taught the English to move swiftly and quietly through the woods and were quick to correct mistakes. On one occasion, a Mohegan warrior leading a party of Connecticut soldiers made one man take off his squeaking shoes and had another dampen his leather breeches because they were rustling. One New Engander declared that friendly Indians had saved the colonies from dire consequences. “Had it not pleased god to draw forth some other Indeans (such as were) former enemies to our now enemies: to aid the English to finde their enemies: and overtake them (when the English cannot) we might have bin driven to great straits.”

No New Engander was more successful in utilizing such friendly Indians in conjunction with English troops than Benjamin Church of Plymouth Colony. Church was

familiar with the marshy areas of his colony and neighboring Rhode Island, and, more important, he knew much about the Indians and saw the benefits of using their own tactics against them. After receiving a captain’s commission in the Plymouth militia, Church refused to remain penned up in towns or garrisons, so-called “Nests for Destruction,” and declared that he and his troops “would lye in the Woods as the Enemy did.” Instead, Church formed an independent company of “150 of the best Souldiers” and “100 of the Friend Indians” and sought the enemy “wherever they might lurk” in order “to beat them at their own tricks of forest warfare.”

Church learned from the failures of previous English expeditions and implemented several unconventional changes. One such modification involved alternate firing. Typically the militia fired every weapon in a single volley, leaving the entire unit with unloaded weapons and vulnerable to attack. Church “called on his Men not to discharge all their Guns at once” in order to deny the Indians “an opportunity to run upon them with their Hatches.” Instead, by staggering volleys, a portion of his company’s weapons remained loaded and ready to resist assault. Another change restricted the personal habits of his men. Other English units’ attempts to ambush Indians had failed because of men “troubled with the Epidemical plague of lust after Tobacco.” Therefore, Church prohibited smoking while on his missions. He was also quite willing to learn from his Indian allies. On one occasion, Church asked an Indian how Philip’s people always got the better of the English.

They told him, that the Indians gain’d great advantage of the English by two things; the Indians always took care in their Marches and Fights, not to

come too thick together. But the English always kept in a heap together, that it was as easy to hit them as to hit an House. The other was, that if at any time they discovered a company of English Souldiers in the Woods, they knew that there was all, for the English never scattered; but the Indians always divided and scattered.

Church implemented this and thereafter spread out his command while marching through thick terrain. "Mr Church . . . order'd his little Company to March at double distance, to make as big a show (if they should be discovered) as might be." Church's tactics worked, and frequently when his company encountered the enemy, the hostile Indians fled, "expecting the great Army." Utilizing such methods, Church was often triumphant over the Indians, and in the final phase of the war in summer 1676, Church fought, captured, and killed scattered bands of Philip's Indians, including the Wampanoag sachem, at little cost to his own men. 29

Although no English regulars took part in King Philip's War, the experiences of Benjamin Church and other colonists were not unknown to the people in England. Between 1675 and 1682, London printers published fourteen different accounts of the war in the form of letters, sermons, epic poems, and histories. Some of these appeared in the London Gazette only weeks after the war began. All of these accounts were popular with the reading public of England and most had at least moderate print runs. London booksellers aggressively advertised the tracts, listing them in the Term Catalogues, a brochure of London booksellers, or printed the stories as supplements to the London Gazette. Hundreds of unpublished, hand-copied newsletters circulated throughout England as well. Copies of the seventeen accounts printed in the colonies also made it across the ocean to London in the form of official narrations sent by colonial authorities to King
Charles or by colonists shipping books to friends and family in England. Church's account, published by his son in 1716, circulated widely as well. Although designed to bolster the captain's image and secure his place in history, the book recounted Church's successful experiences with irregular warfare in such detail that, according to James Axtell, it "might well have served the New English [or even the English military] . . . as a guide to the conduct of Indian warfare." The large number and extensive circulation of accounts printed in England guaranteed exposure of the English military to American irregular warfare in at least a cursory manner.30

King Philip's War was only the first in a long series of conflicts in the American colonies involving irregular warfare. Between Philip's death in 1676 and George Washington's ambush of French forces under Joseph Coulon de Villiers, sieur de Jumonville, in 1754, England fought three major wars in North America, known to the English as King William's War (1689-97), Queen Anne's War (1702-13), and King George's War (1744-48). However, instead of facing only Indian foes, the English colonists fought French troops from Canada. This international threat to the colonies insured the attention but not the large-scale participation of the English government in the conflicts' North American theater. With fierce fighting on the European continent and surrounding oceans, England left the colonies to conduct their own actions.

In each of these colonial wars, France was far more effective in employing irregulars and Indians than were the English. During King William's War, French officers led numerous Franco-Indian war parties in attacks on English settlements. Louis de Buade, comte de Frontenac, governor of New France, planned an ambitious campaign to

29 Church, History of King Philip's War, 28, 32-33, 121-22; Axtell, "Scholastic Philosophy," 146-48.
take Albany and New York in 1690. Diverted by lack of support, his parties instead raided Schenectady, New York, killing sixty inhabitants; Salmon Falls, New Hampshire, killing thirty and capturing fifty-four; and Fort Loyal, destroying a force of one hundred militiamen. Frontenac’s forces overran sixteen additional frontier posts.31

English colonists mounted a two-pronged retaliatory strike that same year, with a seaborne expedition directed against Acadia and an overland strike against Montreal via Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River. Fitz-John Winthrop, a veteran of the English Civil War, led a makeshift army of New York and Connecticut troops on the overland route but only made it as far as Wood Creek, south of Lake Champlain, where a shortage of provisions and an outbreak of smallpox forced them to retreat before ever sighting a Frenchman. Winthrop’s Mohawk allies, advancing toward Montreal, suffered a costly defeat at the hands of a strong force of French regulars.32

Four years after the failed English attempt on Montreal, the French struck again. Pierre Le Moyne, sieur D’Iberville, led a series of raids on English outposts in the Hudson Bay region. Forts Hayes, Rupert, Albany, York, and Nelson all fell to Iberville, followed by all of Newfoundland. In the last year of King William’s War, 1697, incessant Franco-Indian raids devastated the English colonies’ border settlements. Mixed bands penetrated as far as Andover and Haverhill near Boston and left the towns in shambles.33

Seven years later, in the midst of Queen Anne’s War, the French and Indians conducted one of their most notorious raids, striking the outlying settlement of Deerfield,

30 Lepore, Name of War, 49-52, 55, 58; Axtell, “Scholastic Philosophy,” 145.
32 Ibid., 77-78.
33 Ibid., 79-80.
Massachusetts. The town’s location on the outer fringes of English settlement left it prone to attack. But even more dangerous to the town’s safety was one of its own residents, the outspoken Puritan minister John Williams. The French had targeted him for capture in order to exchange him for a high-ranking French prisoner in English hands. To capture their prize, Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville and Pierre Boucher led a force of forty-eight French soldiers and two hundred Abenakis, Caughnawaga Mohawks, and Hurons nearly three hundred miles in the midst of winter to attack Deerfield.

After traveling down frozen Lake Champlain, over the Green Mountains, and down the Connecticut River Valley, the Indian and French force lay quietly outside of Deerfield on the morning of February 29, 1704. After leaving their packs and equipment in a cache several miles away, the raiding party quietly crept into town and was inside the main stockade and beating down doors before the English settlers could raise the alarm. “The enemy came in like a flood upon us,” reminisced John Williams in his popular captivity narrative. Several Indians broke into his home, captured or killed his family, and rifled his possessions as he stood by helplessly. Several families barricaded themselves inside Sergeant Benoni Stebbins’s cabin and poured such a devastating fire into the raiders’ ranks that they left the house untouched. “About sun an hour high” the raiders left town with over one hundred captives, including Williams, and left behind forty-seven dead settlers and numerous burning buildings. A force of English militiamen from nearby towns pursued the attackers and managed to kill several before falling into an ambush. The raiders quickly


If the English military had learned nothing from John Williams and the Deerfield raid, from Benjamin Church, or the centuries of conflict in Ireland, the European wars of the 1740s provided a virtual “schoolhouse” for instruction in irregular warfare. Maria Theresa’s struggle to secure the throne of the Austrian Empire from 1740-48 witnessed a transformation of European warfare, where irregulars began playing a more significant role than in previous wars of that century. When Frederick the Great’s Prussian army invaded Austrian Silesia in 1740, Maria Theresa desperately called on the nobles of Hungary and the Balkans for support. The Hungarian horsemen and “wild and barbaric” Croats who responded were unlike any other soldiers in Europe.\footnote{Russell, “Redcoats in the Wilderness,” 631; Starkey, \textit{European and Native American Warfare}, 47.}

The Balkans and Hungary had been a battleground between Christian Europe and the Muslim Ottomans for centuries. Seeking to expand their empire, the Turks waged a brutal war against the people of southeastern Europe. A unit frequently used by the Turks...
in these wars, the *akinjs*, or Tartar light horsemen, was known for its mobility and unpredictability. These riders fought for plunder and captives instead of wages.37

In response to the Turks’ mobile strikers, the Balkan nobles formed their own irregulars, known as *grenzers* (border guards) or *pandours* (mounted policemen). Raised and maintained on a local basis, the *grenzers* patrolled the eastern frontier of Christian Europe, clearing pockets of Turks from Balkan territory and frequently raiding Turkish holdings. As recently as 1737-39, *grenzers* and *pandours* had fought alongside Field Marshal Seckendorf’s Austrian army in an unsuccessful war against the Turks. It was many of these men, hardened veterans from years of border conflict, who rode against Frederick in 1740.38

While these irregulars could not prevent Frederick’s conquest of Silesia or force the French to abandon their invasion of Austria, small units, such as Franz von der Trenck’s dreaded *pandours*, constantly harassed and chipped away at the invading armies. Isolated units, weakly guarded supply trains, and unfortified towns all fell prey to the Austrian “banditti,” so enraging Frederick that he threatened to execute Trenck and his “barbarians” if he captured them. This particular threat probably stemmed from Trenck’s raid on Frederick the Great’s quarters and the capture of the king’s personal silver service. Frederick’s French allies suffered just as severely from the stings of partisan units. After abandoning the siege of Prague in 1742, the French marched their invading force through

rough mountainous terrain to join the main army in Germany. The Austrian commander
did not let his enemy retreat gracefully and “ordered . . . 5000 Hussars to harass them
during their whole route.” A French officer on the long march complained of the incessant
Austrian strikes, claiming that he faced “Hussars in Flank, Front, and Rear all the way.”

Similar irregular forces bewildered the Spanish invaders of Sardinia-Piedmont in
northwest Italy in 1742. Faced by overwhelming numbers, the Sardinian king recruited
peasants and highlanders to harass the Spanish advance. Frequent skirmishes and
ambushes, along with severe winter weather, took a serious toll on the Spanish army,
which was “continuously harassed by the Vandours and light Troops, who infested their
Rear.” By 1745, Spain could no longer absorb such punishment and began a withdrawal
from Piedmont. But like the French in Austria, the Spanish army was “so harassed [by
Sardinians] in its Retreat out of Piedmont, that not above 8000 Men were brought off.” In
their haste to escape their tormenters, the Spanish left “most of their Cannons, Mortars,
and heavy Baggage” for the Sardinians to confiscate. The British did not ignore their
beleaguered Sardinian allies. The army sent General Handasyde and one thousand “English
Swiss” to fight alongside the peasants and highlanders of Sardinia.

The Sardinian, Hungarian, and Balkan irregulars were so effective in their efforts to
deny unhindered movement, provisions, and intelligence to their enemies that the Prussians,
French, and Spanish all found it prudent to counter with irregulars of their own. Frederick
the Great quickly saw the value of such forces. Following his victory at Mollwitz in 1741,

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39 Ibid., 631-32; Franz von der Trenck, Memoirs of the Life of the Illustrious Francis Baron Trenck,
sometime Lord of the Bed-Chamber to . . . the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia and Colonel of a Body of
Pandours (London: 1747), 58; Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 50.
“where he experienced and recognized his lack of such units, he made it his first task to strengthen his army with light troops . . . His example was followed by the French, the Hanoverians, and the Saxons, all of whom founded units of this branch of the service.” Frederick formed units of jagers, while France organized chasseurs to match the Austrian grenzers and pandours. Recruiters sought out hunters and gamekeepers to fill the ranks of the new irregulars, men skilled in marksmanship and used to the conditions of forests and other rough terrain. The Spanish created a regiment of light horse from Italian criminals, “smuggling well acquainted with the byways,” and a regiment of infantry “most of them from the Romagna [a mountainous region] to make use of against the Pandours and Croats, and the enemy’s other irregular forces.”

Beyond the token force under General Handasyde and the detailed battle accounts read in The Scots Magazine and The Gentlemen’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle, Britain’s participation in the early irregular warfare of Europe was minimal. This changed when a British army joined Austria’s western army in Flanders in summer 1743. Of the sixty-two thousand Austrians under Prince Charles of Loraine, irregular horse and foot numbered over seven thousand. Included among the irregulars was “the famous Col. Metzel at the head of a large Body of irregular Troops.” His pandours, inherited from Trenck, had “made . . . much Noise in the World” with their successful campaigns against the French. An English officer described in detail his shocked reaction to his new allies.

[The] irregular Troops . . . Croats, Hussars, Pandours etc . . . are encamped by themselves . . . and their looks represent a wild and Savage Fierceness. All Night they lie on the Ground without Tents or Straw; in the Day they

40 Samuel Boyse, An Historical Review of the Transactions of Europe, from the Commencement of the War with Spain in 1739, to the Insurrection in Scotland in 1745 . . . 2 vols. (London: 1747), I: 78; The Boston Evening-Post, 1 April 1745, 8 April 1745.
41 Gates, British Light Infantry, 11-12; Russell, “Redcoats in the Wilderness,” 632.
Dance and exercise themselves with running and throwing of Stones of 20 lb. Weight... They openly declare that... they will give no Quarter wither to Man or Child... Yesterday a Body of about 1000... cut in pieces some Frenchmen... and brought away their Heads.

While appreciating the pandours' effectiveness, British officers were shocked by the irregulars' rejection of conventional laws of war and by the atrocities they committed, especially Trenck's habit of keeping severed enemy heads as trophies. In their rush to judgment, the British leaders conveniently forgot their ancestors' habits of doing the same in Ireland. Fear of divine wrath caused some British officers, such as Lieutenant Colonel Charles Russell of the Coldstream Guards, to dread the day that the British army would employ such troops of their own. "I should almost believe there would some judgement befall if we were to employ such in our service, unless the utmost necessity required it."

Although British leaders apparently felt that "the utmost necessity" had not arrived in 1744, they continued to feel the bite of irregulars as the French under Marshal Maurice de Saxe gained experience and proficiency with their own guerrillas. Saxe's irregulars constantly harassed British forces with great success during the Flanders campaign. On one occasion in 1744, a party of Saxe's partisans "laid an Ambush to intercept" the routine relief of British guards at Lanoi. "They posted their men in a thick Copse on one Side of the Road, and behind a Hedge on the other." The commander of the relief column received warning of the ambush and sent an advanced guard of thirty men, "but [only] a Serjeant and twelve Men to beat the Hedges on the Flanks." The British flankers missed the French force, which "lay undiscovered, till it fired on the advanced Guard." Although surprised, the ambush did not shock British leaders. The commander's precautions, though obviously

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insufficient, indicated a familiarity with guerilla tactics and methods for countering them. Instead of accusing the French of using “uncivil” tactics, “the Colonel was . . . blamed for not having more Men on the Flank, [and] for being so negligent.”

After observing and, more frequently, suffering from irregular tactics throughout the 1740s, the time of “the utmost necessity” finally arrived for Britain to utilize its own irregular forces in 1745. Charles Stuart, the Young Pretender to the throne of Britain, arrived in Scotland --for the first time in his life-- to reclaim the crown stolen from his grandfather James II in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. With a large number of the Highland clans rising to support him, Charles had a ready-made army, and the British army suddenly faced an extremely ferocious enemy skilled in the art of irregular warfare.

For the Highland Scots, guerilla warfare was a way of life. Like the Irish, the Scots frequently made their livelihood by thieving from their neighbor’s cattle herds, and periodic blood feuds between clans ensured sporadic raids and ambushes. While guerrilla tactics were their forte, the Highlanders were formidable on the battlefield as well. But instead of trading volleys of musket fire, the kilted Scots preferred the shock and close action of the Highland charge. Advancing in ragged lines, the Highlanders would fire a single volley at short range, throw down their muskets, draw their broadswords, and “dart with fury on the enemy through the smoke of their fire.” “Their attack is so terrible,” wrote James Johnstone, a Jacobite staff officer, “that the best troops in Europe would with difficulty

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sustain the first shock of it, and if the Swords of the Highlanders come in contact with
them, their defeat is inevitable.”44

Johnstone’s predictions of Highland victory came true in the first major battles of
the ‘Forty-Five Rebellion. At Prestonpans and Falkirk, the Highland charge destroyed the
British battle lines in a matter of minutes. Although Prince Charles’s greatest victories
came on the battlefield, the Scottish rebels depended on irregular tactics throughout the
prince’s failed bid for the throne. Soon after the Young Pretender arrived in Scotland, his
supporters initiated a guerilla war on the English. On August 16, 1745, a small party of
Scots under Macdonald of Keppock and Cameron of Lockiel ambushed two companies of
Royal Scots marching from Fort William to Fort Augustus in the northwestern Highlands.
Startled by the sudden attack, the regulars broke and ran. “By their sudden and unexpected
attack the troops were struck with such an unaccountable panick as with consent to run of
without so much as taking time to observe the number of quality of their enemy.” The
Highlanders chased the fleeing redcoats for nearly a mile, killing twelve before the
remaining eighty surrendered.45

The following month, while besieging Edinburgh castle, Prince Charles sent small
raiding parties into the surrounding lowlands to attack English supporters, gather badly
needed supplies, and keep the restless Highland clans occupied. “Small Parties . . . went
several Ways into the Country, pilfering and stealing all they could lay Hands on.” Other

44 John Prebble, Culloden (London: Secker and Warburg, 1961), 37-40; James Johnstone, A Memoir of the
45 Robert Fitzroy Bell, ed., Memoirs of John Murray of Broughton, sometime Secretary to Prince Charles
Edward 1740-1747 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1898), 166; Fortescue, History of the British
Army, 1:126.
groups of Highlanders traveled great distances from the Jacobite army to surprise and capture several English outposts.46

These stinging attacks eroded the English army's confidence, and soldiers began to expect attacks in the most secure locations. "Conceiving themselves insecure everywhere, they were obliged to redouble their service in the midst of winter." Samuel Boyse, an English historian, chose to put these protective measures in a better light, claiming that the Jacobite attacks "only served to put our Troops more upon their Guard to prevent such surprises in their Quarters for the future."47

Whether the Jacobite tactics spurred change out of fear or merely prudence, British military leaders quickly adapted to Highland methods and countered with their own. Soon Prince Charles's men came to respect the British regulars' ability to move and fight in the rough Highland terrain. Occasionally the regulars successfully reversed roles and ambushed the Scots. In March 1746, a detachment of regulars "surprised a Party of the Argyllshire Highlanders... whoe were all either killed or made Prisoners. Two small Detachments of the same Body... underwent a like fate." John Campbell, the earl of Loudon, numbered among the Scots loyal to the house of Hanover. When hostilities erupted in 1745, he was in the midst of forming a Highland regiment for service in the British army. Loudon turned this regiment against the Jacobites with great success, earning him the wary respect of the rebels. In his memoirs of the rebellion, the chevalier de

47 Johnstone, Memoir of the 'Forty-Five, 108-109; Boyse, History of the Late Rebellion, 72.
Johnston, one of Prince Charles’s staff officers, frequently remarked on Loudon’s success. “Lord Loudoun with his corps frequently harassed and annoyed us and he sent detachments across the arm of the sea between himself and us, keeping us continually on the alert.”

Loudon’s harassment of the rebels increased in 1746. Following the Jacobites’ disastrous defeat at Culloden in April, battlefield encounters disappeared from the war and the fighting became exclusively irregular. The rebel army scattered throughout the Highlands to continue the struggle, protect Prince Charles as he scampered into exile, or simply to return home. Small bands of Jacobites and regulars continually pecked at one another, with the regulars usually coming out on top. The duke of Cumberland, newly dubbed “Butcher” after his troops slaughtered the fleeing Highlanders at Culloden, actively pursued the fleeing rebels with irregulars of his own. “The Rebels being now dispersed all over the Highlands, and skulking in secret Corners, Detachments were sent from the Duke’s Army, and encamped at different Places for Greater Safety of the Country, and Convenience of apprehending the Rebels.” Loudon and his loyal Highlanders were especially skilled at this task, ranging “the Country, carrying Fire and Desolation as they passed, shooting the vagrant Highlanders they met in the mountains, and driving off the Cattle.” These redcoated Highlanders and many other regulars became very proficient in mountain warfare, often surprising bands of Jacobites in their isolated hideaways. “They are greatly surpris’d,” wrote a British officer, “to find our soldiers climb over their rocks and mountains full as nimble as they can themselves, and bring cattle from places which they deem’d inaccessible to us.” The ‘Forty-Five proved to be the practical application of

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the lessons learned by the British army in the continental campaigns of the 1740s. Whether fending off Highlanders with redcoated regulars or commanding their own guerilla warriors composed of Scots loyalists, the British army gained valuable experience in countering and utilizing irregular tactics in the Highlands of Scotland.49

The bitter experiences in Scotland and on the continent, as well as the popularization of irregular warfare, caused a flurry of writing on the subject, both in popular literature and technical treatises. Reprints of personal letters and other firsthand accounts of the exploits of pandours, Highlanders, and hussars appeared in newspapers and magazines throughout the British Isles and even as far away as the American colonies. The Boston Weekly News-Letter and The Boston Evening Post as well as all of London’s papers frequently printed accounts of the raids and skirmishes. The Scots Magazine and The Gentleman’s Magazine carried many detailed descriptions of the battles as well as reprints of officers’ letters and occasionally official dispatches. For those officers relegated to garrison and staff duties far from the fighting, these popular accounts provided detailed information on irregular warfare, and according to historian Peter Russell, the personal correspondence of officers and the subscription lists of such magazines reveal that many army officers were regular readers.50

For officers desiring more serious literature on the subject of irregular warfare, the 1740s and 1750s saw a resurgence of technical works on warfare. These treatises were not limited to discussions on training, drill, and linear tactics; ancillary topics such as “the

49 Forbes, Lyon in Mourning, II: 109; Ray, Complete History of the Rebellion, 347-48; [Douglas], History of the Rebellion, 244; Boyce, History of the Late Rebellion, 120; Russell, “Redcoats in the Wilderness,” 690.
service of partisans, or ranging companies" were the focus of many works. Franz von der Trenck published his *Memoirs* in 1747. Although he was fond of recounting his exploits of the boudoir as much as the battlefield, Trenck produced a valuable and entertaining work on partisan warfare that circulated widely. La Croix followed in 1752 with his famous *Traite de la Petite Guerre*, and Lancelot, comte Turpin de Crisse with *Essai sur L'Art de la Guerre* in 1754. Both works focused almost exclusively on partisan warfare and provided guidance and valuable advice for the curious officer. Of the two, Crisse's was the more valuable. As an experienced French hussar officer, Crisse advocated the creation of professional light troops rather than dependence on the "banditti" who frequently populated such units. His *Essai* described many aspects of irregular warfare, ranging from operations in rough and mountainous terrain to how to conduct--and avoid--ambushes. In essence, "the work was a practical handbook for troops involved in *petite guerre.*"51

British officers showed an intense interest in theoretical and practical advancements in warfare, and "foreign campaigns, regulations, and treatises were constantly referred to, and drawn on, by British authors." Translations of La Croix, Crisse, and other contemporary authors, "chiefly from the French and German, were commonplace: the main Prussian and French regulations appeared in English, as did the works of most distinguished foreign soldiers," including Frederick the Great and Marshal Saxe. The subscription requests for the books and the changes evident in units during their annual reviews and exercises indicate that the bulk of this literature circulated widely in the British

50 The Boston Evening-Post, 1 April 1745, 8 April 1745, 6 May 1745, 27 July 1745, 7 October 1745, 21 October 1745, 4 November 1745; Boston Weekly News-Letter 24 September 1741; Russell, "Redcoats in the Wilderness," 640.
military. A 1768 work by Captain Bennett Cuthbertson, though published after the initial flurry, is representative of the extent of circulation of similar monographs. Of approximately 2,600 regular army officers in 1768, 939 subscribed to Cuthbertson’s book, “ranging from the C.-in-C. Granby to the lowest ‘2nd Surgeon’—exclusive of militia officers and private subscribers.”

Officers new to the military—often mere boys—were encouraged to read as much of this literature as possible. Colonel James Wolfe, later conqueror of Quebec, offered such advice in 1756 to Thomas Townshend, whose brother was purchasing an army commission. Foremost on Wolfe’s list was Comte de Turpin’s work, which was “certainly worth looking into, as it contains a good deal of plain practice.” He continued with a lengthy list (more than any boy would read) including “the ‘Memoirs’ of the Marquis de Santa Cruz, Fenquieres, and Montecucculi,” commentaries on classical works on warfare, and accounts of other European military heroes such as Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII of Sweden, and “Zisca the Bohemian.” At the close of the letter, Wolfe mentioned La Croix’s slim but significant work. “There is a little volume, entitled ‘Tratie de la Petite Guerre,’ that your brother should take in his pocket when he goes upon out-duty and detachments.” Wolfe undoubtedly took the book during his “out-duty” to North American shortly after, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that many other British officers did the same.

Whether these technical works or the centuries of exposure to irregular warfare in Ireland, North America, and Europe truly prepared British officers and soldiers for North American warfare has been the subject of debate among historians. In his 1948 biography

52 Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 167-70.
of George Washington, Douglas Freeman doubted that the British officers were anything other than narrow-minded martinets, automatons who responded in programmed ways without deviation. "[Braddock] lacked all originality of mind and exemplified . . . a system traditional, methodical and inflexible." Furthermore, Freeman claimed that Braddock, and all European officers including Marshal Saxe, were ignorant of irregular warfare, "a type of warfare with which he was unfamiliar," because European warfare was confined to traditional methods. Freeman completely ignored Saxe's role as a proponent of irregulars and flexible leadership, the extensive irregular warfare in eighteenth-century Europe, or the experience of one of Braddock's regiments. The Forty-Fourth Foot, under Sir Peter Halket, which after suffering defeat at Prestonpans in 1745 successfully fought the Scottish rebels throughout the remainder of the war, both on the field and in the Highlands.54

The tendency to label British officers as fools continued with Howard Peckham, who described the British as "unresourceful, inefficient, and even stupid." Peckham labeled Lord Loudon, who so successfully fought the Jacobites and whose tenure in North America was marked with significant changes and modifications to the army, as "unimaginative." At the same time, he praised the "successes" of Governor Shirley of Massachusetts, "this extraordinary civilian," who failed in his 1755 expedition against Fort Niagara, built a weak fort on Lake Ontario next to already decrepit Fort Oswego, and failed to adequately garrison, supply, or support the isolated outposts. Guy Fregault, the French-Canadian historian, also contributed to this image, labeling the British officer corps

53 James Wolfe to Thomas Townshend, Devizes, 18 July 1756, Willson, Life and Letters of Wolfe, 296-97. John de Trocanow, or "Zisca the Bohemian," was a famous military leader during Germany's 15th century religious wars. He became known as Zisca, or "one-eyed," after losing an eye in battle.
as an example of “manifest incompetence.” Douglas Leach agreed as well, but contradicted his own conclusions. While Leach avoided the loaded descriptors used by other scholars, he agreed that the British experiences in Europe and Scotland did not prepare them for America. “The conditions of warfare in the vast and dense American forest required special techniques and practices unfamiliar to European troops.” However, immediately following this declaration, Leech admitted that Braddock “was no fool” and he and other British officers took proper precautions to counter the threats posed by Indian warriors and the harsh terrain. Unless previous experience had taught the British officers to act in such a manner, these actions must constitute either blind luck or the work of Providence.55

Armstrong Starkey avoided the pitfalls that entrapped Freeman, Peckham, and Leach by examining the European experiences of the British army instead of ignoring them and making broad and often foundationless declarations. Like the others, Starkey argued that North American warfare was foreign to the British military and European models of irregular warfare (peasant insurrections, people in arms, and irregulars as auxiliaries to regular forces) were inapplicable. The closest example to North America, Starkey reasoned, was “people in arms.” Similar to a popular uprising against government forces, the “people in arms” model was fairly substantial, well organized, and planned in detail, such as the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745. But even the guerrilla warfare of the Highlands in 1745-46 was in no way similar to North American warfare, claimed Starkey, and British officers “would have not learned many specific tactical lessons that could be applied to North America.” While Scots were ferocious irregulars like the Indians, they

relied on the charge and close combat to decide the battle. In contrast, the Indians relied on marksmanship and normally retreated to avoid the bayonet, claimed Starkey. "Thus, officers with Scottish experience had little, if any, exposure to anything like the Indian 'skulking way of war'" and no example of European irregular conflict "provided an adequate model for the conditions of North American forest warfare." While Starkey was correct that North American warfare differed from that of Europe, he admitted that encounters with alternate forms of warfare or exposure to them in theory could alleviate the lack of first-hand experience. "Theory does not have to be directly applicable; it has value if it simply opens the mind to new possibilities and new contingencies." And this is exactly what the British experiences of the previous six hundred years did.56

North American warfare was new to the British army. Regulars had never fought in large numbers in North America before 1755 and few had faced Indians. However, the principles of irregular warfare were the same: move swiftly, strike with the advantage, and retreat when necessary. Whether Balkan pandours, Scottish Highlanders, or Shawnee Indians, small, mobile groups relied on concealment and surprise to defeat their enemies with the least cost to themselves. American folklore "has tended to obscure" this fact in efforts to build the legends of American superiority at the cost of the redcoats' reputation. Much of this image of the bumbling "bullocks" in the wilderness originated with Braddock's defeat in 1755. But "British leaders were not obtuse," claimed historian Daniel Beattie. "They recognized the central problem early on; but . . . they were not successful immediately." It was this lack of instant victory that has led historians to declare the

56 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 47-53.
British uneducated in the ways of *la petite guerre*. This image of Braddock (and for that matter any British officer) as a “fool, unwilling to adapt to American conditions . . . [who] stupidly forced his men to fight in the European manner . . . is nonsense.” In fact, British leaders, including the much-maligned Braddock, arrived in America with a comprehensive education in irregular warfare and acted with “vigor and skill.” During the six hundred years before the Seven Years’ War, the British army had “ample opportunity to observe, combat, and occasionally conduct guerrilla tactics.” The enormous volume of printed material on the subject, whether John Williams’s captivity narrative, Benjamin Church’s “manual” for Indian warfare, newspaper and magazine articles, or professional treatises, conveyed the lessons of the past and provided supplemental or replacement education for those officers lacking personal experience. Admittedly, British officers lacked “firsthand experience of the American wilderness and its fighting men. [But they] were well aware of the military problems which they posed.” The performance of British officers and soldiers in North America during the Seven Years’ War would prove their competence, and if not for a momentary lapse in diligence, General Braddock might have been a hero instead of a goat.57

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II

DEFEAT ON THE MONONGAHELA

Another time we shall know better how to deal with them.

Edward Braddock

During the eighteenth century, the hazily-defined region known as the Ohio country lay at the heart of the North American conflict between Great Britain and France. Wedged between French Canada on the north, the British colonies to the east, and the Mississippi River to the west, the Ohio country occupied a region considered strategically and economically valuable to both Britain and France. Both European powers and several colonies extended conflicting claims over the territory, and the Ohio figured prominently in government policies of each. Its vast tracts of land, natural wealth in furs, and many Indian inhabitants promised an economic boon to whomever could control it. Beyond material wealth, the entity that controlled the Ohio's valuable waterways guaranteed itself enhanced expansion while containing its opponent. 58

France suffered a setback in the colonial competition following the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. Forced to cede portions of Hudson Bay, Newfoundland, and Acadia to Britain, and fearful of further encroachment by English settlers, France sought to strengthen New France's internal defenses by linking its colonies in Canada and Louisiana with a string of forts along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers (see fig. 5). "It is of the
greatest importance to check the progress of the claims and enterprises of the English . . .
Were they to succeed . . . they would cut the communication of the two colonies of Canada and Louisiana,” wrote Antoine-Louis Rouille, comte de Jouy. This became a reality under Ange Duquesne de Menneville, Marquis Duquesne, governor general of New France. By 1753, French forts stretched from Montreal to Niagara Falls, through western Pennsylvania, from Presqu’ile on Lake Erie, to Fort Le Boeuf, to the Indian village of Venango. Their next intended post would guard the Forks of the Ohio.59

British colonial authorities warily eyed the French expansion, which they considered a territorial encroachment. The British derived their claim to the region from colonial charters, European diplomacy, and Indian treaties. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the British gained nominal ownership of the Ohio. Specifically, Article Fifteen of the treaty stated that “the subjects of France, inhabitants of Canada and elsewhere, should not disturb or molest in any manner whatever the five Indian nations [Iroquois] which are subject to Great Britain, nor its other American allies.” Because the Iroquois claimed the Ohio by right of conquest (a tenuous claim at best), the region fell under British auspices. This was reinforced by treaty in 1744 when the Iroquois ceded the territory to Britain.60

On these grounds, and for personal profit associated with the Ohio Company, Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia dispatched Major George Washington, adjutant

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general of the Virginia militia, to Fort Le Boeuf in December 1753 to formally demand French withdrawal. The French commander met the demand with a civil but outright refusal. Dinwiddie quickly responded, and in January 1754 he ordered a fort built at the Forks of the Ohio to prevent further French encroachment.61

Marching to the Forks with reinforcements in May, Washington received word of the newly-constructed stockade’s capture by the French, who promptly constructed a stronger fort and named it Duquesne. Still intent on making a show of force, Washington remained in the region. On May 27, his forces ambushed a small party of Frenchmen. Fearful of retribution, the Virginians retreated to a makeshift stockade named Fort Necessity in the Great Meadow of Pennsylvania. Here, in July 1755, the French easily defeated Washington and sent his small army back to Virginia.62

Washington’s defeat caused much consternation among the British leadership. Response to France’s aggression was necessary and justified, they thought, but diplomatically tricky. Despite obviously hostile intentions by both sides, France and Britain were technically at peace. In order to maintain that fragile status, the British leaders cloaked their response under the guise of self-defense. Under the direction of the duke of Cumberland, captain general of the British Army, the British government devised a grand scheme to reclaim and secure disputed territory in North America, all “in the name of territorial integrity.”63

63 Leach, *Arms for Empire*, 351.
The four targets of this campaign were geographically remote from one another. Foremost was the capture of Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio. Next in importance was the French post Fort Niagara. This bastion, on territory claimed by New York and the Iroquois League, guarded the water and land connections between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, and its capture would sever New France’s western outposts from Montreal. Fort St. Frederick on Lake Champlain controlled the Champlain Valley route from Albany to Montreal. In previous wars, France used this as a staging area for attacks into New York and New England. Finally, the British sought to capture Fort Beausejour in Nova Scotia. Located on disputed ground connecting the Acadian peninsula to the mainland, this post served as a base of support for the disgruntled French-Acadian population, now under British rule. Because the British claimed each location as their own, they could conceivably attack yet maintain a “treaty-saving posture.”

Preparations for this massive campaign began in Britain in late 1754. The duke of Cumberland took a direct hand in all planning. He first selected Major General Edward Braddock, a singularly undistinguished man, to serve as commander-in-chief of British forces in America and personally lead the advance on Fort Duquesne. The sixty-year-old Braddock had served in the aristocratic Coldstream Guards for forty-four years, and despite this lengthy term of service, had never seen battle. “Before his name had become immortal . . . [he] had not done anything to earn himself a place in the chronicles of the times.” His personal secretary, William Shirley, Junior, son of the Massachusetts governor, expressed a rather harsh opinion of Braddock in a letter to Governor Robert Morris of

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Pennsylvania. "We have a G— most judiciously chosen for being disqualified for the service he is employed in, in almost every respect. He may be brave for ought I know and he is honest in pecuniary affairs . . . [but] a little more ability and a little less honesty upon the present occasion might serve our turn better." In spite of such comments from a young gentleman, inexperienced in military affairs, Braddock was a competent administrator and was well-versed in standard European tactics. His future performance would demonstrate his qualification, until a momentary, disastrous lapse guaranteed his reputation eternal damnation.65

The soldiers selected by Cumberland were an entirely different matter. Typical of post-war demilitarization, Britain’s peacetime army in the 1750s was in a poor state. In addition to its normal mission of training for war, the army garrisoned the empire’s outposts and policed the home islands. Lacking a proper police force, the government depended on the army to aid in the suppression of smugglers, overawe rioters, and quell civil disturbances. These additional duties occupied the vast majority of the soldiers’ time, leaving precious little for training. Furthermore, the army dispersed its regiments in small bodies (company-size or smaller) to cover as much territory as possible. Unit leaders trained their men in basic skills such as musket drill but could not conduct large-scale maneuver training. Rare was the occasion when two companies trained together; regimental training was unheard of. Unfortunately, "numbers . . . were an essential prerequisite for the satisfactory and realistic performance of the advanced intricacies of the firings and maneuvers." To compound this problem, leaders relaxed discipline, especially overseas, for fear of large-scale desertion. In a letter to his father, Lieutenant Colonel

65 Sargent, History of an Expedition, 112; Lee McCardell, Ill-Starred General: Braddock of the
James Wolfe, the future hero of Quebec, decried the poor quality of peacetime soldiers. "I have but a very mean opinion of the Infantry in general. I know their discipline to be bad, and their valour precarious. They are easily put into disorder, and hard to recover out of it." He further condemned the army's leadership for its laxity, and he predicted dire consequences. "I am sorry to say that our method of training and instructing the troops is extremely defective, and tends to no good end. We are lazy in time of peace . . . It will cost us very dear some time hence. I hope the day is at a distance, but I am afraid it will come." 66

From this dilapidated, under-trained army, the duke of Cumberland chose two of its worst regiments to accompany Braddock to America. Neither the Forty-fourth Foot, under Colonel Sir Peter Halket, nor the Forty-eighth Foot, led by Colonel Thomas Dunbar, had a good reputation. The Forty-fourth earned its notoriety at the battle of Prestonpans in 1745, where it withstood Charles Stuart's Highlanders for all of five minutes. Both regiments served on police duty throughout Ireland and were far below their authorized wartime strength. Cumberland's unwillingness to finance the campaign was his sole reason for selecting these regiments. As units on the Irish establishment, the Irish parliament, rather than its British counterpart, paid for their upkeep. Thus, "the bottom line . . . directed the front line." 67

Braddock filled out both regiments with drafts from other units in the British Isles and managed to increase their strength to five hundred men apiece, but not without a price.

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The British army routinely rounded out deploying regiments at the expense of those remaining behind, and losing units used this opportunity to rid themselves of troublemakers and fools. The drafts sent to the Forty-fourth and Forty-eighth were no exception. Another four hundred colonials would join the regiments in America. This constant influx of strangers, poor soldiers, and raw recruits ruined whatever cohesiveness the regiments had and transformed them into "jumbled associations of uneven quality."68

As his final piece of meddling in Braddock's campaign, Cumberland determined the route to Fort Duquesne. He ordered Braddock to cut a road from Virginia to the Ohio rather than start from the more populous regions of Pennsylvania. A widely-circulated but inaccurate map by Lewis Evans, the famed cartographer, depicted the overland route via Virginia as shorter than the Pennsylvania alternative. Cumberland presumably considered this, but the powerful investors of Virginia's Ohio Company were the likely force behind the decision. Formed in 1749, the Ohio Company received a royal grant of five hundred thousand acres in the Ohio region. Its investors encouraged settlement in hopes of reaping large profits from land sales. A road, cut at military expense and capable of supporting heavy wagons, would ease the difficult passage to the area and presumably increase migration. Governor Dinwiddie, among the original investors, stood to gain considerably if the duke chose the Virginia plan. Another Ohio Company investor and wealthy London merchant, John Harbury, advised Cumberland to select Virginia. Harbury, who traded primarily in Virginia, stood to gain twofold.69

68 Houlding, *Fit for Service*, 49-50
Braddock and then his regiments finally sailed for Virginia, arriving in early February and mid-March 1755. The British forces gradually moved up the Potomac River and congregated at Fort Cumberland, a stockade constructed by colonial forces on a bluff overlooking the junction of Will's Creek and the Potomac. 70

Before sailing, Braddock had sent Lieutenant Colonel Sir John St. Clair ahead, royal instructions in hand, to supervise colonial preparations for the expedition. By royal decree, the king expected each colony to “raise ... as large a sum as ... [could] be afforded as their contribution to a common Fund, to be employed ... for the general Service in North America.” Furthermore, the instructions demanded that the colonies gather provisions, fodder, wagons, and horses, and recruit soldiers to fill out the Irish regiments. The general arrived expecting to find all in readiness for departure. Instead, he found a furious St. Clair and colonies more interested in trading with the French than in supplying the army. Governor Dinwiddie nearly accused the Middle Colonies of treason. “All the Provisions the French have for conducting this unjust Invasion of the Ohio is, as I am credibly informed, by a Supply from New York and Philadelphia.” Furthermore, Dinwiddie believed and reported rumors of the Albany merchants reverting to an old policy of neutrality with the Indians during war in order to assure uninterrupted trade. 71

In addition to unscrupulous merchants, Braddock discovered the frustration of colonial politics. Each colony’s assembly continuously squabbled with its royal governor,
and they viewed Braddock's expedition as just another imposition by Whitehall.

Pennsylvania's opposition ran deeper than mere power politics. The Quaker-dominated assembly refused to finance a war fought by proxy and repeatedly sidestepped Governor Morris's requests for men, material, and money. An exasperated Morris wrote to Braddock seeking his understanding. "You are sensible what a Sett of People I have to deal with, who think self-defense a Crime, and Instead of advancing the Public Service do what they can to obstruct it . . ." He wrote the general again, apologizing for the behavior of his assembly.

I am . . . almost ashamed to tell You that We have in this Province upward of Three Hundred Thousand Inhabitants; that We are blessed with a rich Solid and temperate Climate, and besides our own Consumption raise Provisions enough to supply a Army of one Hundred Thousand Men . . . We Are burthened with no Taxes and are not only out of Debt, but have a Revenue of Several Thousand a Year . . . And Yet when their all is invaded they refuse to contribute to the necessary Defense of their Country . . .

Exaggerating the wealth of his province, Morris was not innocent in Pennsylvania's political games or failure to provide for Braddock, but the notorious Pennsylvania assembly would continue to impede military actions in this manner for some time to come. 72

Though lacking the moral objection of the Pennsylvanians, the legislative bodies of Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas were equally recalcitrant. After continuous prodding from Governor Dinwiddie, Virginia eventually provided provisions, raised several hundred troops, and voted 20,000 pounds to support the Virginia soldiers. The others yielded far less. 73

72 Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, vol. 6 (Harrisburg, Penn: Theo Fenn and Co., 1851), 298, hereafter cited as MPCP; Gipson, Years of Defeat, 68; MPCP, 6:336.
73 William Shirley to Sir Thomas Robinson, Boston, 4 February 1755, Correspondence of William Shirley: Governor of Massachusetts and Military Commander in America, 1731-1760, ed. Charles Henry Lincoln,
Despite last-minute material contributions, Braddock lacked the horses and wagons necessary to move his army's artillery and supplies. To breach the formidable walls of Fort Duquesne, Braddock had brought a considerable train of artillery from Britain, including four twelve-pounder cannon, six six-pounders, four eight-inch howitzers, and fifteen cohoms.\(^\text{74}\) This ordinance, its ammunition, and general supplies for the army required hundreds of wagons and thousands of draft animals to pull them. The lack of natural forage beyond Fort Cumberland required the army to bring its own, carried by even more wagons and animals. Early in the campaign, Governor Dinwiddie had pledged 200 wagons and 2,500 horses, but as late as June 8, Braddock griped that “the Number of Horses and Wagons procur’d in these Colonies do not amount to the tenth part of what I was promis’d.”\(^\text{75}\)

St. Clair, still fuming at the Quakers, threatened to march into Pennsylvania and “kill all kind of Cattle and carry away the Horses, burn the Houses,” and if delayed any further, “he would with his Sword drawn pass thro’ the Province and treat the Inhabitants as a Parcel of Traitors.” Fortunately, Benjamin Franklin intervened on behalf of General Braddock. Franklin preyed on the fears and memories of Pennsylvania’s German immigrants, who had suffered at the hands of warring armies in Europe. By coloring St. Clair as a Hussar, the infamous cavalrymen renowned throughout Europe for their pillaging and brutality, Franklin obtained one hundred fifty wagons and over one thousand horses.\(^\text{76}\)

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\(^\text{74}\) The British categorized their artillery by the weight of shot. Thus, a twelve-pounder fired a twelve pound round shot. Howitzers fired explosive shells at a high trajectory in order to reach the inside of fortifications. A cohom was a small mortar, weighing approximately 86 pounds, used to hurl grenades.\(^\text{75}\) Edward Braddock to Robert Napier, Fort Cumberland, 8 June 1755, \textit{Military Affairs}, 85.

Braddock's final hurdle to overcome was a lack of Indian auxiliaries. George Croghan, the Pennsylvanian Indian agent and trader, gathered fifty Mingo warriors and their families at Fort Cumberland. To secure their loyalty, if only temporarily, Braddock presented them with strings of wampum and a generous number of gifts, ordered his fifers and drummers to play, and fired several cannon, "which astonished and pleased the Indians greatly." To Braddock's ultimate misfortune, no other Indians joined him, and he would soon lose most of what he had.\textsuperscript{77}

Braddock's critics blamed him for the lack of Indian support, claiming his rough demeanor and haughty, dismissive attitude angered the Indians. In fact, the fault lies with others. In the north, Britain's traditional Indian allies, the Iroquois, chose neutrality despite the best efforts of Sir William Johnson, an adopted Mohawk. French agents had successfully spread dissent among the Iroquois nations, especially the Seneca in the west. Furthermore, the Iroquois refused to work alongside southern Indians, among their traditional enemies, who were rumored to be joining the expedition.\textsuperscript{78}

The southern Indians failed to appear due to intercolonial rivalry and petty feuding between two governors. Governor Dinwiddie appealed directly to the Cherokees and Catawbas of South Carolina, bypassing Governor James Glen. Besides irritation over his violated jurisdiction, Glen saw in Dinwiddie's missives an attempt to steal trade from his province. In response, he called a conference with the two nations in early June 1755, effectively drawing their services away. "I wish he had suspended their going to Him at this Time," reflected Dinwiddie. He did not give up, though, and he sent Nathaniel Gist,


\textsuperscript{78} Dinwiddie to Lord Halifax, [Williamsburg], 6 June 1755, \textit{Dinwiddie Records}, 2:54-55; "Captain Orme’s Journal," 287n.
son of Washington’s guide to Fort Le Boeuf in 1753, to personally appeal for support. Gist successfully convinced three hundred warriors to accompany him back to Virginia. En route, he encountered Richard Pearis, a South Carolina trader and bitter enemy of his father. Pearis convinced the Indians that a governor’s ambassador would possess a written commission and many gifts. Because Gist lacked both, the Indians refused to continue until they could “see some person of authority, upon whose promises they might rely.”

Back at Fort Cumberland, Braddock’s attempts to maintain discipline eroded his last Indian support. The Indian women were becoming “popular” with the soldiers, especially the officers, “who were scandalously fond of them.” Many soldiers stole rum and rations to trade for the women’s favors. To restore order, and in his mind to placate the Indians, Braddock first barred the women from entering the encampment and then ordered them home. Forty-two warriors left with their families, promising to rejoin Braddock on the march. They never did. When Braddock set out for Fort Duquesne, only eight warriors under the Oneida sachem Scarouady marched with him.

Despite the lack of Indians, Braddock led a formidable army out of Fort Cumberland on June 7, 1755. The two regiments from Ireland, reinforced by several hundred colonial recruits, boasted seven hundred regulars each. Three independent companies of redcoats from New York and South Carolina tramped behind their brethren. Six hundred provincials, primarily Virginians, marched in eleven line companies, two
companies of pioneers and carpenters to clear a road, and a small troop of light horsemen.

One hundred royal artillerymen from the Nova Scotia garrisons and thirty-five seamen borrowed from the royal navy came along to serve the artillery during the siege. Wagoners and drovers, including Daniel Boone and Daniel Morgan, managed the hundreds of wagons and packhorses. Numerous gentlemen volunteers from the colonies, such as George Washington acting as Braddock's aide, accompanied the column, as did the normal pack of soldiers' wives, sutlers, and the occasional prostitute. The long column stretched and contracted like a colorful snake, a gaudy red and blue stream among the dark hues of nature engulfing it.81

The army faced a daunting journey. Instead of the short march portrayed by Evans's map, one hundred twenty miles of harsh wilderness, laced with swamps, rivers, lofty mountains, and impenetrable forests lay between the army and the French fort (fig. 6). St. Clair, responsible for constructing the road, complained bitterly. "It is certain that the ground is not easy to be reconnoitered for one may go twenty Miles without seeing before him ten yards . . . The Roads are either Rocky, or full of Boggs, we are obliged to blow the Rocks and lay Bridges every Day." The pioneer companies slaved away under his direction, cutting a twelve-foot-wide road to accommodate the wagons and artillery. They hewed through ancient forests, blasted rocks, smoothed grades, and bridged rivers, creeping along at a snail's pace. At the end of some days, the tail of the four-mile-long

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column barely reached where its head had been that morning. By the evening of June 17, the army encamped only twenty-four miles beyond Fort Cumberland.  

After receiving reports of French reinforcements moving toward the Ohio, and frustrated by the plodding pace of his army, Braddock split his forces on June 8 and moved ahead with a “flying column.” He chose a cross section of the army, but in the words of a British soldier, “his Dependence was chiefly upon us Regulars that he brought from Ireland.” Selecting eight hundred regulars (excluding those raised in the colonies), four hundred provincials, the road crew, and the bulk of his artillery, the general pushed forward. Braddock left Colonel Dunbar behind with the worst troops, weakest animals, and most baggage to follow the advanced column as best he could.

Despite Braddock’s intent, the “flying column” moved like a sick cow and its pace increased only marginally. Regardless of the general’s desire for speed, the artillery and wagons still required a passable road to be cut. Washington expressed his frustration in a letter home, complaining that “instead of pushing on with vigor, without regarding a Little rough Road, they were halting to Level every Mole Hill, and to erect Bridges over every brook; by which means we were 4 Days gettg 12 Miles.”

Though slow, Braddock conducted his movement in a manner to please the strictest Prussian general, and the army maintained tight security. The infantry marched along each

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side of the wagons and guns. Each company pushed thirty men out as flankers, and these flanking parties pushed ten men out even further, effectively surrounding the column in three layers of soldiers. A vanguard of three hundred soldiers led the way and protected the road crew, and a rear guard followed to gather stragglers and discourage desertion (fig. 7). The grenadier companies occupied hills or ridges that dominated the line of march, and flankers scrambled through every thicket that might hide an Indian.\(^{85}\) At all halts, the soldiers faced outwards with bayonets fixed, and at least half remained ready for action. At night, the column closed up and slept in a formation similar to the march order. Pickets walked their posts around the perimeter, a reaction force stood at the ready, and an occasional patrol swept the dark woods.\(^{86}\)

As Braddock’s army crawled closer to Fort Duquesne, signs of the enemy increased, and enemy scouts grew bolder. On June 24 and 26, British outriders discovered recently abandoned camps where French and Indian scouts had left their mark. “They had stripped and parted some trees,” wrote Captain Robert Orme, Braddock’s senior aide, “upon which they and the French had written all Kinds of scurrilous language,” mostly boasting of their intended actions. Other lurking Indians sniped at the column, “fireing at our Wagoners fetching in their horses,” or, very rarely, shot and scalped an unwary straggler.\(^{87}\)

The British regulars grew nervous at the prospect of encountering an unknown enemy. Out of spite and in a show of bravado, the colonial soldiers stoked this fear by

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\(^{85}\) Traditionally, grenadiers were soldiers who threw grenades. In the 18th century, the British army applied the name to the elite company of each regiment. The grenadier company was comprised of the tallest, sturdiest men of the regiment, who acted as shock troops or conducted special missions.


predicting that "if they attempted to fight Indians in a regular manner, they would certainly be defeated." Soon the regulars were "terrified at the notion of having no Quarter and being scalped," and of the "Barbaras Usage which we knew they would treat us." Tense sentries at night fired at anything and nothing. Unprovoked shootings reached such a magnitude that Braddock threatened punishment for future violators. The anxiety exploded on July 6 during an Indian raid on the column, when wary provincials mistook the army's own Indians for hostiles and killed Scarouady's son.88

Nerves aside, Braddock continued to move with absolute precision, taking all necessary precautions to protect the army. On July 8, the column entered the narrow valley of Long Run, a likely ambush site. Braddock carefully posted troops along the ridges ringing the valley and set Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Gage to the far end of the valley with the grenadier companies. They found no sign of the enemy. Further on, the scouts reported, the army's current path would cross a difficult ford and wind through the Narrows, a very dangerous passage. This route would require an inordinate amount of work to make the road passable and was a natural ambush site. Braddock opted to cross to the west side of the Monongahela River, bypass the Narrows, and recross the river upstream from Fort Duquesne. That night, the army bivouacked within two miles of the

Monongahela River. Braddock planned to cross the river early the next morning, camp on the far side, and invest the fort on July 10.89

A scant ten miles away, the French commander, Captain Claude Pcaudy, sieur de Contrecoeur, heatedly argued with his reluctant Indian allies and prepared to meet the British onslaught. Less than two weeks before, in late June, Contrecoeur commanded under two hundred Frenchmen, Canadians, and Indians. Lacking sufficient forces to successfully defeat the British, he had planned to destroy the fort and retreat before the British arrived. He sent numerous scouting parties to harass the British, but they succeeded in killing only a few stragglers. The main body of the enemy army was too alert, impressing Contrecoeur with its tight security. They were “constantly on guard, always in a line of battle,” he reported, “so that all of the efforts of the detachments were to no avail.”90

On July 6, Captain Daniel Beaujeu arrived at Fort Duquesne with several hundred French and Canadian soldiers. Just days before, over eight hundred Indians, mostly from the upper Great Lakes, arrived with the metis Charles Langlade at their head. Beaujeu knew the Indians would be useless in a siege, and he urged Contrecoeur to adopt a more aggressive strategy. Contrecoeur finally decided to strike the English while on the march, but his steadfast Indian allies hesitated to attack because of inflated reports of Braddock’s strength. “Father, you want to die and sacrifice us. The English are more than four thousand . . . Certainly you must see that you are making no sense.” Beaujeu, an

experienced Indian negotiator, chastised the Indians for their fears, however justified. "I am determined to confront the enemy. What—would you let your father go alone? I am certain to defeat them!" Stung by the rebuke, the Indians agreed to go.91

James Smith, a young Pennsylvanian, watched the frantic preparation from within Fort Duquesne. Six weeks before, a group of Delaware Indians had captured him in western Pennsylvania. Severely beaten while running the gauntlet, Smith was recuperating in the French hospital in Duquesne in the tense days before the battle. He worriedly watched as the Indians scooped up handfuls of powder, shot, and flints from open casks. Curious, he spoke to a friendly Delaware who understood English. The Indian indicated that "Braddock's army was advancing in very close order, and that the Indians would surround them, take trees, and (as he expressed it) shoot um down all one pigeon." At mid-morning on July 9, 72 French regulars, 146 Canadians, and 637 Indians streamed out the gates and ran south, intent on ambushing the British as they crossed the Monongahela.92

By the time the French forces left Duquesne, Braddock's army was fording the Monongahela eight miles away. Braddock was no fool. He knew that the river was the ideal place for ambush and therefore sent Gage and his strong vanguard to secure the far banks. Gage crossed the river unopposed and unlimbered two cannon to cover the ford. Braddock formed the remainder of his army into a line of battle for the crossing, still expecting trouble. With great pomp and ceremony, the army crossed "over the river in the

91 Kopperman, Braddock, 22-29; Parkman, Montcalm and Wolfe, 123; "Relation Depuis le Depart des Troupes de Quebec, Jusqu'au 30 du Mois de Septembre, 1755," Sargent, History of an Expedition, 411-12.
greatest order, with their bayonets fixed, colors flying, and Drums and Fifes beating and playing, as He supposed the Enemy would take a view of them in their crossing.93

Once on the far side of the river, the army resumed its march. The scouts under George Croghan and a few horsemen led the way, followed by engineer Harry Gordon, who marked trees for the road crew to fell. Gage’s vanguard of 450 men, with its own advanced and flank parties, trailed close behind. St. Clair’s road crew of 250 men and several tool wagons stretched for two hundred yards behind Gage. After a short break tramped the main body, led by the sailors and the general’s guard. Five hundred men, in twelve companies, marched along side the quarter-mile-long string of wagons and artillery. Sir Peter Halket and 120 soldiers, mostly Americans, brought up the rear. Hundreds of cattle and packhorses filled the gap between the flank parties and the main body (fig. 8).94

A feeling of euphoria washed over the entire mile-long column. The French had not attacked them at any likely place along their journey. Surely they would not do so now, many thought. Several officers expected the French to abandon Fort Duquesne and flee, and they anxiously awaited the sound of the fort exploding in the distance. “Every one . . . hugg’d themselves with joy at our Good Luck in having surmounted our greatest Difficultys,” wrote Harry Gordon, “and too hastily Concluded the Enemy wou’d dare to Oppose us.” “There Never was an Army in the World in more spirits then we where,” exclaimed Captain Robert Cholmley’s batman, “thinking of Reaching Fort de Cain the day following.” Confident in success, Gage sent his two cannon to the rear and exclaimed loud

enough for his soldiers to hear, “I do not think we Shall have much Occation for them.”
Without a thought of danger, he marched by a large hill on his right, making no effort to
reconnoiter or hold it as he had the day before.95

At one o’clock, the light-hearted British and the disorganized stream of French and
Indians collided one mile beyond the ford. The American scouts spied the enemy first, and
one “immediately discharged his piece . . . [and] cried, the Indiens was upon us.” Harry
Gordon stopped blazing trees, rode forward and saw over three hundred Indians and a
smattering of Frenchmen in native garb running toward him. Captain Beaujeu, stripped to
the waist and sporting a gorget around his neck, led the boiling mass of warriors. Spying
the British grenadiers in their tall miter caps, he waved his hat left and right, signaling his
forces to split and run down the flanks of the British column. The grenadiers responded as
trained soldiers should. Under Gage’s direction, they formed a line, fixed bayonets, and
delivered a series of steady volleys that startled the French, caused several Canadians to
flee, and killed Beaujeu.96

Captain Jean Dumas, Beaujeu’s second, took control, and his forces began pouring
a devastating fire into the massed ranks of Gage’s men. The Indians shot down several
British officers immediately, followed by a steady flow of regulars, and drove in the flank
parties. “The Men dropped like Leaves in Autumn, and all was Confusion,” wrote a
British officer in the front ranks. The formation disintegrated quickly and fell back onto St.
Clair’s working party. Within the first fifteen minutes of the battle, the vanguard and the

94 Kopperman, Braddock, 32-46.
95 Kopperman, Braddock, 227; Gordon to ---, Military Affairs, 106; “Cholmley’s Batman,” 28. A batman
was the servant or orderly of a British officer. The young man who kept this journal is unknown except for
his status as a servant to Captain Robert Cholmley.
road crew were hopelessly intermingled and taking heavy losses. The Indians and French arrayed themselves in a half-moon around most of the column and perched on the hill that Gage had ignored a short time before.97

With the first shots, Braddock reacted according to regulation. After halting the column, he sent an aide forward for news, but the aide never returned. In spite of his ignorance of the situation, Braddock ordered Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Burton to move forward with four hundred soldiers to reinforce Gage. Separated by the wagons, the companies marched forward and formed in front of the baggage. The fire from the hilltop immediately took its toll on the scarlet ranks. Burton shifted direction and formed his men to assault the hill.98

While Burton formed, the tangled parties further up the line fell back again and smashed into his moving companies. The result was pandemonium. Companies and battalions became intermingled, men lost their places in formation, and officers lost their units. “Such was the confusion, that the men were sometimes 20 or 30 deep,” facing in all directions. The French and Indians were nearly invisible, presenting no targets for the British to shoot at. “If any got a shott at one the fire immediately ran through the whole line though they saw nothing but trees.” Soldiers in the middle of the massed body leveled their muskets and fired into the backs of their comrades.99

97 Archer Butler Hulbert, Braddock’s Road and Three Relative Papers, vol. 4 of Historic Highways of America (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1903), 164; “Cholmley’s Batman,” 28; Gordon to ---, Military Affairs, 106.
The officers, frantically working to restore order, “advanced into the front, and soon became the mark of the Enemy, who scarce left one, that was not killed or wounded.” Burton organized a company and again attempted to storm the heights. When the Indians shot him down, his dismayed soldiers scampered back into the jumble on the road. Braddock, conspicuous on his horse, galloped everywhere, begging, pleading, encouraging, and threatening his men to form ranks and follow his lead. Though an obvious target for enemy marksmen, he remained unscathed. Braddock’s mounts bore the brunt of shots directed at him, and four horses died under him in quick succession.100

Despite all efforts, the men refused to advance, afraid to leave the “safety” of the masses. “He thought himself securest who was in the Center.” Like automatons, the soldiers were lost when out of formation and lacking familiar leadership. A nearly invisible enemy continued to pour fire into the column and kept up a fierce din that terrified the men, including Lieutenant Matthew Leslie. “The yell of the Indians is fresh on my ear, and the terrific sound will haunt me until the hour of my dissolution.” An occasional warrior burst from the undergrowth to rip the bloody scalp from a slain soldier, but the redcoats saw very few of the enemy. The Forty-fourth’s chaplain later exclaimed that “in all the Time I never saw one, nor could I on Enquiry find any one who saw ten together.” Thus men continued to load and fire, massacring a host of trees.101

Early in the fight, some of the colonial troops sought cover and temporarily kept the Indians at bay. A Virginia company drove the Indians away from a strong point,

momentarily throwing them into confusion. Captain Cholmley’s batman, who witnessed their efforts, claimed that these “two hundred . . . American soldiers that fought behind Trees . . . did the moast Execution of Any.” Unfortunately, the Virginians were just as invisible to the British as the Indians. Seeing only flashes and gun smoke, the redcoats fired a devastating volley into the Virginian ranks, forcing them to return to the road.  

By four o’clock, Braddock’s army was devestated. Over half of the officers and men lay dead or wounded, the remaining soldiers lacked ammunition, and the French were attempting to bring a captured cannon into action. While mounting his fifth horse, the charmed Braddock grunted as a bullet pierced his arm and lodged in his lungs. He staggered, fell, and finally ordered a retreat.

Washington accompanied Braddock as the retreat turned into a headlong race for the river. The men “broke and run as Sheep persued by dogs,” the young man wrote. Several officers, including the wounded Burton tried to rally the troops on the far side of the Monongahela. “It was with as much success as if we had attempted to have stop’d the wild Bears of the Mountain.” Most men kept running through the night and most of the next day until they reached Dunbar’s column over fifty miles away.

At Dunbar’s camp, the army counted its losses. Of 1,459 soldiers and attendants in the flying column, 914 were either dead or wounded, including 63 of 86 officers. Unknown to the British, the French butcher bill amounted to fewer than 70 casualties. Over four hundred horses, one hundred cattle, a month’s supply of food and ammunition,

several thousand pounds in currency, and a fine train of artillery lay scattered in the woods. Most disturbing, other than the magnitude of human loss, was the capture of Braddock’s personal papers, including detailed plans for all four operations of the 1755 campaign.\textsuperscript{105}

Mortally wounded and in despair, Braddock ordered a retreat to Fort Cumberland. With the majority of his draft animals lost, he directed the destruction of anything that could not be carried. The general was in a state of disbelief, yet he had learned a valuable lesson. In a moment of clarity, he muttered, “We shall know better how to deal with them another time.”\textsuperscript{106}

On July 13, Braddock died. Fearing desecration of his body by marauding Indians, Washington ordered the general buried in the middle of the road. As the survivors of the debacle march eastward, they tramped over his grave, obliterating all traces of its existence. Colonel Dunbar assumed command and marched the army into winter quarters (in mid-summer) in Philadelphia, leaving the Virginia/Pennsylvania frontier at the mercy of the enemy.\textsuperscript{107}

Before Dunbar’s official dispatch could reach the various colonial governors, rumors and eyewitness accounts swirled across the frontier. Teamsters fleeing on their animals and swift-running soldiers reported a complete massacre. These stories changed with each telling until the truth was lost. The general mood was one of disbelief, expressed so eloquently by the dying Braddock. “Who would have thought it?” And who would


have? The most powerful British army in North America, fully supplied, heavily armed, capably lead, and utterly crushed. People of all stripes sought a scapegoat. Politicians and soldiers immediately hurled accusations and countercharges at one another. The British officers blamed "that poor dumb ox, the British private soldier," Americans criticized the British, and the regulars, at the bottom of the dung heap, blamed the Americans. The duke of Cumberland received harsh censure for devising the campaign, falling prey to the Ohio Company and selecting the Virginia route, and for choosing Braddock. And, of course, everyone universally condemned the dead general.  

The debate over the causes of Braddock's defeat began in the months following the battle and continues to rage today. Explanations and theories abound, many valid, but many based on fictional or second-hand information. The varied criticisms fall into traditional or modern interpretations.

The traditional American explanation held Braddock completely at fault, claiming he was "too rigid, too narrow, too Prussianic." Benjamin Franklin, and the nineteenth-century historians Francis Parkman and Winthrop Sargent, typify this viewpoint. The first of their three major criticisms attacked Braddock's apparent dependence on regular troops and overconfidence in close-order tactics. "He had too much self-confidence, too high an opinion of the validity of regular troops," wrote Franklin, "and too mean a one of both Americans and Indians." Braddock disdained the capabilities of Indians and irregular forces and was completely ignorant of them, the traditionalists claimed. When Franklin reportedly warned the general of Indian ferocity, he haughtily replied, "These savages may,

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indeed, be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the King’s regulars and disciplin’d troops, Sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.”109

Braddock was certainly confident, but he was not ignorant of irregular tactics and forces. Although his one and only experience in combat ended in abject failure, Braddock had most certainly learned of such fighting through his comrades and popular and professional literature. His career spanned a time period of heightened interest in, use of, and publication on irregular forces. While his personal library is a mystery, the sheer volume of material on the subject of la petite guerre made his exposure to it almost certain.110

But having knowledge of such tactics did not make them an option for Braddock. Bush fighting demanded initiative and discipline from the lowliest private, all performed in an extended formation with little officer control. Teaching soldiers to fight in this manner required considerably more time than training for close-order drill. Braddock’s troops, new to each other and to the army and of questionable quality, could barely march in formation, and the general rightly dedicated the short time available to basic maneuver. The soldiers panicked when under the close supervision of officers. Their performance unsupervised would certainly have been worse.111

The traditionalists’ second charge claimed that Braddock’s contemptuous treatment of Indians lost their support. Though not a charmer, Braddock always treated Indians with respect. To do otherwise would violate the king’s orders, which clearly stated “You will...

110 See chapter one.
. cultivate the best Harmony and Friendship possible . . . with the Chiefs of the Indian Tribes." As with all orders, Braddock took this seriously and held several conferences, plying the Indians with gifts and honoring them with artillery salutes. He even took a wagonload of gifts with his flying column. His justifiable attempts at discipline at Fort Cumberland may have lost him forty Indians, but the feuding of Governors Dinwiddie and Glen, and William Johnson's failure to gain Iroquois support cost Braddock hundreds.\(^{112}\)

The final indictment leveled by American traditionalists claimed that Braddock ignored the advice of his subordinates. Specifically, he ignored advice to bring up Dunbar's column before attacking the fort, and he refused to allow the provincials to fight Indian style. This charge was unfounded. Braddock held several councils of war before and during the march and actively sought the advice of his juniors. He ignored both pieces of advice for good reason. Dunbar's column, with the weakest animals, lay sixty miles away. At his pace, he would have arrived at the Monongahela in late July or early August, nullifying the purpose of the flying column. He also led the worst troops, intentionally left behind by Braddock. If Braddock's best troops panicked and failed, it is doubtful that Dunbar's dregs would have tipped the scale.\(^{113}\)

The argument regarding bush fighting is largely a legend built around the figure of Washington. Billy Brown, a ninety-three-year-old slave, recalled his participation in the expedition in 1830. He described Washington on his knees in the midst of battle, begging Braddock for permission to lead the Virginians into the trees. Braddock supposedly "cursed him, and said, 'I've a mind to run you through the body . . . we'll sup to-day in

Fort Du Quesne, or else in hell!” Dramatic, yes, but Washington never recounted this anecdote, and Brown’s testimony is hardly credible. The officer he claimed to have served did not exist. Brown also neatly inserted himself at General Wolfe’s side at his death at Quebec in 1759. Perhaps the clouds of age or the desire for notoriety blended fact and fiction in his memory. Regardless, the provincials who sought the cover of the trees were not frontiersmen or even backwoods settlers. Most hailed from the tidewater of Virginia and Maryland and “turned out to be mostly plowboys and drifters, younger sons and recent immigrants who had never spent a night in the woods.” Many of these provincials were veterans of Washington’s fight at Fort Necessity, where instead of scattering into a loose formation in the woods, they retreated to a fortified stockade (a conventional response), indicating a lack of familiarity with or confusion over irregular warfare. The following year spent at Fort Cumberland before Braddock’s expedition had done little to improve their lack of frontier savvy. Furthermore, for these men to take cover behind trees would only have provided temporary shelter. The Indians did not shelter behind a single tree during a fight, but continued to fire and move, constantly seeking new positions. The mobile Indians could easily flank and shoot a stationary soldier. Only with accurate musket fire could the British hope to drive off the Indians, and the casualty figures from the battle clearly demonstrate the redcoats’ and provincials’ lack of marksmanship. For Braddock’s army to “go to tree” would only have postponed the defeat.114

113 Kopperman, Braddock, 106-110.
The traditional British view disregarded any elements proposed by the Americans and focused instead on the soldiers. Unable or unwilling to sully the reputations of the vaunted officer corps (or trying to regain their reputations after the battle), this group of critics blamed the "rabble's" cowardice and panic for the defeat, while claiming that every officer behaved bravely. This view is correct to a degree. The men did panic and the officers were brave, but the failures of certain officers, far beyond the control of simple soldiers, led to the panic, not some innate inferiority on the soldiers' part. The redcoats stood up under punishing fire for over three hours, suffering horribly. This alone indicates a measure of bravery.\(^1\)\(^1\)\(^5\)

The first interpretation of Braddock's defeat to depart from these traditional theories came with Stanley Pargellis in 1936. Disregarding previous hypotheses, Pargellis focused on Braddock's tactics and blamed the defeat on "incompetent leadership, judged not by modern standards, but by contemporary." Pargellis leveled three charges at Braddock: he used improper formations, he failed to react properly, and he failed to occupy the hill on the right flank of the column. The first charge, based on an inexact sketch and a second-hand report, claimed that the wagon train split each infantry company, leaving all of the officers on one side and preventing the unit from acting collectively. In his rush to judgement, Pargellis ignored the proper formations indicated on Captain Robert Orme's map. Furthermore, Braddock's personal order on March 27 directed each

“Company . . . to tell . . . off in two divisions . . . and post the second Commissioned Offr and nonCommsd Offrs,” meaning an officer and sergeant were always with their troops.116

Pargellis’s last two indictments were logical and correct. He based his evaluation on *A Treatise of Military Discipline* by Lieutenant Colonel Humphrey Bland, a veteran of many campaigns with the British army. Bland first published the *Treatise* in 1727, and it grew so popular within military circles that it went through nine editions in Europe and several in America. The British army adopted Bland’s book and incorporated it into its *1728 Regulations*.117

Bland gave standard precautions for marching through wooded country while expecting an attack. He recommended establishing a vanguard, rear guard, and “small Parties, commanded by serjeants, marching on the Flanks of the Battalion.” Braddock did each of these correctly. However, Bland directed the vanguard to reconnoiter “every Place where any Number of Men can be conceal’d, such as Woods, Copses, Ditches.” The vanguard did this regularly until Gage ignored the critical hill after crossing the Monongahela.118

When the vanguard encountered the enemy, Bland continued, its leader was to send information back to the main body commander immediately. The commander, with no knowledge of the situation, would halt and wait for this report before deploying his men. “It is impossible to say in what manner . . . [the commander] is to act when he meets with the enemy, without knowing their numbers, quality, and disposition.” Braddock sent an

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aide forward at the first gun, but receiving no reply, he blindly ordered Burton’s detachment forward. Thus, Braddock violated two important rules, earning himself condemnation by the very book he subscribed to. “If he is surpriz’d by neglecting common Methods used to prevent it, his Character is hardly Retrievable.”\textsuperscript{119}

Robert Yaples, writing in 1968, agreed with Pargellis’s tactical analysis, but pushed the blame further down the chain of command. Two faults that Pargellis attributed to Braddock involved the vanguard: failure to take the hill and failure to advise the commander of the situation. As the overall commander, Braddock was still responsible, but Gage, as commander of the vanguard, failed in his duties. Furthermore, the vanguard’s purpose was to stand and absorb the first shock of attack and allow the commander and the main body time to deploy. Gage’s force disintegrated quickly and fell back, causing immense confusion. Overall, Yaples argued, the British simply had bad luck. The combination of a chance encounter, Gage’s ineptitude, and terrain favorable to the enemy led to defeat.\textsuperscript{120}

Paul Kopperman sought to end the debate in 1977 with the most comprehensive examination of the battle to date. After considering all factors, he concluded, like the British traditionalists, that the soldiers’ panic caused defeat. Even though Braddock and his officers made mistakes, they did not lead their men into an impossible situation, Kopperman argued. Any attempt to react “required a sizable body of men to succeed,” and the soldiers failed to answer the call. “The weight of the evidence places the onus on

\textsuperscript{118}Humphrey Bland, \textit{A Treatise of Military Discipline: In Which is Laid Down and Explained the Duty of the Officer and Soldier, Through the Several Branches of the Service}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (London, 1727), 118, 123.
\textsuperscript{120}Yaples, “A Reconsideration,” 201.
them.” The army could have survived intact, Kopperman claimed “if they had kept their heads.” A disciplined counterattack, using the bayonet, would have won the day.121

Kopperman was correct that panic among the men contributed to the defeat, but a quick bayonet charge would not have necessarily saved the British. The success of a bayonet charge depended on an undisciplined or unorganized enemy, easily swept aside by the threat of cold steel in the belly. Leroy Eid argued that Indian warriors were highly disciplined and organized. Many tribes operated in large numbers and used complicated formations and maneuvers for warfare and communal hunting long before extensive European influence. In 1606, the Frenchman Marc Lescarbot accompanied over one thousand Algonquin warriors on a campaign against the Iroquois. “They practice maneuvers, appear on schedule, march on order, and approach the enemy in clearly defined unity,” he noted in a letter. James Smith, the young Pennsylvania prisoner at Fort Duquesne, witnessed similar actions during his lengthy captivity. “Indians were punctual in obeying orders, they acted in concert, and they cheerfully and immediately carried out direction.”122

The Indians’ typical formation was a half-moon or horseshoe, which allowed maximum flexibility and coverage, yet prevented heavy casualties. Rather than strike an enemy head on, the Indians moved from tree to tree, working around their opponents’ flanks until nearly surrounding them. Several of Braddock’s soldiers, such as Harry Gordon and Captain Cholmley’s batman, both accurately described the technique. “They Divided themselves and Run along our right and Left flanks . . . and fell upon the flank partys,” described Gordon. Cholmley’s batman seemed to understand the intent.

121 Kopperman, Braddock, 114-121.
"Immediately they began to Ingage us in a half Moon and still Continued Surrounding us more and more."123

Once holding the enemy in this strangle hold, the Indians maintained "a kind of Running fight, Skulking behind Trees and Bushes," always in motion. In a method Eid labeled "blackbirding," the Indians advanced or gave up ground as the battle progressed. Small groups of warriors worked together, some moving while their companions fired. If an enemy pressed hard, such as Kopperman’s suggested bayonet charge, the Indians simply retreated until the assault was over, then advanced again. Francis Parkman saw the futility of such an attack. "To charge the Indians in their hiding-place would have been useless. They would have eluded pursuit with the agility of wildcats, and swarmed back, like angry hornets, the moment that it ceased."124

Each theory, whether traditional or modern, contains elements of the truth behind the expedition’s tragic conclusion. Four primary reasons emerge by combining the valid portions of each argument. First, the several months’ delay allowed this chance encounter to happen. The duke of Cumberland’s misguided selection of the Virginia route led to an extremely slow advance and difficulty in obtaining supplies. The ineptitude and disinterestedness of the colonial governments and merchants delayed the gathering of supplies and transportation assets. If Braddock had marched when he intended (in April), or even a few weeks before he did, he would have beaten Beaujeu, his reinforcements, and the Great Lakes Indians to Fort Duquesne. Beaujeu was the instigator of the attack, and it

122 Eid, "A Running Fight," 149-152.
was he who motivated the Indians. Without his crucial leadership, Contrepoeur would have destroyed his post and retreated.

The lack of Indian support hurt Braddock severely. Lacking a sizable reconnaissance force, Braddock marched almost blindly into the wilderness. His few scouts could cover only a short distance in front of the column and often refused to venture further. As noted before, the blame for this is widespread. Intercolonial rivalry, personal vendettas, Indian politics, Braddock’s discipline, and French influence all assured the British a paucity of support.

Third, the absolute panic of the regulars prevented any decisive action on Braddock’s part. Whether because of colonial “ghost stories,” lack of unit cohesion and training, or the quick destruction of the leadership, the soldiers refused to respond to direction. They clumped together in a massive red target, unwilling to aggressively attack the invisible force tormenting them, yet strangely willing to stand in place and absorb the horrific fire.

Finally, tactical errors by the British officers left the army vulnerable to defeat. Braddock marched over one hundred miles from his last base without constructing an intermediate base or magazine in between, forcing him to gamble everything on successfully taking Fort Duquesne, or else risking a long retreat through hostile territory following defeat. Gage’s momentary lapse of judgment left a dominating hill unoccupied, unlike previous days. His inability to hold his command together, his failure to inform Braddock, and the general’s rush to the front, resulted in chaos. Until that unfortunate moment, European tactics had proved applicable and *remarkably successful* in the backcountry. While recovering from his wounds in the days following the battle, Harry
Gordon lamented the simple errors of July 9. "Had our March Been Executed in the same manner on the 9th as it was on the 8th, I should have stood a fair Chance of writing from fort Du Quesne, instead of Being in the hospital at Wills's Creek."125

Beyond the tactical causes of Braddock's defeat, the practical consequences became immediately apparent. The French gained a temporary respite and remained in possession of Fort Duquesne until 1758. The capture of Braddock's papers was a miraculous boon, allowing the French to make adjustments to counter the other thrusts of the British campaign. Furthermore, the papers allowed France to portray itself to the European community as a victim of British aggression. The Canadian governor believed that the plans provided the "most authentic proof of extensive plans, for long the principal occupation of the court of Great Britain, to surprise this colony and invade it at a time when, on the faith of the most respectable treaties of peace, it should be safe from any insult." In a letter to his royal "cousin" of Britain, Louis XV complained of British duplicity, offering peace with one hand while preparing for war with the other. "It is scarce possible to conceive how these assurances can be reconciled with the orders for hostilities given . . . to General Braddock." Such actions constituted "a public insult to his Majesty's flag." In a letter of reply, the British ministry countered Louis's claims with counter-accusations of its own. The Ohio Valley belonged to Britain, contended the ministry, based on the Treaties of Utrecht and Aix-la-Chapelle, both of which called for the realignment of lands in America to "the same footing that they were, or ought to have been, before the last war." In fact, continued the British reply, France was the aggressor in America. But Louis had drawn "a veil over all the hostilities committed on [his] part in

125 Gordon to ---, Military Affairs, 107.
America," including an "invasion" of Nova Scotia, harassment of British subjects (American traders and Anglo-aligned Indians) in the Ohio Valley, and the erection "with an armed force, a chain of forts on the lands" claimed by Virginia. "Worn out by the continuance of these violences," King George "found himself obliged to provide for the security and defense of his subjects." There was nothing irreconcilable between Britain's peace overtures and Braddock's actions, the letter concluded. On the contrary, France's hostile actions justified the British "response." "It can never be unlawful to repel an aggressor." 126

The citizenry of Britain called for vengeance against their traditional enemy, who had so brazenly violated the rules of "civil" warfare by employing "savages" in an ambush. Lieutenant Matthew Leslie, St. Clair's assistant, expressed the common sentiment clearly in a letter to a Philadelphia merchant. "We have lost gallant officers and generous friends, not in battle, for that we could bear, but by murder, by savage butchery. The French dared not openly meet us; our's is the loss, theirs the disgrace." Later in the war, Britain would not hesitate to use Indians or their "dastardly" tactics in the same way. Rather than genuine astonishment, Leslie's diatribe indicated an attempt by Britain to label the supposedly civilized French as "savages." Thus, each side used the battle's outcome as propaganda to justify an end to the political cat-and-mouse game and openly declare war. 127

Beyond the sparring in the political arena, Braddock's defeat had other far-reaching consequences. Soon the frontier would erupt as French and Indian raiders swooped down

126 Bigot to Machault, Quebec, 23 October 1755; Lotbiniere to d'Argenson, Carillon Encampment, 24 September 1755; Louis XV to George II, Versailles, 21 October 1755; "Remarks of the British Ministry on the Letter of the King of France," NYCD, X: 363, 365-66, 379, 387-91; Anonymous letter on Braddock's campaign, Fort Cumberland, 25 July 1755, Military Affairs, 119; Jennings, Empire of Fortune, 159-60.
127 "Major Leslie to a Merchant," Kopperman, Braddock, 204.
on the nearly undefended border settlements from Virginia to Pennsylvania. Political haggling in the provincial governments would prevent a unified and efficient response on the part of the colonies. Settlers fled eastward in droves, while hysterical preachers predicted the fiery end of the colonies. In the midst of this turmoil, American colonists began to question their ties with Britain. The home country was unable to protect its own troops from a "small" band of "savages," let alone defend the entirety of the North American colonies, and as doubts arose over Britain's invincibility, the first vestiges of an American identity began to emerge.
III

AFTERMATH OF DISASTER: THE RESPONSE TO BRADDOCK’S DEFEAT

This will be the most melancholy and calamitous Year that Virginia has ever seen; and he is a stupid Creature indeed, that can flatter himself with better Hopes.
Samuel Davies, 1755

On July 20, 1755, the broken, dispirited remnants of General Edward Braddock’s army trudged through the palisades of Fort Cumberland, Maryland. Of the nearly twenty-six hundred soldiers and sailors who had marched from the fort in May to destroy Fort Duquesne at the Forks of the Ohio, over four hundred lay dead along the banks of the Monongahela River or strewn along the army’s line of retreat, including the general himself. The remains of the army under Colonel Thomas Dunbar were still formidable in numbers, but they possessed little of the snap that characterized their step only two months before. Once-crisp scarlet uniforms were stained with sweat and dirt, and muskets were caked with powder residue. Many soldiers had discarded weapons and equipment in efforts to flee from real and imagined pursuers. The following morning, nearly four hundred wounded soldiers limped into camp or rode in litters pulled by horses “so much fatigued that we dread their performance.” Braddock’s ill-fated expedition was over.128

Beyond the physical reduction of Braddock’s army, the defeat on the Monongahela sparked a wide range of reactions among government officials, the clergy, minority

elements of society, and private citizens. While the various colonial governors hoped for a quick counterattack by Colonel Dunbar, they soon reverted to internal means to cope with the loss. Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia enhanced his militia’s strength, bolstered frontier defenses, and appealed to the mercy of God, while Robert Morris of Pennsylvania squabbled with his assembly over procedural minutia and the rights of the proprietor. Clergymen such as Samuel Davies quickly took the defeat as a sign from God and vigorously called for repentance and reform, while slaves and Catholics harbored hopes for ultimate French victory. Finally, large numbers of colonists began doubting the myth of British invincibility and began thinking of themselves as *Americans* rather than Englishmen. The schism with Britain was still twenty years away, but the roots of independence and American identity began to build in the midst of Britain’s greatest war for empire.

While Braddock’s defeat was a major setback for the British effort to retake the Ohio Valley, final French victory was not a certainty. Colonel Dunbar remained at Fort Cumberland with nearly 1,600 soldiers, who with a period of rest and refitting could counter any French thrust down Braddock’s road. One officer in the column claimed that the army was “still the finest ever seen in America.” With four months of good weather remaining in the year, sizable reserves of food and munitions, and great numerical superiority over the French, a counterattack was possible. However, Dunbar harbored no illusions of grandeur or desire for notoriety, nor did he have any intention of marching west again or even of remaining on the frontier. Rumors of his impending departure spread faster than official dispatches, causing consternation among the backcountry settlers. Governor Morris of Pennsylvania feared that Dunbar’s departure would not only leave the
frontier undefended but also cause widespread panic and flight to the east. "The Removal of the Army from the Frontiers will leave the back Settlements entirely exposed to the Incursions of the French and Indians, who are flushed by their Late Victory, and will be encouraged by the Retreat of the Forces . . . The People being defenseless will immediately quit their Habitation." Besides a power vacuum in the West, Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia feared that French and Indian raiding parties would "come over the Mountains and rob and murder our People." Not a man to dwell on fear, Dinwiddie proposed immediate action. Writing to Governor William Shirley, the new commander-in-chief of British forces following Braddock's death, Dinwiddie urged Shirley to send Dunbar against Fort Duquesne as quickly as possible in order "to retrieve our Loss."\(^{129}\)

But British commanders and politicians seemed more concerned with placing blame for the defeat and punishing malefactors than repairing morale and attacking again. "Great dishonour has been reflected on the British army," wrote Charles Chauncy, an influential Congregational minister from Boston, and its leaders were "pleased to lay the blame on the soldiers; speaking of them as cowards, and as leaving their officers to fall a sacrifice to the enemy." Sir Thomas Robinson, the British secretary of state, proposed harsh terms to "rehabilitate" Dunbar's men and urged the colonel to "make as many examples of the most notorious delinquents as shall be found requisite and expedient to restore the Discipline." He further threatened to cut off veteran's benefits at Chelsea Hospital for any shirkers. Dunbar unknowingly acted on this advice before receiving it and generously applied the lash to his soldiers' backs. Duncan Cameron, a veteran redcoat, claimed never to have

seen worse punishments. "Here was Court-Martial, upon Court-Martial, and the most
cruel Whippings succeeded them as ever I beheld."\textsuperscript{130}

Shirley heeded the advice of the various governors and ordered Dunbar to march
on Fort Duquesne with all dispatch. However, he allowed Dunbar to refrain from
attacking if "it shall become absolutely Impracticable." Granted official sanction to retreat
and with his mind already made up, Dunbar quickly marched his army to Philadelphia.
Benjamin Franklin derided Dunbar for this overzealous charge to the rear. "He continued
his hasty march through all the country, not thinking himself safe till he arrived at
Philadelphia, where the inhabitants could protect him."\textsuperscript{131}

Dunbar's decision was unfortunate for the British. Soon after the battle on the
Monongahela, the French withdrew a number of troops from Fort Duquesne and sent them
to reinforce other threatened posts. The bulk of the Great Lakes Indians, the true victors
at the Monongahela, left shortly afterward as well. They had taken numerous scalps and
several prisoners and thus satisfied set off for their homes. Pierre Pecaudy, sieur de
Contrecour, the commander of Fort Duquesne, admitted that if the British had returned
and attacked again, he would have been "seriously embarrassed."\textsuperscript{132}

The various tribes of the Ohio soon made up for the departure of the Great Lakes
Indians. Throughout Braddock's campaign, the Ohio Indians had remained neutral, hoping
for the British to drive the French out of their lands but unwilling to commit to either side.

\textsuperscript{130} [Charles Chauncy], \textit{A Letter to a Friend; Giving a concise, but just, Account . . . of the Ohio-Defeat . . .}
(Boston: Edes and Gill, 1755), 4; Sir Thomas Robinson to Shirley, Whitehall, 28 August 1755, Shirley
Correspondence, 2:241-42; Cameron, \textit{Duncan Cameron}, 14.
\textsuperscript{131} Shirley to Thomas Dunbar, Camp at the Great Carrying Place, 12 August 1755, Shirley
Correspondence, 2:231-34; Franklin, \textit{Autobiography}, 225.
\textsuperscript{132} Guy Fregault, \textit{Canada: The War of the Conquest}, trans. Margaret M. Cameron (Toronto: Oxford Univ.
Press, 1969), 90; C. Hale Sipe, \textit{The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania}, 2nd ed. (Harrisburg, Penn: Telegraph
Press, 1931), 199-201.
Braddock’s virtual annihilation left little doubt over which European power would triumph and “gave the French [,.] who remained Masters of all that part of the Country, an opportunity to strengthen and increase their Indian Interest and Influence . . . They won over several of these Indians, who were before in our Interest, and some who held themselves . . . neutral.”

Numerous raiding parties of Indians and Frenchmen fell on the undefended farms and isolated hamlets along the Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia borderlands, burning homes and either killing the inhabitants or carrying them into captivity. The killings reached such magnitude that Captain Dumas at Fort Duquesne complained that for eight days he could do nothing else but pay scalp bounties. The settlers along the frontier seemed helpless before the onslaught of raiders even though the war parties were relatively small. Dinwiddie chastised Colonel David Stewart of the Virginia militia for his county’s apparent unwillingness to confront the raiders. “It appears to me that Your People sit quiet under [attack] with’t rising in proper Bodies to defeat their Designs,” as if the people were “siez’d with a Panick.”

Devastating raids continued throughout the summer and fall of 1755. On October 16, Indians destroyed Mahanahy Creek in the Susquehanna River Valley, killing or capturing twenty-five people. Two weeks later, half of the population of Great Cove, Virginia died under the hatchet. Similar attacks devastated English settlements throughout

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the Shenandoah Valley, and war parties penetrated to within fifty miles of Philadelphia, twelve miles of Winchester, Virginia, and sixty-five miles of Boston. The overwhelmed commander of Fort Cumberland, Adam Stephen, wrote despondently to George Washington. The raiders "go about and commit their outrages at all hours of the day, and nothing is to be seen or heard of, but desolation and murder heightened with all barbarous circumstances, and unheard of instances of cruelty . . . The smoke of the burning plantations darkens the day and hides the neighboring mountains from our site."135

Facing imminent death, frontier settlers fled in droves to the relative safety of the East, leaving large areas of western Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia empty of white settlers. Governor Horatio Sharpe of Maryland reported in September 1755 that "the Country is entirely deserted for 30 Miles below Fort Cumberland." Six weeks later, the London Public Advertiser extended the abandoned zone to seventy-five miles. Finally, Daniel Dulany of Maryland claimed that "all the plantations in this Province (except two or three) for near one hundred miles to the Eastward of Fort Cumberland have been destroyed, or deserted."136

Dinwiddie reported a similar exodus in Virginia, and flight reached such proportions that Washington, as commander of the Virginia regiment, published an advertisement in Winchester in October urging settlers to remain in their homes. "I can venture to assure them, that in a short time, the Frontier will be so well Guarded, that no mischief can be done, either to them or their Plantations." This did little to stem the tide,

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136 Horatio Sharpe to Dinwiddie, [Annapolis], 2 September 1755, Sharpe Correspondence, 1: 279; N. Darnell Davis, "British Newspaper Accounts of Braddock's Defeat," Pennsylvania Magazine of History
and Adam Stephen warned that “unless Relief is Sent to the Back inhabitants immediately None will Stay on this Side Monocasy or Winchester.”

Despite Washington’s assurances, Indian and French raids continued without respite. With colonial forces posing no credible threat, raiding parties attacked to the very gates of Fort Cumberland, where two Indians captured a boy “within Musket Shot of the Sentry.” Another party accosted Stephen immediately outside the gates, and he “Savd [his] Bacon by retreating to the Fort.” Stephen, like all military commanders on the frontier, was plainly frustrated by his inability to defend himself, let alone his district. “It Sits heavy upon me, to be obliged to let the Enemy pass under our Noses without even putting them in bodily Fear. This increases Their Insolence, and adds to the Contemptible Opinion The Indians have of us.”

The colonial governments did not sit idly as their constituents died. However, their responses varied from quick funding and recruitment in Virginia to wholesale debate and deadlock within the Pennsylvania assembly. New York and New England, with the bulk of their troops and efforts focused on Crown Point, Fort Niagara, and Fort Beausejour, could send little aid to their brethren to the south. Both the New York and New Jersey assemblies increased funding and manpower levies in response to the Indian attacks, but

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and Biography 23 (1899): 323; Daniel Dulany, “Military and Political Affairs in the Middle Colonies in 1755,” PMHIB 3 (1879): 22; This article is an unpublished letter written by Dulany in 1755.
they directed these resources toward the northern missions. Thus, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia were left to deal with the frontier situation as best they could.139

After the initial shock of defeat and period of unity, the Pennsylvania government quickly reverted to its cycle of contention between the governor, representing the proprietor’s interests, and the Quaker-dominated assembly. Governor Morris insisted that the assembly take quick action to “prepare for our own Defense.” The assembly could hardly disagree with the need to act, but how to respond was another matter entirely. The assembly and the city council of Philadelphia consistently answered the governor’s proposals with polite refusal, while the governor staunchly protected his prerogative and interests against incursions by the assembly. When Morris requested the city council to provide quarters for Dunbar’s army, the mayor and aldermen refused. “We know of no law that Authorizes us to make such provisions, and, therefore, have it not in our powers to Obey your Order.” On another occasion, the governor requested funds for gifts to cement alliances with the few Indian nations still friendly to the British. As expected, the assembly refused. “As our Treasury is exhausted by the very heavy charges for the King’s Service, these Indians are come among us at a very unfortunate time when it is not in our power to supply them.” The assembly instead “suggested” that the proprietor, “whose interest is at least as much concerned as ours,” assume the expense.140

The Philadelphia council’s refusal to quarter troops and the assembly’s convenient “inability” to fund Indian gifts were both symptomatic of a much deeper schism between the assembly and the governor. Each jealously guarded its powers and constantly sought to limit those of the opponent. While both the assembly and the governor allegedly had the

139 Shirley to Robinson, Shirley Correspondence, 2:219.
people's best interest in mind, the petty power feud between them overshadowed any
desire to act decisively or unite. Furthermore, the governor was intimately attached to the
proprietor, whose influence and near immunity from assembly actions angered many
Pennsylvanians. Such antagonism between key portions of government was difficult to
overcome, even in the midst of emergency. In fact, in a continuation of the power
struggle, the Quakers in the assembly quickly blamed the governor for the Indian attacks.
Believing that their fair treatment of Indians had kept the peace for years, the Friends in the
legislature declared that non-Quaker violence and provocation had sparked the war.
Because they dominated the assembly, the Quakers assumed that the people would shift
blame for the war and government inaction from the assembly to the governor's council.141

Beyond mere jealousy and rivalry, the assembly vehemently opposed the
proprietor's immunity from tax bills passed by the colonial government. Soon after
Braddock's defeat, the assembly passed a bill granting £50,000 for "the King's use," to be
raised in part by taxing all estates, real and personal, in the colony. Governor Morris
immediately claimed exemption for the proprietor and demanded another spending bill.
The assembly refused to change its stance, as did the governor. Exasperated, Morris
attempted to shame the assembly into conforming to his wishes. "Had you really any
tenderness for your bleeding country would you have acted the part you have done? . . . or
would you now . . . waste your time in disputing about new and extraordinary Claims of
your own raising when every head and hand should be employed for the public Safety."142

140 MPCP, 486-87, 532-33, 537.
141 Leonard W. Lebaree and Ralph L. Ketcham, eds., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven: Yale
142 MPCP, 545-546.
If Morris hoped to spur the assembly into action, he was sadly mistaken. Stung by the governor’s claims of indifference, the assembly hardened its stance and responded with a lengthy and heated letter, outlining its objections to proprietary exemption. Discounting any claims of encumbrance on the proprietor’s estates, the assemblymen pointed to the illogic of forcing the people to pay for the proprietor’s defense while he contributed nothing. Such a measure was “abhorrent to common Justice, common Reason, and common Sense.” The legislators further accused the proprietor and governor of attempting to subvert the rights of Englishmen. “Our Lord Proprietary, though a subject like ourselves, would send us out to fight for him while he keeps himself a Thousand Leagues remote from Danger! Vassals fight at their Lord’s expense, but our Lord would have us defend his Estate at our own Expense. This is not merely Vassalage . . . it is even more slavish than Slavery itself.” This rhetoric rankled Morris so much that he effectively wrote off any possibility of compromise with the assembly. “My assembly meets tomorrow,” he complained to Shirley, “but by what I can learn nothing is to be expected from them.” The unwillingness of either side to bargain shocked even Governor Dinwiddie. “I think the G’r sh’d have submitted in hav’g the Proprietor’s private Estate subjected to the Taxes of the other Subjects.”

Governor Sharpe of Maryland avoided Pennsylvania’s troubles by not bothering to call his assembly at all. Sharpe distrusted the Maryland assembly, which was “fond of following such Precedents” set by Pennsylvania. Instead, the governor took action on his

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143 MPCP, 569-85, 322n; Dinwiddie to Governor Dobbs, [Williamsburg], 29 August 1755, Dinwiddie Correspondence, 2:181.
own and ordered several small forts, garrisoned by volunteers, to be built throughout "the distant parts of the province" to shelter outlying settlers.\footnote{Sharpe to Dinwiddie, [Annapolis], 23 August 1755; Sharpe to William and John Sharpe, [Annapolis], 11 August 1755, \textit{Sharpe Correspondence}, 270-71, 267.}

Of the three colonies immediately concerned by Braddock's defeat, Virginia responded with greatest heart. The ever-optimistic Dinwiddie initially discounted reports of the slaughter and hoped it was "not so bad as reported." Even after confirmation of the loss, Dinwiddie remained upbeat. Dunbar was a good officer, he wrote Washington, and he would surely counterattack and prevail. With Dunbar's retreat to Philadelphia, the governor shifted his hopes to the Virginia troops, whom he considered sending to the Great Meadows of Fort Necessity fame to build a fort and prevent further French incursions.\footnote{John Richard Alden, \textit{Robert Dinwiddie: Servant of the Crown} (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1973), 55; Dinwiddie to Dobbs, \textit{Dinwiddie Correspondence}, 2:181.}

After his appointment as commander of the Virginia Regiment, Washington persuaded Dinwiddie to abandon plans for the Great Meadow (possibly out of personal aversion) and turn his efforts to more realistic ventures. Dinwiddie concurred and authorized Washington to raise sixteen companies to form the Virginia Regiment, disbanded after Washington's defeat in 1754, and another six companies of "rangers"\footnote{These men were not rangers in the style of Robert Rogers' Rangers. They were often recruited from tidewater settlements and many had never seen an Indian. These six companies of rangers were merely a stopgap solution until the Virginia Regiment could assume the defense of the frontier.} to defend the frontier during the regiment's generation. Like his Maryland counterpart, Dinwiddie ordered the construction of blockhouses throughout the backcountry to encourage settlers to remain and defend their homes.\footnote{Dinwiddie to Washington, Commission, 14 August 1755, \textit{Washington Papers}, 2:3-4; Alden, \textit{Servant of the Crown}, 60.}
However, unlike Morris and Sharpe, Dinwiddie worked closely with his assembly and successfully passed a number of measures in August 1755 to counter the French and Indians. During the first session of the House of Burgesses following Braddock’s defeat, Dinwiddie followed New England precedent and presented a bill that provided a £10 bounty for every Indian scalp brought to a government agent. “I hope you will think the Measures taken by our Brethren of New-England, expedient to your Safety also; and by giving a Reward for the taking or scalping of Indian Enemies, provide such as Encouragement as may induce our People to cut off the Destroyers, before they come to execute their purposed Villanies.” While this did little to endear the Virginians to friendly Indians, it gave the British colonists a personal stake in the war, even if it was purely economical. Along with the scalp bounty, the burgesses amended the militia law to authorize Washington’s recruiting for the Virginia regiment. In addition, to support the new regiment, the assembly voted another £40,000 to be raised by a duty on imported goods, a head tax on all tithable people, and a land tax.148

With solid support from his legislature and governor, Washington acted quickly in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Virginia military to protect the Virginia frontier. Admonishing his district commanders for remaining within their forts and leaving the settlers to fend for themselves, he ordered them to “send out strong Parties to Scour the Woods and Mountains.” He also vigorously pushed his recruiting officers to fill the ranks of his embryonic regiment.149

149 Washington to Peter Hog, [Fort Dinwiddie], [24 September 1755]; Washington to William Cocks and John Ashby, [Winchester], [10 October 1755], Washington Papers, 2:60, 91.
Despite Washington’s best efforts, few volunteers signed up to fight. In a letter to Washington, William Brickenbrough reported the difficulties encountered by his recruiting officer. “He has Try’d Every place where there was the least likelihood of getting recruits but . . . the People are deaf to reason . . . They are determin’d not to go till they are forced.” Unfortunately, coercion became necessary, but such methods produced undesirable results. Many Virginians violently resisted compulsory service and ended up in jail, only to have mobs free them hours later.\textsuperscript{150}

Washington’s experience with local militia units was little better. These part-time soldiers frequently refused to assemble and leave their homes undefended. In October 1755, Washington called on a militia company to follow him in pursuit of a raiding party, “but was told by Colo. Martin who had attempted to raise the Militia for the same purpose that it was impossible to get above 20 or 25 Men, They having absolutely refus’d to stir, choosing as they say to die with their Wives and Family’s.”\textsuperscript{151}

Although troubled daily by recalcitrant recruits and bullheaded militiamen, Washington and Dinwiddie both recognized the need to enact changes in how they fought the French and Indians. Having witnessed the futility of massed volleys against a scattered enemy, Washington ordered his commanders to train their men to fire at individual marks. Dinwiddie, borrowing a page from Benjamin Church and King Philip’s War, recommended using dogs to aid in tracking raiding parties. “I think some good Dogs w’d soon find out the skulking Places of the Ind’s, so that the Rangers may come up with them.” Adam Stephen requested “Shoe-packs or Moccosons” to outfit his Scouts to prevent “the Indians

\textsuperscript{150} William Brockenbrough to Washington, Richmond [County], 29 September 1755, Washington Papers 2:65; Horowitz, \textit{First Frontier}, 177.
\textsuperscript{151} Washington to Dinwiddie, Winchester, 11 October 1755, Washington Papers 2:101.
discover[ing] our Parties by the Tract of their Shoes.” Finally, Dinwiddie and Washington both saw the need to train soldiers in the methods of woodland warfare. The governor urged Washington to “teach [the soldiers] as much as possible Bush-fighting.” In response, Washington called on his old acquaintance, Christopher Gist, to form a company of rangers consisting entirely of woodsmen. Clearly Virginia was adapting to the Indian threat.152

While actively preparing to fight external enemies, Dinwiddie and other colonial leaders also sought to counter the enemy within. As in all times of extreme emergency, citizens and government officials saw dissidents and undesirable elements of society as potential threats or potential scapegoats. Governor Dinwiddie was particularly concerned about the vast number of African slaves in Virginia. They required constant supervision, especially after Braddock’s defeat. The slaves had been “very audacious in the Defeat on the Ohio,” believing that the French would grant them freedom and land. As a result, Dinwiddie had to leave soldiers in each county to “prevent these Creatures enter’g into Combinat[ion]s and wicked Design ag’st the Subjects.” Governor Shirley feared this would prevent the southern colonies from contributing much to the war effort. As it was, troops desperately needed on the frontiers served on slave patrols instead.153

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152 Washington to Andrew Lewis, [Fredericksburg], [6 September 1755]; Washington to Adam Stephen, [Alexandria], [11 September 1755]; Washington to Commanding Officer at Winchester, [Winchester], [15 September 1755]; Axtell, “Scholastic Philosophy of the Wilderness;” Dinwiddie to Washington, [Williamsburg], 7 September 1755; Stephen to Washington, Fort Cumberland, 27 September 1755; Washington to Christopher Gist, [Winchester], [10 October 1755], Washington Papers, 2:23, 27, 38-39, 43, 64, 98-99; Dinwiddie to Colonel John Buchanan, [Winchester], 11 August 1755, Dinwiddie Correspondence, 2:154. “A Shoepack was a shoe of tanned leather made without a separate sole, similar to a moccasin.” Washington Papers, 2:64n.

153 Dinwiddie to Colonel Charles Carter, [Williamsburg], 18 July 1755; Dinwiddie to the Earl of Halifax, [Williamsburg], 23 July 1755, Dinwiddie Correspondence, 2:102-03, 114.
Catholics attracted a great deal of suspicion as well. Because Catholics were "spiritual kindred" to the French, most colonists automatically suspected them of treason. The justices of Berks County, Pennsylvania considered Romanists to be "the worst Subjects and worst of Neighbors." Similar to the reaction of the slaves, many Catholics allegedly expressed "great Joy at the bad News lately come from the Army." While certain elements of the Catholic community may have enjoyed tweaking John Bull's nose, they gained nothing from the defeat. Indian tomahawks split a Catholic Englishman's head no less than that of a Protestant. Still, Protestants entertained notions of Catholics sneaking away to Fort Duquesne to conspire with the French for the takeover of the colonies, and the Berks County justices demanded quick action to counter such imagined threats. Maryland suffered from similar suspicions. "The clamors against Popery is as loud as ever," wrote Daniel Dulany, who witnessed the near lynching of a priest in Alexandria, Virginia. The priest escaped execution only by bribing a boatman to row him across the Potomac River to safety. "Something ought to be done in regard to these priests, but the present heat and ferment of the times are such that nothing short of a total extermination of them ... will be heard of." Governor Sharpe ordered his local justices to inquire into "the Reports of the tumultuous Meetings and Cabaling of Negroes, the Misbehaviour of the Roman Catholicks ... and the absence of ... Priests," but his deputies found nothing of substance. In Philadelphia, anti-Catholic rhetoric turned into violent action. "The Mob here upon this occasion were very unruly, assembling in great numbers, with an intention of demolishing the Mass House belonging to the Roman Catholics, wherein they were underhand excited and encouraged by some People of Higher Rank. But the peaceable Quakers ... prevailed with the Mob to desist." Governor Shirley looked beyond slaves
and Catholics and imagined a universal insurrection of all "undesirables." "It is well known, how much these Colonies abound with Roman Catholicks, Jacobites, Indented Servants for long terms, and transported Convicts, who, far from being depended upon against the enemy, would doubtless, many of them instigate the Slaves to rebel, and perhaps join with them."\textsuperscript{154}

This anti-Catholic, anti-Indian, anti-rabble rhetoric surfaced in religious sermons as well. Religion gained heightened attention in the months after Braddock's defeat as people sought divine answers for the loss and guidance for the future that politicians and soldiers could not provide. Parsons capitalized on the opportunity and turned their oratorical skills and biblical themes to meet the twin goals of spiritual conversion and public service in war. While preachers may have used the terror of Indian attack to reap a rich harvest of souls, they provided invaluable service as promoters of military service and communal preparedness. Behind their fiery and often hysterical rhetoric, preachers shared certain characteristics in their messages and methods. All sought to determine the cause of the debacle on the Monongahela, which was invariably sin, and present the means to overcome colony-wide guilt. Many strove to establish the justness and necessity of the war with secular treatises and scriptural prophecy. Finally, as guardians of their people, preachers inspired their audiences to greater levels of piety and martial preparedness to ensure ultimate victory.\textsuperscript{155}


\textsuperscript{155} Barbara A. Larson, Prologue to Revolution: The War Sermons of the Reverend Samuel Davies: A Rhetorical Study (Milwaukee: The Speech Communication Association, 1978), 244; Harry S. Stout, The
Thomas Barton had no single audience to administer to. As a traveling missionary for the Church of England, Barton preached to small and large crowds throughout York and Cumberland counties in Pennsylvania. A short time after Braddock’s defeat, Barton delivered an address entitled *Unanimity and Public Spirit* to an audience at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He used the opportunity to chastise the people—a thinly-veiled reference to the assembly and the governor—for division, disunity, and selfishness. “We have been rent and torn into so many Factions and Parties,” he cried, that the colonists faced the destruction of their faith and way of life. Popish fiends hovered in the shadows, waiting to strike down the “pure reformed Light of the blessed Gospel” and replace it with “*Legends and Traditions* . . . in an unknown Tongue.” He summoned memories of the “bloody Persecutions of an unrelenting Mary” and the repression under the “bigotted James” to remind his people what their fate would be under a Catholic sovereign. Braddock’s defeat was a warning from God, Barton continued, and an opportunity for redemption. “Our heavenly Father has thought fit to permit” the French and Indians to prevail so “that we may thereby be led to Repentence before it be too late.” The fiery preacher concluded that salvation and victory lay in the reunification of Pennsylvania (specifically the government) and concerted action. “Let us therefore lay aside every idle Division and Distinction, and be heartily united for the future.”

William Vinal’s message to Rhode Islanders was considerably harsher than Burton’s to the Pennsylvanians. As with many war sermons, Vinal reverted to the Old

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Testament, compared the colonists to the ancient Hebrews, and invoked the powerful image of the angry and vengeful God of Abraham. But instead of criticizing the people for secular disunity, Vinal accused them of separating themselves from God through unending sin, which he labeled “the Accursed Thing.” Success in war depended on God’s assistance, he claimed, and a society must put its sins aside to gain God’s favor. God “cannot go forth with our Army to fight our Battles for us . . . [if] the Accursed Thing [is] in the Midst of us.” But sin was rampant in the colonies, Vinal vehemently claimed, especially among “Persons of Note, and by Men in Authority and Office, both Civil and Ecclesiastical.” He attempted to identify the colonists’ foremost sin but found “so many Accursed Things among us, that I have been almost at a Loss which to single out.” Finally, after haranguing profaners, heretics, drunks, and women in “immodest clothing,” Vinal declared “self-confidence in War” to be the vilest sin of all.157

Such confidence by itself was not the cause of Braddock’s destruction, but when “added to all our other Flagrant Crimes, and public Sins, [it] seems to have fill’s up our Measure, and ripen’d us for the Melancholy Event.” Vinal reminded his audience of the universal hubris upon Braddock’s arrival in Virginia and his march to Fort Duquesne. Success seemed guaranteed, and soldiers boasted of their prowess, “proudly declaring, that they will have the Victory whether He will give it or not; And so by Consequence, setting up themselves, not only against God, but above God.” But the sin of confidence was not Braddock’s alone, Vinal continued, but of every citizen. “O Braddock, thou wast slain in our low Places.” Vinal railed at his audience, bitterly recounting New England’s fall from grace. “New-England . . . Thou wast once an Asylum of persecuted Saints; but thou art

157 William Vinal, A Sermon on the Accursed Thing that Hinders Success and Victory in War, Occasioned
now a *Den of Thieves and Robbers.* But to Vinal, even his audience of "criminals" had hope for salvation if they acted without pause. "TO ARMS, ye *Descendants* of ancient *Heroes," he cried to them. Vinal equally demanded that the colonial governments do their allotted part and provide men and money to prosecute the war. And like Barton, he called for "*Unanimity* and a *good Understanding* among the *English* Governments in America."\(^{158}\)

More influential than either Barton or Vinal, and possibly the most influential preacher during the war, was Samuel Davies of Hanover County, Virginia. A dissenting preacher, who had led the Presbyterians of Virginia in their struggle for toleration, Davies worked tirelessly throughout the Seven Years' War to recruit soldiers and ready the province for war. He possessed unlimited spirit and zeal, and his inflammatory style of oratory captivated his audiences. Davies seemed "fired by equal parts backwater circumstances and audience, New Light enthusiasm, and English Whig animadversions against the French." Following Braddock's defeat, he wholeheartedly committed himself to the war effort, and through a series of war sermons he became one of the most successful recruiters in the colony. In his sermons, Davies connected secular and divine goals; to be ready to face the French and Indians, he said, Virginia must be both spiritually and materially prepared. To Davies, political survival of the colony was a direct correlative of the personal salvation of its citizens. Therefore, secular service, usually in the form of military service, became an "adjunct" of religious duty and an expression of religious faith. Thus, as a soldier of Christ, Davies contributed as much to the war effort as anyone who

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carried a musket. The men he "saved" would, he believed, express their newly-found (or rediscovered) piety in public service.\textsuperscript{159}

On August 5, 1755, Davies delivered \textit{Virginia's Danger and Remedy}, which Davies saw as "a hurried Attempt to save a sinking Land." During these "two marathon discourses" spanning the better part of a day, he lamented the poor spiritual and physical condition of Virginia. A severe drought was causing crops to wither and die; trade was stagnant; money was in short supply; and taxes were heavy. All of these were signs of God's displeasure and warnings for the people to repent and reform, said Davies. But Virginians, enraptured by secular vices, continued to ignore God's admonitions, forcing Him to resort to the ultimate form of coercion. Braddock's defeat and the vicious Indian raids, claimed Davies, were God's final warning.\textsuperscript{160}

Like Vinal, Davies rattled off a lengthy list of sins committed by Virginians and likewise focused on "People of high Life and affluent Fortunes." However, these daily sins paled in comparison to Davies's greatest accusation. He declared the masses to be atheists despite what they might profess, and he accused them of rejecting God as sovereign. Like Vinal's charges of self-confidence, the Virginians' rejection of God as the ultimate power had brought His wrath upon the people of America. Davies took individual sin and applied it to Virginia as a whole. The sins of the multitude, he believed, transferred to the body politic, rendering the colony fit only for destruction. Salvation of the state hinged on


\textsuperscript{160} Ahearn, \textit{Rhetoric of War}, 102; Samuel Davies, \textit{Virginia's Danger and Remedy: Two Discourses, Occasioned by the Severe Drought in Sundry Parts of the Country; and the Defeat of General Braddock} (Williamsburg: 1756), iii, 6.
repentance of the individual, and until that occurred, God would continue to "give thee up to thine Enemies, that though mayst feel and lament his Absence." Like the Babylonians sent by God to chastise the ancient Hebrews, the French and Indians would continue to attack and triumph until God was satisfied.\textsuperscript{161}

With great emotion, Davies called for his flock to act before God destroyed them out of anger. "REPENT! O my Countrymen, REPENT! REPENT! Down upon your Knees before your injured Sovereign . . . Confess your Guilt, and implore Forgiveness." But while calling for spiritual conversion, Davies did not ignore the practical aspects of war. Dismissing the militia as "a mere Farce," Davies called on the people and leaders of Virginia to gather arms and ammunition, reinforce defenses, and join the army. "\textit{Put yourselves in a Posture of Defense.}" Although he demanded surrender to God, Davies seemed to be preaching "God helps those who help themselves."\textsuperscript{162}

Davies's war sermons had a powerful influence both on his audiences and those who never heard him preach. Governor Dinwiddie caught the spirit of repentance, or at least he recognized the need for public action in this regard. In late September, possibly moved by Davies, the governor called for a day of fasting and repentance. "National Repentance is the only Remedy for national Guilt." Davies's influence on audiences was even more striking. John Rice recorded the impressions of several "aged friends" who had heard Davies speak. The emotional response of the audience highlights Davies's profound ability to excite people into action. "As the preacher poured forth the stream of his eloquence, his own spirit was transfused into his hearers: the cheek that was blanched with

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 26-27.
\textsuperscript{162} Davies, \textit{Virginia's Danger}, 29, 11, 44.
fear reddened, and the drooping eye kindled with martial fire, and at the conclusion, every
voice was ready to say—'Let us march against the enemy—let us conquer or die!'"163

Who were the enemies that Davies's audience rushed to combat? In reality, the
foes were French troops, Canadian militiamen, and a wide range of Indian tribes. But there
was a clear if uncoordinated effort on the part of clerics, government officials, and private
citizens to portray the enemy in anything but human terms. While preachers tended to
produce the most virulent rhetoric, they held no monopoly on hatred. Just as New
Englanders had feared losing their "civilized" status and becoming "savage" in King
Philip's War, the colonists of the 1750s were determined to remove any shred of humanity
from their enemy. Common references for French or Indians in sermons, legislation, and
letters included "Barbarians," "Merciless Savages," or the occasional "lawless Sons of
Violence and Plunder." Governor Sharpe even described the invasion of the raiders as an
"infestation," as if their enemies were a swarm of vermin.164

A popular method among preachers for dehumanizing the enemy was to portray the
French and Indians as "agents of hell, as demons of Satan on the side of malignant, evil
powers." Davies accused Indians of "swilling" in their victims' blood, thus investing the
Indians with satanic, vampire-like powers. "They are not Men; they are not Beasts-of-
Prey; they are something worse; they must be infernal Furies in human Shape."165

163 Virginia Gazette, 19 September 1755; William Henry Foote, Sketches of Virginia: Historical and
164 Lepore, The Name of War; Davies, Religion and Patriotism: The Constituents of a Good Soldier
(Philadelphia: James Chattin, 1755), 3-4; Barton, Unanimity and Public Spirit, 4; Sharpe to Shirley,
[Annapolis], 29 August 1755, Sharpe Correspondence, 273.
165 Larson, Prologue to Revolution, 34-35; Davies, Religion and Patriotism, 5; Davies, Virginia's Danger,
5.
By equating the French and Indians with Satan and stripping them of their humanity, Davies and others turned the war into a struggle between good and evil, a holy war against the lawless sons of perdition. Such infernal enemies, with an unquenchable thirst for blood and violence, deserved only horrible violence in return. Governor Dinwiddie used such reasoning to justify his request for the scalp bounty. The “brutal Savages” who perpetrated “the most cruel Outrages” surrendered any right for mercy and had thereby “subjected themselves to be considered, rather as devouring Beasts of Prey, then hostile Men.” A holy war against the forces of darkness appealed to some colonists and preyed on the fears of others, encouraging and provoking many to either enlist and fight or actively maintain the struggle at home.¹⁶⁶

The rhetoric of war did not disparage the French and Indians alone. Braddock’s defeat and William Johnson’s “victory” at Lake George with an army of provincials led to widespread questioning of British invincibility and superiority as well as a growing sense among the colonists of being American.¹⁶⁷ Years later, Benjamin Franklin noted this early crack in imperial relations. “This whole Transaction gave us Americans the first suspicion that our exalted ideas of the prowess of British regular troops had not been well founded.” Johnson’s triumph, with only colonial troops and Indians, over French regulars under the illustrious Baron Dieskau seemed to confirm suspicions. Charles Chauncy proposed that “the best British regulars could not have dispensed matters . . . with greater wisdom.” In

¹⁶⁶ McIlwain, Journals of the House of Burgesses, 298.
¹⁶⁷ On September 8, 1755, a British force of provincial troops and Indians led by Sir William Johnson defeated a French and Indian force led by Baron de Dieskau, a famous veteran of numerous European wars, on the shores of Lake George, New York. After repulsing several attacks by French regulars, the colonial and Indian forces swept the French from the field and captured Dieskau. Although Johnson was heavily criticized for abandoning his drive on Crown Point, his victory, in light of Braddock’s crushing defeat, earned him a baronetcy and a pension.
fact, he thought regulars of little use except to "defend a fort, or to support Indian forces against regular troops." British officers and soldiers, he continued, were so haughty and proud that they would rather stand in the open and die than "practise such a low kind of military art" as that of the Indians.  

Chauncy, like many Americans, was convinced that American troops and officers were necessary to guarantee success for any British military ventures in North America. "It is now made manifest . . . that neither British officer, nor private soldiers, without American assistance, can be depended on for success against American enemies." He attributed the loss on the Monongahela to the British officers, who "had no Idea of the Manner of fighting in use here." Future commanders-in-chief would undoubtedly, and out of necessity, act "with the advise of some thoroughly experienced Americans actually present with him."  

Chauncy obviously wrote with Johnson and Washington in mind as the "experienced Americans." After Fort Necessity and Braddock's expedition, Washington's reputation for wilderness expertise spread with astonishing speed. Although both battles led to defeat, reports of Washington's and the Virginians' aptitude for irregular warfare created an image of wilderness-savvy fighters compared to "the stiff and stupid redcoat." In fact, Seth Pomeroy of the Massachusetts provincials declared Washington to be the true hero of the Monongahela. "The salvation of [Braddock's] whole army from destruction was made, under God, by a young American officer named George Washington." This image was not entirely realistic. Historian Armstrong Starkey discounts the validity of

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169 [Chauncy], Letter to a Friend, 7-8.
such proclamations by examining Washington’s tactics in 1754 and later during the war with Britain. “This was the same Washington who had been surrounded and trapped at Great Meadows the preceding year and who, during the American War of Independence, rejected calls for guerilla war and created an army of which Bland would have been proud.” While Washington’s initial attack on French forces in 1754 was an ambush, his reaction was entirely conventional: retreat to a fort and offer battle in an open field.\textsuperscript{170}

Not all of Washington’s contemporaries shared the belief in American superiority or contempt for the redcoats either. One American lamented the lack of wilderness-savvy frontiersmen in the colonies, declaring his fellow subjects “nothing but a set of farmers and planters, used only to the axe or hoe,” not born with Pennsylvanias rifles in hand or hatchets at their hips. Daniel Dulany hoped that Braddock’s defeat would not “induce the ministry into the mistake that regulars are of no great use in our woods.” In fact, nothing could be “more detrimental to America” than to remove the regulars.\textsuperscript{171}

Regardless of the truth or fiction of British inferiority and American preeminence, what was truly important was the American people’s perception of Braddock’s loss, and large numbers of Americans believed the rhetoric that bombarded them. A letter in the Boston Public Advertiser, openly challenging the notion of the superiority of British regulars, represented widespread feelings. “[Braddock’s defeat] is, and always will be the Consequence of Old England Officers and Soldiers being sent to America; they have neither Skill nor Courage for this Method of Fighting, for the Indians will kill them as fast

as pigeons.” Furthermore, the author expressed the growing belief in the superiority of American soldiers. “300 New England Men would have routed this Party of Indians.” Finally, it advocated quasi-independence. “We want nothing but Money and Liberty to act . . . and we’ll soon have all North America.” The legends surrounding George Washington’s conduct in battle further enhanced this stance, contributed to 1775’s rage militaire, and lent credence to the legend of “the omnipresent American marksman clothed not in a military uniform but in a hunting shirt.”

Finally, the defeat and subsequent deluge of criticism and accusations even managed to put a chink in the armor of the British military establishment. Although the British military had long been exposed to or participated in irregular warfare in Ireland and on the European continent or read accounts of it in the American colonies, they suddenly realized that they faced a new kind of petite guerre, different from the partisan warfare of Europe. Military leaders, heeding Braddock’s sage remarks, “Another time we shall know better how to deal with them,” recognized the need for units and soldiers that could learn to compete successfully with the French and Indians and defeat them through superior proficiency in their own methods. The Virginian Adam Stephen neatly captured this need for change. “It ought to be laid down as a Maxim to attack them [Indians] first, to fight them in their own way, and go against them light and naked, as they come against us . . . You might as well send a Cow in pursuit of a Hare as an English Soldier . . . after Canadeans . . . or Naked Indians.” Still rightly enamored of the capabilities of continental tactics, key British army officers sought to combine the qualities of scouts with the discipline of the line, resulting in the British light infantry. This adaptation to conditions, or

“Americanization” of the British army, provided the flexibility necessary to compete in American warfare. The crucial campaigns still to come in the war, centered on the capture of large fortifications in the midst of inhospitable terrain, would justify their decision.\textsuperscript{173}

\textsuperscript{173} Leach, \textit{Arms for Empire}, 369; Kopperman, \textit{Braddock}, 226-27.
CONCLUSION

Edward Braddock’s defeat in 1755 is relegated to marginalia in many history books today. Compared to the slaughter of General Abercrombie’s redcoats at Fort Ticonderoga in 1758 or James Wolfe’s victory on the Plains of Abraham a year later, the fight on the banks of the Monongahela was small-scale. Indeed the consequences of defeat, while immediately devastating to the soldiers who fought in it and the settlers who felt the wrath of Indian raiders, merely postponed British victory for a few years.

Beyond the short-term strategic implications, the battle forced the British to reanalyze their methods of fighting. Although the British had been long-exposed to irregular warfare in Europe and by proxy in North America, this initial encounter of regulars with Indians forced the British to rethink war in America, just as their experiences in Scotland, Ireland, and on the European continent had done in the centuries before. Like any culture faced with something new or novel, they were forced to analyze their own methods, evaluate new techniques, and integrate them into their own culture. British leaders, such as Henry Bouquet, Robert Rogers, and Lord Loudoun would make adjustments just as Lord Mountjoy had done in Ireland two hundred years before. This did not invalidate their methods of warfare as some historians propose. Instead, the shift indicated a degree of flexibility developed through centuries of trial and error. The changes after the Braddock debacle represented only one more such adjustment.
The lessons learned from Braddock’s defeat were not lost during the American Revolutionary War either, where both the British and the American rebels used backcountry raiders and tactics. John Butler’s dreaded Tory rangers waged a brutal war in the New England and mid-Atlantic borderlands, as did rebel George Rogers Clark in the Illinois country. In a campaign eerily reminiscent of Braddock’s march on Fort Duquesne, General John Stark led a conventional force of Continentals on a devastating march through Iroquoia and returned virtually untouched. In the larger history of warfare in America, Braddock’s defeat may have been insignificant, but the ripples it produced created change far beyond its scale.

Figure 2. Champlain’s Fight with the Mohawks. From Colin G. Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont 1600-1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 60.
Figure 3. Irish Kerne, ca. 1540-1550. From David Beers Quinn, The Elizabethans and the Irish (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966), Plate 3.

Figure 4. Successful return of an English force after the defeat of the Irish kerne, from Derricke’s Image of Ireland, 1581. Note the severed heads and prisoners on halters or being beaten. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery, ed. A Military History of Ireland (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 119.
FIGURE 5. French, Indian and English Borderlands 1756-64
Figure 6. Operations Against Fort Duquesne, 1755, 1758

FIGURE 7. Captain Robert Orme’s Sketch of March Plan for General Braddock’s Column
FIGURE 6. Disposition of Braddock’s Army, 1:00 PM 9 July 1755
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VITA

David Michael Corlett

High School in June 1990. Received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Gonzaga University
States Army and served for four years. Received an honorable discharge as a captain in
July 1998. Entered the College of William and Mary as a graduate student in the
Department of History in August 1998. Entered the Ph.D. program in History at the
College of William and Mary in August 1999.