

# ❧ FORT GEORGE ADVICE ❧

*The Newsletter of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance*

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

Spring 2008

## A Note on New Hampshire Provincial Troops in New York During the French and Indian War ❧

By Walter A. Ryan

The military and political history of the British Colonies of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is dominated by a series of wars between the colonials on one part and the native inhabitants and the French in Canada on the other. Some of these wars were limited to North America but the wars known in America as King William's War, Queen Anne's War, King George's War, and the French and Indian War were European wars as well. New Hampshire raised formed bodies of provincial soldiers for all of these wars.

In 1755, at the start of the French and Indian War, New Hampshire was a small, poor, frontier province. The only town of any size was Portsmouth which also was the seat of government. By that time the settled part of New Hampshire scarcely extended beyond the Merrimack River apart from some few towns along the Connecticut River in western New Hampshire extending North to the Fort at Number Four that had been originally settled by Massachusetts. Annually for six years, from 1755 to 1760, New Hampshire raised provincial soldiers who served in northern New York. A provincial regiment was an ephemeral thing, organized for a single campaign and existing in most cases for only a few months. Although often called "militia regiments," properly speaking, they were not. A militia regiment was a static organization. It included, with only a few statutory exceptions, all

of the able bodied men living within a defined geographical district. The provincial regiments were raised from the militia, by voluntary enlistments if possible, or by drafts from the several militia regiments when there were not enough volunteers.

The campaign of 1755 was marked by William Johnson's expedition to take Fort St. Frederic at Crown Point. New Hampshire raised a regiment of 500 men commanded by Colonel Joseph Blanchard as part of this army. The provincial officials, not understanding the geography of the land between the Merrimack River and Lake Champlain, ordered the regiment to Salisbury, New Hampshire where they were to build bateaus. William Shirley ordered them recalled from that duty and they marched from there to the Fort at Number Four; Albany, New York; and on to Fort Edward where they joined that garrison. While at Fort Edward two companies from Blanchard's regiment under Captain Robert Rogers were detached from the regiment to act as rangers.

On September 8, 1755, during the battle of Lake George, a scout from Fort Edward discovered burning wagons in the road between there and Lake George. Captain Nathaniel Folsom of the New Hampshire regiment was ordered to take 80 men and, with 40 men under Captain McGinnis of New York, to investigate. They found the wagons and dead cattle and, hearing gunfire, they advanced and came upon the French baggage. They attacked and drove off the guards and after becoming involved in a fire fight with the retreating French returned to Fort Edward with prisoners and about 1200 French packs. In the weeks after the battle many of Blanchard's men were employed as scouts and rangers.

When the news of the Battle of Lake George reached New Hampshire a second regiment under Colonel Peter Gillman was raised and ordered to Albany. That fall, a company of 91 men drawn from the New Hampshire troops, under Rogers' command, was part of the winter garrison at Fort

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## FRENCH & INDIAN WAR COMMEMORATION

*250 years*

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*The Alliance supports the historic preservation, conservation, interpretation and associated maintenance, improvement and development of the Lake George Battlefield Park at Lake George, New York.*

# President's Message

By Herman C. Brown

**W**elcome to the year 2008, the year of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance's seventh anniversary and the 250th anniversary of the British expedition led by General Abercrombie against the French at Fort Carillon (Fort Ticonderoga). Imagine in your mind's eye 15 to 16,000 men embarking under the hot summer sun in small

boats down Lake George from the site of our Lake George Battlefield Park in 1758!

The past winter has been long and a challenging one both weather wise and from the perspective of my personal health. I THANK YOU ALL for your cards, best wishes and prayers during my two hospital stays and the periods of recovery there after. Hope does spring eternal.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU goes Stelfer Steel & Pipe, LLC of Fairfield, CT for their continuing Sponsor Membership support. A SPECIAL WELCOME is extended to John L. Buttolph, III of Lake Elmore, VT our newest Paid-Up-For-Life member. A HEARTY THANK YOU is extended to ALL new and renewing members. It is because of YOU ALL, that the Alliance is able to continue carrying out its mission and goals.

The Alliance Board of Trustees met on April 19th and adopted an operating budget of \$10,655 for fiscal year 2008-2009. Major goals for this year include: (1) complete the park's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; (2) continue planning the GREAT unveiling of Mr. Ernest

Haas' painting of our historic site "Gen. Jeffery Amherst's Encampment (Fort George) Summer 1759" at the Fourteenth Annual War College of the Seven Years War to be held April 2009 at Fort Ticonderoga. (3) continue supporting the DEC staff at the park as they strive to maintain, improve and develop the park and assure its historic preservation, conservation and interpretation; and (4) spread the word, both far and wide, of the historic significance of our beloved site.

The Alliance's new fiscal and membership year began on April 1st. If you have not yet remitted this year's dues to the Secretary please do so at your earliest convenience. A copy of the budget and last year's financial report will be presented at this year's annual membership meeting. Advance copies are available by request from the Secretary.

Our seventh annual membership meeting and picnic will be held on Saturday, August 23, 2008 at the pavilion at Lake George Battlefield Park, Lake George, NY. Please make a commitment to attend. Mark your calendar now. I hope to see you all there. ■

## Alliance Trustees

- ◆ Herman C. Brown, Grand Isle, VT, *President*
- ◆ William M. Herrlich, New York, NY, *Treasurer*
- ◆ Nadine M. Battaglia, Lake Luzerne, NY, *Secretary*
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- ◆ Edward J. Dodge, Springfield, IL, *Publications*

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- ◆ Herman C. Brown, *President*
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- ◆ Edward J. Dodge, *Publications Committee Chair*
- ◆ Walter A. Ryan, *Member*
- ◆ Cheryl Seymour, *Glens Falls Printing*

## Meeting Notice !

### SEVENTH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**When: Saturday, August 23, 2008.**

**Where: Lake George Battlefield Park Picnic Pavilion.**

#### SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

- **10:00 to 11:15 AM:** An interpreted tour of the Fort George Garrison Grounds (open to the public).
- **11:30 AM to Noon:** The Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance membership business meeting (members and invited guests only).
- **Noon to 1:00 PM:** Picnic lunch catered by the East Cove Restaurant. Quest Speaker TBA. (members and invited guests only).
- **1:15 PM:** Board of Trustees Meeting.



(Above) Embarking at the Head of Lake George of Gen. Abercrombie's Expedition Against Fort Ticonderoga - July 5, 1758 (Postcard - Collection of Herman C. Brown).

## Alliance Member Exhibits &

By Herman C. Brown

**E**rne Haas, the artist who did the painting "Gen. Jeffery Amherst's Encampment (Fort George) Summer 1759" for the Fort George Alliance, has announced that he is having a one-man show of his newest work (some 25-30 pieces) in July at the Fiske Farm on Isle La Motte, Vermont. The show will run from the 4th through the 16th, and should be especially interesting on Sundays with live music and tea being served in the traditional Fiske Farm manner on the terrace. One painting which should be of interest to our members is a large rauding tribes from the Finger Lakes region of New York. Haas states that a large proportion of Quebec's

population today is descended from the officers and men of that regiment who were given land after the Indians were subdued and no longer a threat.

The exhibit will include landscapes, but stresses historical and nautical subjects, especially early steamboats, the Battle of Lake Champlain (Valcour Island 1776), and a number of sail craft - some of which will be available as very limited edition digital prints.

Ernie also states that, because he no longer works through a gallery, he is able to price his painting some 30-40% lower than previously. Fort George Alliance members can also expect a discount. ■



## A SECOND LOOK at the Battle of Lake George September 8, 1755

By Edward J. Dodge

I earlier wrote about the September 8, 1755 Battle of Lake George. (See: *The Battle of Lake George* in the Spring 2005 newsletter). At that time numerous sources were used with Samuel Blodgett's *Prospective Plan of The Battle of Lake George* being the article's primary source. Since that time, other primary material concerning the battle has come to my attention. That is the published journal and letters of Lieutenant Colonel Seth Pomeroy. The information contained in those writings confirms and adds to what I had written previously in 2005 as well as the contents of the article *Major General Seth Pomeroy - A Brief Biography* published in the Fall 2007 newsletter.

In Lieutenant Colonel Pomeroy's journal and letters, he indicates that the British Provincial Troops arrived at Lake George at about 4PM, Thursday, 28 August 1755 with the strength of 2000 men. Among them was Colonel Ephraim Williams' Massachusetts Regiment in which he served as one of its company commanders. (See: *Ephraim Williams* in the Fall 2004 newsletter).

Early in the morning of September 8th, Seth wrote to his wife indicating, among other things, that he missed her and that he was in good health. He went on to relate to her some of the recent news pertaining to the conduct of the expedition so far. There were 2000 men at the lake (the south end of Lake George). They had lost some men due to illness brought on by cold weather, but that number was few. A friend of theirs was still at the Carrying Place being quite ill and another friend had died. Three of their Indians, who had been up towards Crown Point, had the day before brought word of seeing evidence that a considerable number of the enemy

were traveling south along Wood Creek. Since it was felt that enemy force might attack their wagons coming up to the lake from the Carrying Place on the Hudson River a number of messengers (first one man and later two others plus three Indians) were sent to the Carrying Place with that intelligence. Seth went on to state that earlier that morning (the 8th), they had received word that the wagons had been fired on, but no harm had been done. The balance of the letter advised her that they felt they would be successful with the expedition and that he advised her to train the children in the ways of religion and virtue and to extent his best to those they knew.

In Seth's journal entry of early Monday, September 8, 1755, he stated, in view of the information they had received on the 7th, that a large body of men was traveling south near Wood Creek (east of the lake and separated from the lake by a mountain), approximately 1200 men, 200 of them allies from the Six Nations, had been sent south on the military road toward "The Carrying Place" (also known as Fort Edward, Fort Lyman, Lydius Trading House or Fort Lydius). This movement of their troops was due to some speculation that the Enemy was going to attack their wagon train loaded with stores for the camp at Lake George or possibly Fort Edward which was only partially constructed and lightly defended and that they either needed additional protection or reinforcement.

These troops had gone about three miles south along the military road when they were ambushed by the French force and their Indian allies.

Quoting from Seth's journal: "The front of the column fought bravely, but many of the men in the rear fled. Others remained and fought a very handsome

retreat by firing, retreating a little and then rising and giving the enemy a brisk fire. This continued until they were within    of a mile of the camp. At that point the troops gave a last volley killing great numbers of them - seen to drop like pigeons and stopping the French momentarily. Some 300 men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Cole of Rhode Island were sent out to assist the retreating troops."

The French drove on with courage, with the French Regulars about six abreast and came within 20 rods of the British camp. The French then turned to their left and faced the British camp after taking shelter behind trees, logs and other places where they could hide and fire from. The troops in the British camp, when their first wounded started to arrive, realized they had only a short period of time before they would also be attacked. They then rapidly set up a hasty defense line with 3 or 4 field pieces in a relatively safe position covering the approach along the military road. Other field pieces were positioned toward the west part of the camp. Lieutenant Colonel Pomeroy placed himself with his troops and some of Colonel Timothy Ruggles' Regiment in a defensive line toward the west of the camp. The main battle, according to Colonel Pomeroy, started in earnest between 11 o'clock AM and noon and continued until 5 PM.

The French General, Baron de Dieskau, was wounded and about 30 of his men were taken prisoner. His Aide De Camp was also taken prisoner. There were a considerable number of French dead. The French General advised his captors that the greater part of his officers were killed and that his army or force was broken. Dieskau did not know the number of dead, but by body count and questioning the prisoners, it was

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## Welcoming New Members

By Nadine M. Battaglia

Lake George is without comparison, the most beautiful water I ever saw. Its water is limpid as crystal, and the mountain sides are covered with rich groves of fir, pine, aspen and birch down to the waters edge". So noted Thomas Jefferson in 1791 during his "Northern Tour" which visit included among other destinations, our own Fort George, positioned at the headwaters of Lake

George. Jefferson's words have many times over been noted and have touched the minds and hearts of many a visitor to the lake and Fort George during its recorded history and with good reason.

The physical grandeur together with the profoundly meaningful colonial American history which played itself out, season by season and year by year at Fort George never ceases to fill

me with a deep reverence whenever I enter those hallowed grounds among the rocky hills and shadows of the towering trees. To know that I am standing in the same place and viewing our beautiful Lake George essentially the same way as did such luminaries as Messer's, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Benjamin Franklin and Teddy Roosevelt, as well as the many

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## A Note on New Hampshire Provincial Troops in New York During the French and Indian War

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William Henry. The rest of the men were discharged by the late autumn.

For the campaign of 1756, Shirley was ordered to lead another expedition against Crown Point. New Hampshire again raised a regiment, commanded by Colonel Nathaniel Meserve, which was ordered to join Shirley. Shirley also ordered Rogers to raise an independent company to act as rangers. That summer Rogers raised a second company and by December, 1756 there were four ranging companies enlisted primarily from New Hampshire which remained in the service after the rest of the regiment was discharged that Fall. These companies, which were in British pay, were the genesis of Roger's Rangers.

In 1757 a regiment, again commanded by Meserve, was raised in New Hampshire. Meserve, with 100 carpenters and three companies of rangers was ordered to Nova Scotia. The Lieutenant Colonel, John Goffe, led the rest of the regiment from the Fort at Number Four and reported to General Daniel Webb at Albany. Webb ordered them to Fort William Henry on the shore of Lake George

where they became part of the garrison commanded by Colonel George Monro. They were there when the French, under Montcalm, attacked the fort. When the British and provincial troops marched out in surrender Goffe's regiment was at the rear of the column and took the brunt of the Indian attack when the French guards were unable to protect their prisoners. Word of the disaster quickly reached New Hampshire and a force of 250 men, commanded by Major Thomas Tash, was quickly raised and ordered by Webb to garrison the Fort at Number Four. The next year, a New Hampshire regiment 800 strong commanded by Colonel John Hart served under General James Abercrombie in the failed attack on Fort Ticonderoga. For General Jeffrey Amherst's campaign of 1759, 1000 men were raised by volunteering and a draft. They included rangers, carpenters, and bateau men and a regiment of 800 men commanded by Colonel Zaccheus Lovewell. As the men were raised, they marched by companies to Dunstable, Massachusetts and from there, led by Lieutenant Colonel John Goffe, they

marched through Worcester and Springfield, Massachusetts, arriving in Albany, New York in late May. The New Hampshire Regiment was with Amherst when he moved North to build Fort George and invest Fort Ticonderoga. On July 23, a few days before the French abandoned Ticonderoga, Amherst ordered the New Hampshire regiment to march to Oswego. Arriving there they took part in the attack on Fort Niagara.

In 1760, 800 men, commanded by Colonel John Goffe, rendezvoused at the Fort at Number Four and in forty-four days, cut a road from there to the Green Mountains. Crossing the mountains they followed a road cut the previous year by the rangers to Crown Point. There, they joined General William Haviland and went down Lake Champlain to capture Isle Au Noix, St. John, Chamblee, and Montreal.

In total, during six campaigns, about 5000 men raised from the militia by volunteering and by drafts, served in New Hampshire Provincial regiments along the New York frontier. ■

## Welcoming New Members

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other thousands of unknown early American Patriots whose memory is marked only by their blood and sweat in that Adirondack Mountain soil, fills me with the awe and respect intrinsic in a twenty-first century American Patriot.

I feel privileged to join with you, the standing membership of the Fort George Alliance, in dedicating some part of my time and energy to the care of the Fort and its surrounding battlefield. Our splendid goal of securing and preserving the history of Fort George for posterity is a noble one. In six years we have among other things, accomplished the professional restoration of antiquities taken from the ground during the archeological field studies of the past, we have cared for the statuary on the grounds, and with great anticipation we look forward to the 2009 unveiling of Artist Ernie Haas's spectacular painting, "Gen. Jeffery Amherst's Encampment (Fort George) Summer 1759".

I am also most pleased to announce our newest Paid Up For Life Member, Mr. John Lucius Buttolph, III who hails from Lake Elmore, Vermont. We welcome you, John, to our membership rolls and hope to see you at our Annual Picnic this coming August.

As your Membership Chair, I would ask you, one and all, to keep Fort George in mind when you come across a friend or contact who is interested in our history because they may be of the mind to join us as well. If you should be able to use a membership application for this purpose, please contact me by e-mail at [tedda@frontiernet.net](mailto:tedda@frontiernet.net) or by telephone at 518 696-5889, and I'll be glad to send one to you. Till next time, and respectfully submitted from your fellow twenty-first century American Patriot. ■

## A SECOND LOOK at the Battle of Lake George September 8, 1755

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determined that number was not less than 4 or 500 men.

On Tuesday, September 9th, the Provincials buried the dead in camp and reinforced their position. Seth gave no indication of the number of dead in camp.

Seth's journal entry for Wednesday, September 10th, indicates the day was fair and hot. That day, he went out with 400 men to bury the dead killed at the ambush site and along the military road on the 8th. They buried 136 men in what he termed "A most melancholy piece of business." The body of Colonel Williams their Regimental Commander was found and buried. Seth makes no mention of King Hendrick's body being found. That day, he also learned that his brother Daniel had been killed and scalped. The burial/work party with Colonel Pomeroy collected 2 or 3 wagons full of French stores, guns, blankets and hatches. These spoils of war, they brought back to camp.

Seth's journal reflects that on Thursday, September 11th, more men were sent out to pick up the stores and to bury any other bodies that could be found. That day they buried four more of their own men and found a great number of French bodies that had been hidden and buried. He stated further that they had brought back to camp a wounded man who had been setting where they found him (he didn't say where) since September 8th. That man had the back of his skull cut off and his brain exposed. Seth did not think the man would live.

On September 9th, Colonel Pomeroy wrote to Colonel Israel Williams (Colonel Ephraim Williams cousin and executor of his estate) advising him of the events of the 8th. As of the 9th, Colonel Seth Pomeroy was the only surviving field grade officer of Ephraim Williams' regiment.

Seth's letter to Israel Williams further indicates: that the French had 4000 men at Crown Point and the immediate French column had 1800 men, the French had copies of the plans for the British provincial (William Johnson's) operation, maps of Fort Edward, a lay out of the camp at Lake George, as well as details of the Provincial's march from Fort Edward to Lake George. Colonel Pomeroy ends this letter with the hope that the prayers of God's people will sustain and support them in their attack on Crown Point.

On September 11th, the Seth wrote his sister-in-law Rachel Pomeroy, wife of Daniel, to inform her of Daniel's death. He was very straight forward; he told her that Daniel had been killed by a fatal shot through the middle of his head. He did not tell her that Daniel had been scalped. He wrote further that they had buried 136 men and had since buried 20 more. He closed with the hope that God's blessings would be with her and her children and indicated the family would help in all ways possible.

Colonel Ephraim Williams' Regiment sustained 50 dead, 21 wounded and no missing as a result of the battle(s) of the 8th of September. They brought in 27 French, 20 were wounded. Their equipment loss was low: 12 blanket haversacks, 11 pumpkins (probably trumplings - used to distribute the weight of a haversack load), 5 hatches, 2 waistcoats, 2 coats, 2 shoes, 2 hats, 2 caps, and one knife. No firearms were listed.

Lieutenant Colonel Pomeroy was promoted to full Colonel and took command of the regiment, September 9, 1755. ■

REFERENCE: "Journal and Papers of Seth Pomeroy" as published by The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, 1926.