

# New York Almanack

## Defeat from the Jaws of Victory: The 1758 Battle for Fort Carillon

June 10, 2025



At dawn on July 5, 1758, the largest army ever seen in North America embarked from the head of Lake George (the south shore in the modern-day town of Lake George) in a fleet of over 1,000 vessels. This mass of 15,000 British troops was in high spirits with flags flying,

drums beating, and bagpipes playing.

It was a confident army that moved down Lake George in the early morning hours. And why not? They outnumbered their French adversaries at the destination of Fort Carillon (now Fort Ticonderoga), near the lake's north end, by nearly 4 to 1.

“It was the greatest spectacle ever seen on Lake George,” says historian Dr. Bruce Venter, a Trustee of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance. “Some 15,000 troops in 1,000 boats with artillery set off from the southern end of the lake with assured victory in the air. But things went horribly wrong in a hurry.”

In the end, the fight for Fort Carillon became France's greatest victory in North America and caused more single-day military deaths than any other event in North American history until the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War, over 100 years later. How could this have happened?

French & Indian War historian John-Eric Nelson will share his in-depth research on the notorious British defeat at the hands of vastly outnumbered French forces at Fort Carillon (later, Fort Ticonderoga) in a presentation entitled, “Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory: The 1758 Battle for Fort Carillon”, on Thursday, June 19, 7 pm at the Holiday Inn Resort Lake George.

John-Eric Nelson's presentation will explain what led to this great and unexpected French victory, exploring what the British did wrong and what the French did right.

Nelson is an independent historian and re-enactor who has researched the French and Indian War for over 45 years. He retired from teaching after 35 years in the Milford, CT school system. He resides in Milford, but spends his summers in Ticonderoga.

He regularly presents on colonial war topics to historical sites and organizations, including the US military, throughout the northeastern US and Canada.

The event is being sponsored by the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance and is free to the public. Those planning to attend are requested to reserve their seats in advance by registering at the following email address: [info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org](mailto:info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org).

### **June 14th Archaeological Event**

As part of the Alliance's participation in the State's "Path through History" weekend, Professor Siobhan Hart of Skidmore College's Anthropology Department will make an informal presentation about her team's archaeological survey at the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center on Saturday, June 14, beginning at 1 pm. This year's archaeology at the Park commenced on June 2 and will continue through the end of the month. The public is welcome to attend.

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance is a not-for-profit organization of volunteers who have an abiding interest in the Lake George Region's critical role in the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. The Alliance manages the Battlefield Park's Visitor Center and sponsors events throughout the year that educate the public about the site and its unique history.

It is also working closely with the Town of Lake George and State of New York on the "Repose of the Fallen" project, which will reinter in 2026 the remains of 44 Continental Army soldiers and support personnel in the Battlefield Park. For more information, visit [www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org](http://www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org).