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BRITISH LIGHT INFANTRY
IN NORTH AMERICA
IN THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

by

RORY M. CORY

B.A. (Hons.), University of Calgary, 1991

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British Light Infantry in the Seven Years War

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ABSTRACT

After Michael Roberts developed the idea of a European Military Revolution lasting from 1600 to 1800, it was generally accepted that new ideas flowed from one army to another. Since then, historians such as Geoffrey Parker have challenged this view by advocating that parallel developments were occurring independently within the separate European armies. Parker mainly referred to Spain and France, but a similar debate has been taking place about the evolution of the British Army during the eighteenth century.

Historiographical opinion has been split in recent decades between those who feel that the British Army of the Seven Years War was built primarily upon experiences in North America, and those who feel that other European armies, such as the Hanoverian Army, provided a better example for emulation. However, study of light infantry in the British Army during the Seven Years War shows that many aspects of strategic, operational, and tactical doctrine for their use actually evolved in North America. This evolution relied primarily on the initiative of officers, who responded to the terrain and the character of enemy and allied forces. It can thus be seen to be more of an internal reform than was previously thought, while still recognizing that there were European influences. This argument for an independent development is supported by a variety of sources including memoirs, journals, and letters of British officers, such as Robert Rogers, Jeffery Amherst, James Wolfe and George Washington.

to

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since the early decades of this century there has been an active debate among military historians about the development of light infantry in the British army during the Seven Years War. Some authors (whom we will call Continentalists) believe that Continental[1] influences from light troops like the French *voltigeurs* or the German *jägers* were the most important influence for the development of light infantry in the British army, while others (whom we will call Americanists) feel that the experiences in forest warfare in North America had the greatest effect. In fact, both facets of development were crucial. The former provided a close-order framework and functional examples for British light infantry, while the latter offered a ready-made open-order framework with which to integrate this close-order methodology in addition to providing a testing ground and vivid proof that heavy reliance on light infantry was feasible and desirable. It was the British failures in North America at the beginning of the Seven Years War that demonstrated a need for large-scale integration of light infantry into the British army and made the officer corps willing to support a sustained campaign to accomplish this.

Any reconciliation between the Americanist and Continentalist

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1 "Continental" will be used concurrently with "European" throughout the narrative to denote influences from the continent of Europe itself, the very term that the British used to separate themselves from the rest of Europe. For the purposes of light infantry, Continental influences came mainly from France, Hanover, and Prussia.

schools has been impossible up to this point, as the last monograph devoted solely to light infantry was J.F.C. Fuller's 1925 work.[2] Fuller believed that the evolution of British light infantry in the Seven Years War took place mainly in North America, but he did not devote much space to proving this.

Since 1925, there have only been short pieces written about British light infantry. The next author to examine the subject was Stanley Pargellis in 1933.[3] He suggested that a series of adverse experiences in North America led officers there to form new light units, reacting particularly to poor performances by the rangers. Pargellis, like Fuller, can thus be classed as an Americanist, but while he thus explained where the motivation for reforms came from, he had little to say about where the actual basis for light infantry came from.

The initial attempts to identify this basis led to the development of the Continentalist school, heavily influenced by Michael Roberts' 'Military Revolution' hypothesis posited in 1955.[4] In this diffusionist model, Roberts posits that tactics changed from 1560 to 1660 through the work of military geniuses in Sweden and the Low Countries such as Gustavus Adolphus and Maurice of Nassau. Other nations copied these changes, and so absorbed the new doctrines from abroad. Recently, however, this hypothesis has

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2 J.F.C. Fuller, British Light Infantry in the Eighteenth Century: An Introduction to "Sir John Moore's System of Training" (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1925)

3 Stanley Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933).

4 Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution, 1560-1660," (Inaugural lecture delivered 1955.) Essays in Swedish History. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967), 196.

been challenged by Geoffrey Parker, John Lynn, and others. Parker in particular has shown that Spain was undergoing its own independent tactical evolution in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and many of the changes carried out by Adolphus were actually presaged by the Spanish.[5] Lynn has come to similar conclusions about the French.[6] These models recognize the capabilities of separate nations to evolve independently of each other, based on their own unique set of circumstances. But Roberts' influence dominated into the 1970s.[7]

One of the first Continentalists to adopt Roberts' thesis was Richard Glover. Writing in 1963, he was vehemently opposed to the assumption that there was any positive influence from the North American battlefield. According to him, "many of the 'lessons of America' were lessons that would have been lethal for anyone who tried to apply them on most European battlefields."[8] Nevertheless, he does admit that the British Army learned from its experiences in North America, right or wrong. The internal evolutionary process cannot be denied.

In his 1967 study, Peter Paret largely agreed with Glover, and tried to prove that developments in the British Army previously thought to be the result of North American experience actually

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5 Geoffrey Parker, Spain and the Netherlands 1559 - 1659: Ten Studies (London, 1979), 86-103.

6 J. A. Lynn, "Tactical Evolution in the French Army 1560-1660," French Historical Studies, XIV (1985), 176-191.

7 Geoffrey Parker, The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 2.

8 Richard Glover. Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809 (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 116.

developed in Europe; "Colonial experiences played a secondary role; they tended to reinforce existing trends, not to initiate them."[9] Although armies based solely in Europe were developing their own forms of light infantry, it is not necessary to suggest that Britain copied them. Furthermore, the importance of North America as an indispensable testing ground cannot be ignored. The British learned a great deal in both Europe and North America.

This view is supported by H.C.B. Rogers, who wrote after Glover and Paret in 1977;

> There was nothing new in the concept of mobile infantry operating largely as skirmishers, but the necessity of having such troops was brought heavily home to some British officers through the disaster suffered by the force under General Braddock . . .[10]

At the same time that the voice of the Americanists was rising, that of the Continentalists was still strong, but the historiography moved towards a consensus when Paul E. Kopperman shifted from outright rejection of North American influences to confinement of their effect. According to Kopperman, "Tactics did indeed change in the wake of Braddock's Defeat, but only in America, and only on the initiative of officers actually serving there."[11] While Kopperman still tries to trivialize North American developments, he admits that there was change occurring, and that it was, to an extent, internal.

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9 Peter Paret, "Colonial Experience and European Military Reform at the End of the Eighteenth Century," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XXXVII (95), 1964, 55.

10 H.C.B. Rogers, The British Army of the Eighteenth Century (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1977), 70.

11 Paul E. Kopperman, Braddock at the Monongahela (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), 301.

However, not all Continentalists were willing to budge as much as Kopperman did, and the most recent study to have been devoted to the subject since Kopperman wrote came in 1978 and represents how strong the voice of reaction of the Continentalists still was. In that year, Peter Russell denied that any substantial methodological influences on the development of light troops came from North America. He argued that, "Between 1755 and 1760 war in North America was waged largely by Europeans employing concepts and practices which they brought across the Atlantic."[12] His suggestion is that European light troops such as Austrian pandours and hussars had a direct and favourable impact on the attitude of British officers to light troops, and provided a model for their integration into the British Army. Russell did, however, fall in line with a general move towards a historiographical consensus when he offered that the nature of warfare in North America was different from that in Europe and that rangers did have a limited impact on light infantry.[13]

Russell is convincing in his delineation of some influence by European methods. By examining the early development of the light infantry, it becomes obvious that influences were not completely internal. The British army did not exist in a vacuum. Authors such as Frederick the Great and Turpin de Crissé had a profound impact on British light infantry by providing a codified system

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12 Peter E. Russell, "Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740 to 1760," The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History, XXXV (4), October 1978, 651.

13 Ibid., 645, 652.

that the British could bend to their own ends. In addition, European light troops such as the Hanoverian *jägers* provided a positive example that light troops could be effective. British experiences in Europe both during the War of Austrian Succession and during the Seven Years War helped to foment an atmosphere among the officer corps that was favourable to light troops.

However, the main theatre in the Seven Years War for the British Army was North America, and if light infantry were to be absorbed into the British Army they would have to be made to work in the unique set of circumstances that North America presented. Consequently, British light infantry became something different from the *jägers*, performing a different set of missions, although including many European ones. Although European light troops may have provided some of the inspiration for British light infantry, they did not provide a direct example for the British to copy, contrary to Russell's arguments. If the British thus "borrowed" some of the experiences from their European neighbors, the way that they put these experiences to use was entirely unique. This developmental process was effected by replacing irregular troops (specifically rangers), who were versed in North American operations, with regular troops. The Continentalists fail to mention the influence that rangers had not only on regular infantry, but on their officers, many of whom credited the rangers directly with influencing the development of light infantry.

Light infantry are stereotypically thought of as skirmishers in front of a line of battle used only in field battles. This was

not what officers at the time understood them to be. They were regulars[14] capable of operating in both open and close-order on a variety of missions both attached and detached from the main body of the army. Open-order was a dispersed unit formation, not rigidly rectilinear, while close-order was a rigidly rectilinear, densely packed formation. Although somewhat later than the period dealt with in this study, David Dundas' drill manual of 1792 contained the accepted definition of light infantry at the time. This had not changed substantially in the past half century, and will operate as a working definition for our purposes;

> their great province is to form advanced and rear guards, to gain intelligence, to occupy the outposts, to keep up communications, and by their vigilance and activity to cover a front . . . their skirmishers and dispersed men are loose, detached and numerous according to the circumstances, but a firm reserve always remains to rally upon and to give support as may be wanted -- their attacks are connected and their movements the same as the rest of the line.[15]

This is the substance of what light infantry were expected to do during the Seven Years War. It is important to note that this is similar to what was expected of ranger units at the same time, but rangers were true irregular units. They were capable only of open-order formations, and as such could not be used in the line in a

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14 "Regulars" are used throughout the narrative to denote any body of infantry capable of entering close order and doing so frequently, and who were trained in European drill methods. "Irregulars" denote infantry that operated mainly or exclusively in open order, such as the rangers, and who received little or no formal European parade ground drill. There were two types of regulars for the purpose of this study; light infantry and regular infantry (not to be confused with the rubric "regulars"). The former was capable of entering open order while the latter was not.

15 Glover, 122. Dundas' occupation of outposts, intelligence gathering, strategic raids and skirmishing activities all fall under the rubrics *"guerre des postes"* or "little war" in eighteenth century literature, but this implies an independence that was not known to the British light infantry, and something that was peripheral to the main events. To the contrary, light infantry's roles in these missions were very much connected with the main army's actions. Consequently, "strategic" will be used in place of *"guerre des postes"* in most places.

full field battle in the way that light infantry could.

Prior to the French and Indian Wars, very little use was made of light infantry in the British Army. Few, if any, skirmishers appear during the major battles of the War of the League of Augsburg or the War of Spanish Succession.[16] Humphrey Bland's book of 1727 outlines how to use detachments in the *guerre des postes* of rearguards, advanced guards, and flank guards, but most of the troops that were expected to carry out these duties were not trained as light infantry -- they were companies of regular infantry trained in close order tactics.[17] During the War of Austrian Succession there was an increased opportunity for British regulars to experience forest warfare firsthand in North America, but the numerical commitment to this theatre was nowhere near as large as that during the Seven Years War, and reliance was still placed on the drill book of 1727. This war was important for training American volunteers and militia in the ways of forest warfare, but even here only a few companies were designated as light infantry, and there was little impact on the regular British army. Thus, according to H.C.B. Rogers,

> There was nothing new in the concept of mobile infantry operating largely as skirmishers, but the necessity of having such troops was brought heavily home to some British officers through the disaster suffered by the force under General Braddock . . . [18]

General Braddock's defeat on July 8, 1755 near Fort Duquesne

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16 H.C.B. Rogers, 42.

17 P.E. Kopperman, 112.

18 H.C.B. Rogers, 70.

in the Ohio Valley at the hands of a much smaller force of French and Indians telegraphed the need for a much larger reliance on light infantry. Braddock's contingent of 1300 men (mostly British regulars) had been using mainly close-order tactics, while the 250 French (mostly Canadian militia) and 640 Indians that attacked them had been skirmishing behind cover. Fully two-thirds of the expedition was lost, while the total casualties of the enemy numbered only thirty-nine.[19] Braddock had followed the manuals explicitly, and his men were better trained and equipped than their adversaries in the accepted military doctrine of the time. Clearly something was wrong with the system, and something needed to change.

Greater reliance on light infantry in all facets of war was a part of this change. Integration was not readily apparent in 1756 and 1757, due to the limited nature of those campaigns in North America, but by the time Canada fell in 1760 British light infantry were involved at all levels: logistical, strategic, operational, and tactical. By 1762 Captain Nicholas Delacherois, during his service with the light infantry at Havana, was able to write: "We are a corps of reserves and are employed upon all material services and are exposed to more fatigue than all the army."[20] It was found that light infantry, far from being consigned to the *guerre des postes*, could and should operate in tandem with

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19 Kopperman, 30, 88-91.

20 H.C.B. Rogers, 73.

the main army. By a detailed examination of these activities it can be shown that although light infantry were employed on many similar missions in Europe, British light infantry in North America came to be used in areas that *jägers* were not, and were thus unique in many ways. The direct rectification of the conditions leading to Braddock's Defeat can also be seen in a process that was not immediate, but full of experimentation, including wrong turns and dead ends in addition to brilliant developments.

The method of introduction of light infantry into the British Army also needs to be explained. Although the reasons for Braddock's Defeat are very complex, one of the main lessons that was learnt was that in an environment where a great deal of cover is available, such as North America, light troops have a decided advantage. Conditions were particularly suitable for light infantry in North America, then, but it is absurd to assume that without an idea and a doctrine for their use light infantry tactics would have evolved spontaneously. For this tactical evolution the British relied on a unique mixture of Indian and European techniques drawn from Continental theorists and provincial officers. Consequently, whole regiments of light infantry were raised and trained in such techniques.

The transmission of the lessons learned during these conflicts depended on the attitude of the officer corps, a large part of which in North America gave their wholehearted support to developing light infantry. Generals like Sir Jeffery Amherst and James Wolfe came to believe in heavy reliance on light infantry,

and were very instrumental in experimenting with them to determine how best to integrate them. Amherst was most impressed by the rangers led by Robert Rogers, as were many other officers. In them he saw a preexisting framework that light infantry could be built into, and so gave the light infantry many of the roles that the rangers had filled previously. The importance of these two men for the history of light infantry in the British Army cannot be overemphasized. Rogers created a corps of light troops largely on his own initiative and was able to involve them successfully in a very wide range of missions through using irregular tactics, which were well suited to the North American environment. By so doing he proved to the British officers that light troops could be used effectively in conjunction with the British Army. Amherst took his experience with *jägers* in Europe and integrated it with the rangers to involve light troops in the same range of missions as regulars. His willingness to experiment with the light infantry on all military levels was crucial for making the light infantry into a valuable and lasting asset to the British Army.

In fact, the journals of Amherst and Rogers were by far the most valuable for this study. Not only were these men involved extensively with the development of light infantry, but they wrote prodigiously about it in their journals. Thus, one not only gets a detailed account of events, but with daily journal headings one can see the evolutionary process taking place. Other observers or peripheral theorists also left their impressions, and the letters of George Washington, Sir William Johnson, the Duke of Cumberland,

and James Wolfe, in addition to the journals of William Amherst and James Murray were very helpful in ensuring that false conclusions were not arrived at by too much reliance on the two main sources. While these men were not largely involved with the creation of light infantry, reliance upon them was still necessary, for every officer had a slightly different version of how he wanted the new light infantry to operate. For those observers whose correspondence was not generally available to the author, a number of excellent bibliographies have been referred to -- Stanley Pargellis' Lord Loudoun in North America and J. R. Alden's General Gage in America being the two most important. All of these officers viewed the evolution of light infantry through a different set of experiences and perceptions, but it is fascinating that they were unified in their desire to create light infantry units in North America, only differing slightly in the way that they wished to see this carried out. Most of these sources have been generally available to historians for a long period of time, but this unifying conclusion has never been openly reached, and a systematic use of these sources to examine the evolution of British light infantry in North America the Seven Years War has never been carried out.

It should be emphasized that Continental influences will not be discredited in this study. The main focus of this work will be on North America, as it is possible to show an internal chain of development within the body of troops stationed there. It is, however, important to give an idea of how European use of light

infantry differed or was similar to this North American use for comparative purposes. The Hanoverian Army has been selected as a model, for the British Army was in direct contact with it throughout much of the Seven Years War, as the two operated together against the French. The British would thus have been able to see European uses of light infantry firsthand and to compare them with their own experiences in North America. Indeed, it was European conditions that created an atmosphere favourable to the implementation of North American lessons. Yet, had the lessons not been there, there would have been little or no direct experience upon which to base a large-scale integration of light infantry into the British Army.

The period of the Seven Years War has been chosen for study because this was seminal for the integration of light infantry into the British Army. Light infantry was on the threshold of its development and the first impressions that the British were to receive in this war on its employment were to be lasting ones. Experiences during the war were to begin an evolutionary process that would not be complete until the beginning of the Napoleonic Wars. By studying light infantry in the Seven Years War it will be possible to determine how and why the British began this evolutionary process.

The Seven Years War began in Europe with Frederick the Great's invasion of Saxony in October of 1756, but in North America the conflict began much earlier, in 1754. In that year George

Washington was sent into the Ohio valley with a body of provincial[21] troops to establish British control, but he was defeated during the Fort Necessity campaign. As a result, the French were able to establish their own control over the valley, with their main centre of control being Fort Duquesne. The British sought to capture this power base the following year by a large commitment of British regulars under Major-General Edward Braddock as Commander-in-Chief in North America. Marching from Fort Cumberland, he was intercepted and defeated a short distance from Fort Duquesne, on the Monongahela River, losing his own life in the process.[22] The conflict had begun badly for the British.

That same year the scope of the conflict began to expand into other theatres of war in North America, and the focus of military efforts began to shift away from the Ohio valley. Major-General Johnson launched an abortive campaign against the French in the Lake Champlain area in late 1755. As a result of his failure to establish British control in the area, the French were able to build two forts -- one at Crown Point on Lake Champlain, and one between Lakes George and Champlain called Fort Carillon (renamed Fort Ticonderoga after its capture by the British).

More ambitious plans than border warfare were brewing, however. When William Pitt became Prime Minister in 1756 he had

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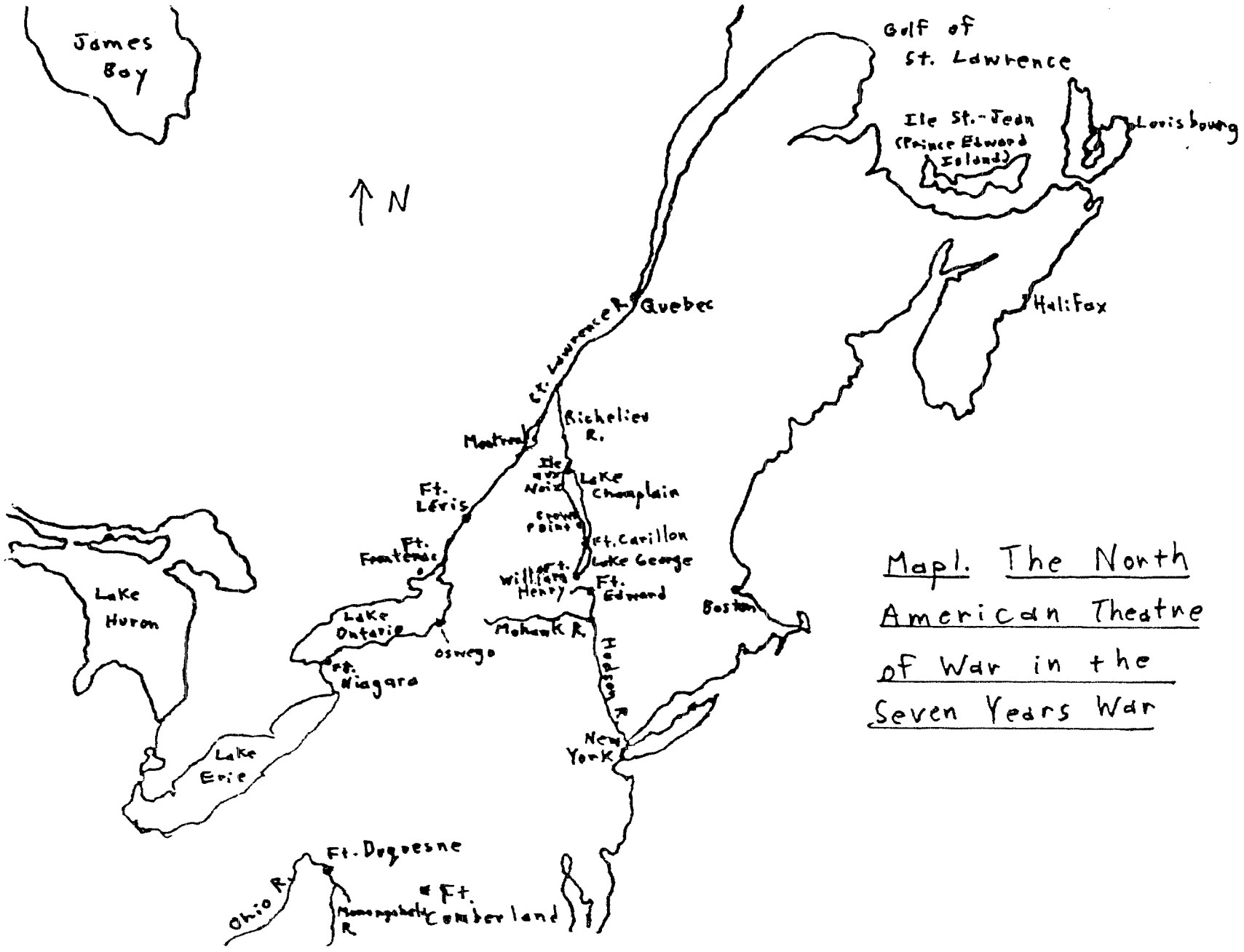
21 "Provincial" is used in the narrative to denote the Anglo-Americans. Their military infrastructure was different from the regular British Army even at this time, and so was outside the development of light infantry in the British Army itself for the purposes of this study.

22 "Braddock's Defeat" was the name of this battle, and should not be confused with "Braddock's defeat" which refers simply to Braddock's loss of the battle.



Map 1. The North American Theatre of War in the Seven Years War

in mind the conquest of all of New France. To do this, the British would have to capture Montreal and Quebec -- the two main seats of power in New France. There were three routes of attack that could be used. One was through the Gulf of St. Lawrence past Louisbourg up the St. Lawrence river itself to Quebec; another was up Lakes George and Champlain to the St. Lawrence valley; and another was via the Mohawk river valley to Lake Ontario and down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. For 1756 General John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun (the new Commander-in-Chief in North America), planned to use the Lake George route, but he started too late in the season and so had to abort his plans. The French commander, the Marquis de Montcalm, was thus free to take the offensive, and he succeeded in taking Fort Oswego on Lake Ontario that year.

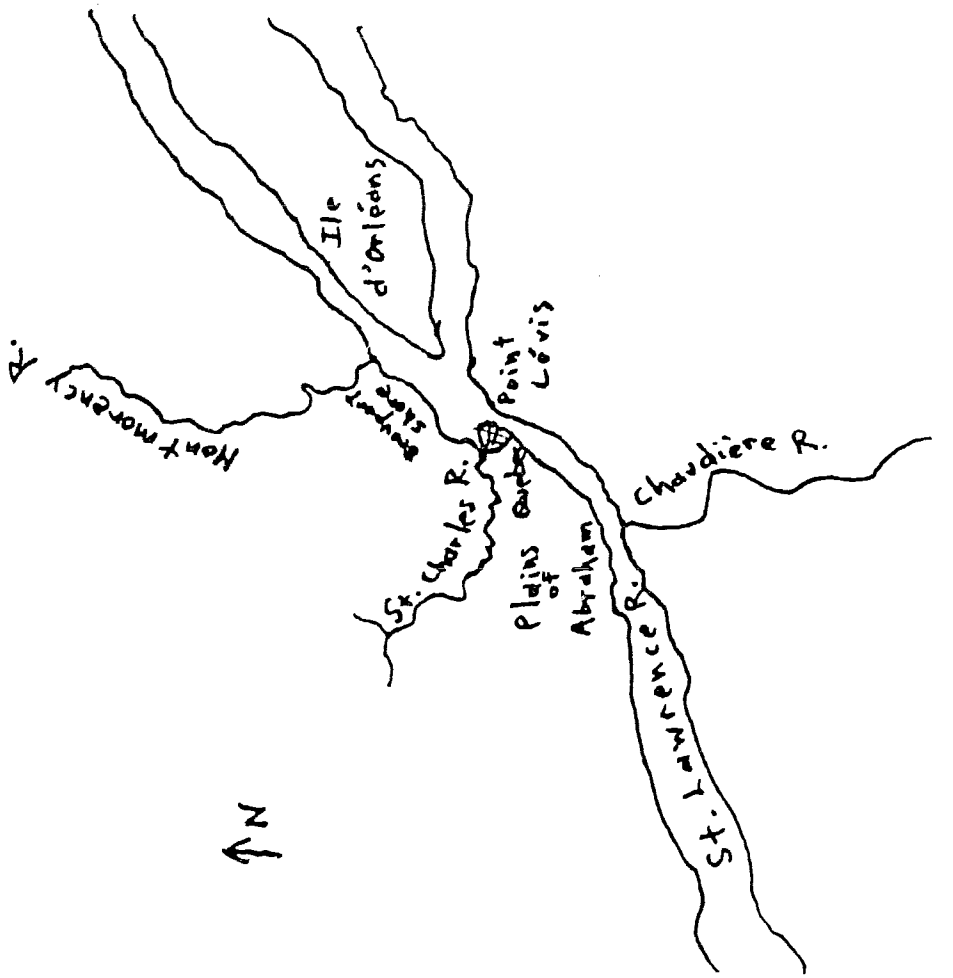
The year 1757 marked the first serious attempt to conquer Canada. A large force was sent from Britain to try to take Louisbourg to crack one of Canada's most formidable outer bulwarks. However, the French were able to send enough reinforcements to Louisbourg to convince Lord Loudoun in his camp at Halifax that the attempt would not be feasible that year. While the main British army was at Halifax, Montcalm was able to switch over to the offensive in the Lake George area and take Fort William Henry.

In 1758 Loudoun, due to his lack of results, was replaced by General James Abercromby. Abercromby chose to make the Lake George route the main avenue of advance on Canada while a powerful thrust was to be made against Louisbourg and Quebec in succession that same year under Jeffery Amherst. At Fort Carillon Abercromby's

attempt to take the fort by direct assault failed miserably and the army returned to Fort Edward. Amherst had better luck, and with James Wolfe as an able subordinate he was able to take Louisbourg, but Quebec would have to wait for the following year.

Amherst was rewarded for his services by replacing Abercromby in late 1758, and he took it upon himself to renew the advance up Lake George towards Montreal in 1759 while Wolfe was to take Quebec. This time, both avenues of attack met with much success. Both Fort Carillon and Crown Point were evacuated by the French, but Amherst took so long in taking them that he was able to advance no further that year. Wolfe's siege of Quebec and the subsequent battle on the Plains of Abraham are the stuff of legend, but he died while taking Quebec, and the season was too advanced to consider linking up with Amherst for a push on Montreal. That would have to wait for the next year. In the interim, General James Murray, one of Wolfe's more able subordinates, was put in charge of the garrison of Quebec. The French (now under the Chevalier de Lévis in the wake of Montcalm's death at Quebec) tried to retake Quebec in May of 1760, so Murray met them in a field battle. He lost, but was saved by the arrival of a British fleet which forced the French to retreat.

For the offensive of 1760 Amherst developed a brilliant three-pronged advance on Montreal. Murray was to move up the St. Lawrence from Quebec, Colonel William Haviland was to continue the advance from Crown Point through Isle aux Noix, while Amherst was to build upon the previous gains of the capture of Fort Niagara and



Map 2. Quebec and Environs

Fort Oswego to advance down the St. Lawrence from Lake Ontario. Defeated on all three fronts, the French had no choice but to surrender.

The war ceased in New France following this, but not in the West Indies or in Europe. In the West Indies the British began campaigning in 1759 with an attempted capture of Martinique that failed, followed by a successful attempt on Guadeloupe. The high water mark for the British was reached with their capture of Havana in 1762, however. With this and the developments in Europe, all sides were ready for peace, with the preliminaries signed in late 1762 and the actual treaty the following year. Light troops were present in one form or another throughout all of these campaigns.

CHAPTER ONE

THE BASIS

> *"In the task of adapting the British army to American conditions, no problem was so important as that which concerned the art of war in the wilderness."*[1]
>
> - Stanley Pargellis

When tracing the development of light infantry in this early period it is necessary to establish just where the idea for light infantry came from, in addition to determining why light troops were seen as the best solution to a specific problem. Once the seed of an idea had been planted, the physical environment in which it was to grow had to be receptive to the use of light troops as well. When these two facets coalesced, then it was possible for the light infantry to reach out and grow within the structure of the British Army.

As Pargellis says, "conditions in America made some adaptation necessary . . ."[2] The particular needs in North America were very much a response to the close environment, which necessitated open order troops and troops with a more independent character. In addition, due to the poor transportation network and close terrain neither side used much artillery or cavalry, and this made it

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1 Pargellis, Loudoun, 299.

2 Ibid., 306.

easier for light infantry to operate.

The original idea for many of the activities in which the light infantry were employed in the British army did not come from armies with exclusively European experiences, such as the Hanoverian army, as will be shown later in the narrative. It remains to be explained where these ideas on the use of light troops came from then, for they arose to fill a need, and could sometimes be based on non-European models. There were also models upon which to base new systems in North America itself. Neither Robert Rogers nor the Canadian militia tried to hide the fact that they copied Indian methods of warfare. This is not to say, however, that the British and Americans became Indians. They took these ideas and fused them within their own system to create a new, peculiarly British style.

Environmental Considerations

Perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of the North American experience is the environment. Certainly, the areas over which the campaigns were fought were heavily forested and did not contain nearly as much cleared land as in Europe. Some would say that this had a significant effect on tactical doctrine, while others argue that European techniques could be employed with little modification. For instance, H.C.B. Rogers believes that the "heavily wooded country . . . inevitably influenced tactical

formations and methods."[3] But Richard Glover comments on "how closely the character of some parts of Europe had come to approximate American conditions."[4] How unique was the North American environment during the Seven Years War?

It would be difficult to find a better gauge of relative closure than the opinions of officers serving in North America at the time. The general consensus among these does suggest that North America was much more closed than Europe. Although writing at the time of the American Revolution, Sir William Howe's impressions are valuable, as the country was certainly no more closed than during the previous war, and in fact most of Howe's experiences were on the Atlantic littoral where the vast majority of what cleared land existed was. He tells us: "The country is so covered with wood, swamps, and creeks, that it is not open in the least degree to be known . . . "[5]

In fact, although there had been precedents since the sixteenth century, the bulk of enclosures did not occur in England, for example, until the last quarter of the eighteenth century, meaning that there were still substantial open areas in Europe on which to manoeuvre without running into obstacles. Even the woods in Europe were not as plentiful as in North America. Sir Reginald Savory calculates that only one third of the area over which the

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3 H.C.B. Rogers, 73.
4 Richard Glover, 124.
5 H.C.B. Rogers, 161.

Hanoverians fought was either hilly or wooded.[6] Comparative statistics are not available for North America, but even areas of dense European settlement such as the St. Lawrence valley were still heavily forested. Wolfe's brigadiers were working on a plan in 1759 to ford the Montmorency river just nine miles upstream and then to work their way back towards the Beauport position to take it in the rear, but discarded the idea due to the "constant wood fight" that it would involve.[7] Perhaps there is no better indication of the dense nature of the woods in North America than the fact that the opposing armies at Braddock's Defeat were within effective musketry range (one hundred yards) before they even saw each other!

What did this mean for light infantry? Close order troops like regular infantry were ineffective in woods or similar obstructing terrain. They could not maintain their densely packed rectilinear formations, their system of mutual support would not function, and they were more vulnerable to enemy fire or chargestate. Therefore, the more obstructing terrain there was, the more effective open order troops were, and the more important that it was to have them. Thus, there was more of a chance for light infantry to show their value in a variety of activities in North America, and there was a need for more of them in proportion to regular infantry. It should not be thought, however, that this

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6 Major-General Sir Reginald Savory, His Britannic Majesty's Army in Germany, During the Seven Years' War (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 18.

7 Beckles Willson, The Life and Letters of James Wolfe (London: W. Heinemann, 1909), 467.

would lead to an army composed entirely of light infantry. To the contrary, the contending European armies preferred battle in open areas, as at Quebec, and in these battles it was close order troops which proved decisive. Light infantry were simply responsible for ensuring that close order troops reached the battlefield and that they were able to perform effectively there.

Even more important was the British reaction to the terrain. Whereas Ferdinand of Brunswick (the commander of the allied forces in Westphalia) shied away from heavily forested areas on a number of occasions,[8] Abercromby and Amherst drove into the heart of some of the most dense forests in North America when they moved to attack Fort Carillon. Wolfe similarly did not share his brigadiers' pessimism in breaking the Beauport position, and remarked that "the light infantry have a good chance to get up the woody hill; trying different places and moving quick to the right, would soon discover a proper place for the rest."[9] These commanders were not only confident in the abilities of their troops to operate in such terrain, but were also willing to let them show what they could do.

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8 See, for example, Savory, 212. In this instance Ferdinand withdrew in the face of the French summer offensive of 1760, because he felt that the heavily wooded terrain was not suited to a defensive battle.

9 Willson, Wolfe, 466.

Anglo-American Precedents

"...for specially trained light troops... it is thus clear that North America was the true cradle of this sort of soldier; it is to the Red Indian that we owe light troops in the eighteenth and nineteenth century meaning of the term."[10]

- Frederick Myatt

With the necessary geographic preconditions for experimentation in place, there needed to be a spark to create movement on reforms. Braddock's Defeat provided this. It showed the British that something was wrong with their system and that the French had mastered the art of war in North America much better. How was this possible? To any observer of the battle it would have been immediately obvious that the vast majority of the enemy force had been composed of irregulars (Indians and militia) fighting Indian style. These had proved superior to regular troops. It would appear, then, that through the adoption of irregular techniques, the French had been able to beat the British. If nothing else, these techniques were worth examining. To do this, the British had numerous Indian allies from whom they could draw information, in addition to viewing how the French used these techniques in a variety of encounters.

Governor William Shirley of Massachussetts was influential in establishing cooperation and contact with the Indians. In 1756 he raised a company of Stockbridge Indians. Lord Loudoun found

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10 Frederick Myatt, The British Infantry 1660-1945: The Evolution of a Fighting Force (Poole: Blandford Press, 1983), 54.

them valuable enough to maintain them during his term as Commander-in-Chief, at a cost of £2000 a year, mainly in the Lake Champlain area.[11] Indian auxiliaries performed many of the duties that light troops were later to perform. Sir William Johnson was the greatest Indian agent that the British had working for them. He was instrumental in bringing many of the Six Nations Iroquois over to the British side. When Loudoun asked Johnson to raise as many Indians as possible to protect Fort Edward and Fort William Henry in the summer of 1757, they were "to assist in scouting parties and in getting intelligence of the enemy; and to prevent the enemy from harassing the convoys or annoying the camps or garrisons . . ."[12] These are activities in which light troops were also involved. On July 7, 1759 Johnson arrived with 440 Indians to help Amherst take Fort Carillon.[13] In part due to his efforts once again, approximately 600 warriors joined the expedition against Fort Lévis and Montreal the following year.[14] Thus, the British were familiar with Indian techniques, as they did have exposure to them. Did they learn anything directly?

It is highly unlikely that the British used the Indians as anything more than a reinforcing model for techniques that had been

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11 Pargellis, Loudoun, 301. Loudoun was so impressed with their performance that he even contemplated raising a regiment of 500 Indians, but when the yearly cost for the unit's maintenance was calculated, it was found that it would have cost £30,000. Loudoun did not trust the Indians enough to drain the already low army coffers, and so settled for maintaining the Stockbridge company instead. (Ibid.)

12 James Sullivan, et al (ed.), The Papers of Sir William Johnson 12 vols. (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1921-1939), 2:724.

13 Robert Rogers. Journals of Major Robert Rogers (London: 1765), 83.

14 Jeffery Amherst. The Journal of Jeffery Amherst. Ed. J. Clarence Webster (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1931), 225.

developed from the Indians much earlier. Many forces collected in North America had some Indians with them, but the British took great pains to separate the Indians from the Europeans, due to the problems caused by alcohol and potential disputes resulting in injury or death.[15] When the army was moving, the Indians often disappeared into the forest. Contact was thus not as direct as it might have been. The British needed to look no further than their own back yard for a model that was easier to integrate and easier to understand. Ever since the earliest English settlements in North America there had been strife between colonists and Indians, and by the time of the Seven Years War the Anglo-Americans had had well over 100 years to perfect different methods of fighting Indians. These methods were closer approximations of Indian methods than they were of accepted European practice at the time, as it was found most effective to combat Indians in their own way. Hence, there were many provincial officers with experience in Indian techniques who were only too willing to share their knowledge with regular British officers.

Many provincial soldiers had had some experience fighting "Indian style", but closest to the Indians were the rangers. Adam Stephen was one, having been present at Braddock's Defeat, but he does not seem to have had much influence on the regular officer corps. Rogers was another. He had grown up in New Hampshire and had learned a great deal from the Indians there. He continued to

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15 For example; Lord Loudoun and Phineas Lyman, General Orders of 1757 (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 17, or Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 537.

have direct and extensive relations with Indians throughout the war. For instance, in April of 1756 he went out as the only European on a raid with thirty Indians and an Indian officer (this was Shirley's Stockbridge company).[16] A prime role for the rangers, in fact, was fighting and neutralizing enemy Indians, for a bounty of £5 was offered for each Indian scalp that the rangers brought in.[17] Obviously, contact with Indian techniques was inevitable.

Another provincial officer who had direct exposure to Indian warfare was George Washington. On May 27, 1754 he was commanding a forty man detachment when it linked up with a friendly Indian patrol of thirty-five warriors and together they decided to attack a nearby party of Frenchmen. According to Washington, "we prepared to surround them marching one after the other, Indian fashion . . . "[18] Washington himself underlined the word, and it is significant that he thought it was important. It is obvious that he was admitting the adoption of a different style of warfare. The ensuing encounter proved that this was the correct style in the circumstances, as the French were routed in fifteen minutes, losing thirty-two out of an original force of fifty. British losses constituted one man killed and two or three wounded.[19] Washington was very impressed by the behaviour of his Indian allies and later wrote of them that "besides the advantageous way they have of

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16 Robert Rogers, 19.

17 Pargellis, Loudoun, 302.

18 George Washington, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1941), 1:56.

19 Ibid., 1:58.

fighting in the woods, their cunning and craft are not to be equalled, neither their activity and indefatigable sufferings."[20]

The regular British officers were impressed by the use and effectiveness of these techniques as well. One British observer at Braddock's Defeat said that "I believe their [sic] might be two hundred of the American Soldiers that fought behind Trees and I believe they did the moast [sic] Execution of Any."[21] There were those who had their differences with the provincials however. Wolfe retorted after the capture of Louisbourg that "The Americans are in general the dirtiest most contemptible cowardly dogs that you can conceive. There is no depending on them in action."[22] Man for man the provincials were probably better material for fighting in North America than their regular European counterparts, but as units the Europeans showed infinitely better discipline, drill, and cohesion. Close order tactics were far from being discarded altogether. Fuller and Howard H. Peckham are thus interpreting the past with twenty-twenty hindsight when they say that close order tactics were doomed (as Peckham says; "the tactics of the Rangers, borrowed largely from the Indians and made effective by rifles, doomed the old formations of exposed battle lines firing by platoons."[23]) Open order tactics were simply a way to make close order tactics viable in the North American environment by providing

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20 Washington to Dinwiddie, 7 Apr. 1756, Washington, 1:301.

21 Kopperman, 107.

22 Wolfe to Sackville, 7 Aug. 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 392.

23 Howard H. Peckham, The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 216.

protection for close order troops.

European officers did differ from American ones in the ways that they chose to adopt Indian warfare. Most European officers took a more negative example of trying to neutralize these tactics, however. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Bouquet, for instance, studied Indian warfare "to discover its nature so that he might devise a system of tactics whereby he could destroy it."[24] Amherst was of a like mind, as his biographer tells us that he "had never liked the savages on account of their habits and methods of warfare . . . "[25] If Amherst let the rangers and light infantry use Indian techniques, it was because he thought that they could perform them better than the Indians themselves, eliminating the necessity for Indian auxiliaries. For the Americans it was more of a positive example of mimicry. Washington wrote that "Indians are only match for Indians; and without these, we shall ever fight upon unequal Terms."[26] Rogers agreed, but took it less literally and essentially tried to make his rangers into Indians. There were some European officers that were of one mind with Rogers, however. While still a captain at the time of Braddock's Defeat, John Forbes wrote that he had "been long in your opinion of equipping Numbers of our men like the Saveges [sic],"[27] and that "We must learn the art of war from the Indians."[28] Gage also formed his regiment in an effort to

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24 Fuller, Light Infantry, 102.

25 J. Amherst, 18.

26 Washington to John Robinson, 7 Apr. 1756, Washington, 1:305.

27 Kopperman, 126.

28 Fuller, 88.

have a dependable unit capable of these tactics. He still had faith in Indian auxiliaries by 1764, however, as he was recommending that troops be escorted by friendly Indians at that time.[29]

These ideas were not incompatible, and the British used all of them. In fact, Indians, rangers, and regulars often fought together and had a chance to exchange ideas. What resulted was a synthesis of irregular and regular techniques, in the form of the light infantry. Amherst may have felt that Indians were unnecessary adjuncts to the army, but he also felt that troops who had some experience in Indian methods would be most effective against them.

French Precedents

If there were those British officers who eschewed Indian auxiliaries and their ways of warfare, all could respect the ways in which the French used their Indian allies and the ways that they put these methods to good use in their own strategy, operations, and tactics. This was only natural, since the French had had a long history of friendly relations with several Indian tribes, in direct contrast to the experience of the British. The British were to learn Indian methods from their enemies as well as their allies.

Direct contact with these French adaptations began at Braddock's Defeat. The four main French commanders opposing the

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29 Gage to Earl of Halifax, 7 Jan. 1764, C. E. Carter (ed.) The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 1:8.

British were all veterans experienced in forest warfare, and they made good use of what they had learned. All along the British march, hit and run raids were launched by small groups of French and Indians. This, more than anything, led to the ineffectiveness shown by the regulars on the day of the battle, since they were already terrorized by an enemy whom they could not see or strike back at effectively. Their morale had been sapped. Striking at the enemy's morale was and is often more important than causing actual casualties, for if a unit is shaken enough by enemy action it will flee the battlefield or disintegrate.

The French used this approach later in the war as well. During the advance against Fort Carillon in 1759 hit and run raids were launched by the Indians against the British. These were not as damaging, however, as the British had developed the idea of ringing their army with light troops to avoid just such a problem. Despite a few penetrations of the ring, this worked rather well, and the British army was able to repel an attempt to repeat Braddock's Defeat by striking the rear of the British force, in part because morale was still high.

Even as late as 1758, however, the British were still afraid of the effectiveness of hit and run raids. When Wolfe was planning his march to Lighthouse Point opposite Louisbourg, he commented that,

> I expect to be attacked upon the march by the Mickmacs, Abenaquis and Canadians. I have made the best preparations in my power . . . to beat 'em off; but I can't be sure that we shan't presently run into confusion and be very ill-treated, altho' I have with me some of the best

of our battalions.[30]

The French and Indians were still considered capable of causing confusion and demoralization.

Even the pursuit after the battle was highly successful for the French and Indians, as several parties of British soldiers were cut off, and the British did not stop their withdrawal for many leagues. This is one reason why rangers and light infantry were later placed in the rearguard, since the lightly accoutered Indians could run faster than the heavily encumbered British regulars and outflank them again and again. It is significant that Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Gage, who commanded the small rearguard during the retreat, never forgot his experiences that day, and brought them to bear on the development of light infantry, as we shall see. The British in general took note of the effectiveness of these tactics, and used them on a number of occasions with good results, but they did not adopt them anywhere near the extent that the French had.

Indian techniques were not applicable or influential in every situation, however. Indians lived off the land, had no need for long supply trains, and thus had no experience with the supply protection that light infantry were involved with. For examples on the effectiveness of light troops in these situations, the British would have to look to Europe. Indians never played a role in assaulting fortified positions either, as light infantry did later in the war. As troops capable only of open order, Indians

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30 Wolfe to Sackville, 24 May 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 369.

were ineffective against such positions. In this the British were unique among their contemporaries in employing their light troops in such a role.

Indeed, the British did not apply their experiences with Indian warfare in the same way that the French did. Light troops were being developed in the French Army at the same time as they were in the British Army, and the literature devoted to this development as regards North America has undergone a historiographical evolution similar to the Continentalist-Americanist debate in the British literature. Early authors on the French military in North America felt that French regular officers learned little from Indian warfare and treated the Canadian militia (who, like the rangers, used this style of warfare) with disdain. According to Stanley, French regular officers "never understood or completely appreciated" the methods used by the Canadians.[31] Frégault perpetuated this view[32], and even as recently as 1972 Eccles cited Montcalm, who Eccles believes saw "no worthwhile purpose in Canadian warfare and "no use . . . at all" for Indian auxiliaries.[33] Opinion began to change in 1969 with I.K. Steele, who actually delineated the value of the Canadian militia as scouts and flank guards,[34] but even he believed that they were merely being

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31 George F.G. Stanley, Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1960), 25.

32 Guy Frégault, Canada: the War of the Conquest. Trans. Margaret M. Cameron (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969), 62-63.

33 W.J. Eccles, France in America (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), 189.

34 I.K. Steele, Guerillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689-1760 (Vancouver: The Ryerson Press, 1969), 104.

made to conform to European strategies and that it was European warfare that had triumphed at the end of the war.[35] Only more recently has Martin L. Niccolai stated that although there was a lack of respect for Canadian methods, they were put to use and reworked by a number of officers.[36] As Niccolai says, "There was . . . a general recognition among military men by the end of the 1740s that irregular troops, fortunately or unfortunately, had a role to play in wartime . . ."[37] Canadian historians have always agreed that the Canadian militia, through its close relationship with Indian warfare, had become adept at *la petite guerre*, but Niccolai was among the first to delineate how French officers sought to shape the Canadians to their own ends.

However, in the French Army in North America it was the Canadian militia who were to become light infantry. Unlike in the British army, where the light infantry were drawn from the ranks of the regular infantry, with regulars thus becoming more irregular, the French tried (rather unsuccessfully) to force the irregular Canadians to become more regular in their tactics. None of the regular infantry in the French Army in North America were made into light infantry, and although such reforms were made in the French Army in Germany, it should be noted that these began in earnest only in 1759 -- two years after similar reforms had begun

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35 Ibid., 129-33.

36 Martin L. Niccolai, "A Different Kind of Courage: The French Military and the Canadian Irregular Soldier During the Seven Years' War," The Beaver, LXX (1), March 1989, 58.

37 Ibid., 56.

in the British Army. Rather than teaching regulars how to use irregular warfare, as was done in the British Army, irregulars were being taught how to use regular warfare. As well, although irregulars were central to both evolutionary processes, Rogers' Rangers were not militia in the way that the Canadians were. They were highly trained specialists. The British had Anglo-American militia available, but these units proved so unreliable that it was decided instead to draft them into regular provincial units and train them in regular warfare. This was done with a fair degree of success -- something that the French were never able to do with their militia units. It must be stressed, however, that this conversion process was completely different from the training of light infantry. Whether in the French Army or the British Army this conversion affected only the militia units. The evolutionary paths followed by the two armies were thus different, and the British had no French precedents to follow in a similar creation of light infantry using Indian techniques. Although the British were able to learn how to operate effectively against forces containing Canadian militia and Indians, the units that carried out these operations were formed mainly on the internal model of the rangers.

By crediting the numerous outside influences of other armies on the British it should not be thought that the British were modelling their light troops on other armies, as in Michael Roberts' diffusionist model of the Military Revolution. On the

other hand, new ideas are rarely developed "independently", but rather are a response to past experiences. This response can take the form of either mimicry or the development of a new idea to counter the old. The British experience ranged around the globe, and their army thus became a polyglot of global experience of which the development of light infantry was a part. Indian, French and German methods of warfare were all encountered by the British, and their response was to adopt those methods that were seen as most effective and capable of integration, while adopting different formats to neutralize enemy methods that were seen as potentially ineffective. These formats were rarely completely new, but more often were simply new uses of established techniques. As a new development in the British army, light infantry could put old techniques to use in a new and different manner as an effective response to the experiences of the British in the world around them. Light infantry thus evolved as the British interacted with other methods that they came in contact with, as did all other European armies, each in its own unique way, responding to a unique set of circumstances.

CHAPTER TWO

STRATEGIC USES

The evolution of light infantry encompassed all facets of warfare -- strategy, operations, and tactics. Light troops were used in all of these areas, and by tracing the developments in each area, it becomes readily apparent where light infantry came from and how they came to be firmly established in the British Army.

At first, however, light troops were involved mainly with strategic missions. Light infantry proved to be very helpful in facilitating the movement of armies through the campaigning theatre while hindering the movement of enemy armies. They could act as the "eyes" of an army, going out on scouting missions to gain information on the whereabouts of the enemy. Rogers was the first to be involved in such missions, and the information that he provided, garnered from prisoners and direct ovservation, proved invaluable to the successful conclusion of many campaigns. Supplying an army was crucial to its very existence, and here light infantry could be used either to protect or to interdict lines of communication. Protection took the form of either acting as guards for foragers, or as escorts for supply convoys. Interdiction was simply the converse of these activities -- attacking foragers or convoys. Finally, the presence of light infantry could be used to affect the movement of enemy armies directly. This was accomplished through raids deep into hostile rear areas to divert

enemy forces. In all of these areas only rangers were involved initially, but light infantry gradually replaced them, being effectively fitted into a prefabricated mission framework.

Intelligence Gathering

According to George Washington, "There is nothing more necessary than good intelligence to frustrate a designing enemy, and nothing that requires greater pains to obtain."[1] This applies equally to Europe and North America, and in fact there was no established military intelligence system initially. There were few maps at the time, and ignorance of the location of roads, canals, and resources caused severe problems. Even in England, the only two counties that had been adequately mapped for military purposes were Sussex and Kent.[2] Therefore, light troops came to be an important part of the intelligence gathering process, being sent out to discover the lay of the land and the presence of enemy forces. Detachments were frequently sent off on scouting missions either wholly composed of light troops, or using regulars as well. It is significant, however, that while *jägers* were employed in this capacity in Europe, light infantry in North America were not initially. In the forests of Pennsylvania and New York scouting missions fell to rangers.

Jägers were involved in scouting by 1758 -- the second year

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1 Washington to Governor Robert Hunter Morris, 5 Jan. 1756, Washington, 1:268.

2 Glover, 20.

of Hanoverian involvement in the Seven Years War, and a full year before light infantry was so used in North America. However, extensive use was not made of them in this capacity, as apparently information on European geography was much better. When Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick (commanding the allied forces in Hanover) advanced to the Rhine in March 1758, *jägers* were sent ahead to clear both banks of the Weser of French forces. They were thus serving not only an informative function in locating the French, but were also capable of engaging the enemy independently and expected to do so, something not achieved in North America for another year.[3]

Nevertheless, this particular use of light troops stands out as the exception, rather than the rule. A possible explanation may be that more powerful field armies were operating in Europe, making a small scouting expedition more vulnerable than in North America. The only time of year that such missions could be reasonably safe was when the enemy field army was still in winter quarters, hence Ferdinand's use of them in March, as above. These missions did, however, show what could be done, and it remained for light infantry in North America to build upon these ideas, in what was certainly a slow process.

Scouting was not entirely without precedent in North America, however, and when the time came for light infantry to partake in such missions, they could build both upon European *jäger* doctrine

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3 Savory, 62.

and the experience of the rangers. Perhaps the most well-known ranger was Robert Rogers. Starting with a handful of men, Rogers created a ranger corps that numbered eight companies at its most numerous. They were employed in operations against Louisbourg and along Lakes George and Champlain, but it was in the latter area that their scouting abilities were most used and most appreciated.

It is no coincidence that increasing confidence in rangers followed Braddock's Defeat. One of the reasons that the British were defeated was that no proper scouting parties had been sent ahead of the army, leading to complete surprise and panic. This omission telegraphed a message throughout the British army that proper intelligence gathering efforts were necessary to avoid surprise by the enemy. The traditional solution had been to hire Indians as guides and scouts, but Braddock was able to hire only eight Indians, which was simply not enough. Similarly, both Shirley and Johnson used Indians as scouts, but if the record of Johnson's force is any indication, they proved inadequate. Baron Dieskau was able to surprise and defeat Johnson's advanced party. Although the method may have been the problem -- Johnson advocated only sending out "spy" parties of three to five men at a time -- a more effective solution was at hand.[4] The rangers offered a way to gather information in a more reliable manner.

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4 Johnson had the same ideas, but it was his adjutant, Captain Peter Wraxhall, who codified them in a letter to one of the officers of the provincial army; "I woud [sic] have you daily send out small parties of 3, 4, or 5 to Scour the Woods for a mile or two round you." Wraxhall to Colonel William Cockcroft, 15 Sept. 1755, Sullivan Johnson Papers, 2:41. This was more of the ideal rather than the real as well, since the few Indians that Johnson had with him at the time often refused to go scouting for him. (Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:238)

Initially based on Fort William Henry and Fort Edward, Rogers led no scouting expeditions beyond the immediate area of the field army that he was attached to until 1756. In that capacity Rogers was kept very busy, as Johnson relates that the New Hampshire Regiment (to which Rogers was attached), "did the chief part of the Scouting Duty [and] are very extreamly [sic] well calculated for it."[5] Apparently, his operations connected with the advance up Lake George in 1755 were noted and approved by his superiors, as Rogers tells us that it was found of "great use to leave one company of woodsmen or rangers under my command to make excursions towards the enemy's forts during the winter . . . " whereas the Indians were allowed to return home.[6]

Rogers' scouts began as small affairs, but they were already becoming more important. On November 2 Rogers was ordered to increase his activities to the level of hit and run raids when he was able.[7] Scouting missions began to be composed of more men as a result, and Johnson was able by November 12 to refer to "our usual Scout of 30 Men."[8] On January 14, 1756 Rogers set out with seventeen men on ice skates up frozen Lake George, and when he returned three days later he had destroyed a shipment of provisions and taken a number of prisoners.[9] This was something that Johnson's Indians had not been used to do. The prisoners were then

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5 Johnson to Governor Spencer Phipps, 10 Oct. 1755, Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:167.

6 Robert Rogers, 8.

7 Johnson to Rogers, 2 Nov. 1755, Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:269.

8 Johnson to Shirley, 12 Nov. 1755, Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:295.

9 Robert Rogers, 8.

interrogated, yielding information on the quality, number, and status of the enemy formations. The capture of prisoners was the focal point of Rogers' scouting expeditions. Eyewitness reports from rangers were desirable as corroborative information. On January 26 Colonel Glasier (in command at Fort Edward) requested just such a personal reconnaissance of Crown Point, so Rogers went out with fifty men.[10] However, Johnson made it clear that this was to complement interrogations and not to replace them, as the two varieties of information often disagreed.[11]

Rogers' efforts proved that light troops could act as the long-distance "eyes" of the army, and after the campaigning season had ended in September, Rogers was scouting again. He was thus employed by the German method of scouting only in winter. This was due partially to the fact that the rangers were tied more closely to the field army during the campaign season, as we shall see. This time, instead of periodic raids it was decided that a constant influx of information would be useful. Starting on September 24, 1756 scouting parties were sent out constantly from the fort, and relieved in rotation.

On his return to Fort Edward from Loudoun's Louisbourg expedition the following year, Rogers was sent back on scouting missions immediately by Haviland. The need for information was urgent owing to the loss of the forward outpost of Fort William

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10 Robert Rogers, 8.

11 Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:162.

Henry in the summer of 1757. The largest scouting mission yet was sent out on December 17, 1757, consisting of 150 men.[12] It lasted ten days, longer than any previous mission, and was more bold. Rogers actually tried to draw the garrison of Fort Carillon (later Fort Ticonderoga) into a field battle, but without success. Nevertheless, he burned the garrison's winter fuel supply, and slaughtered most of its cattle.[13] He had gone beyond the level of a scouting mission to a full-scale incursion.

With a campaign planned against Fort Carillon for 1759, Rogers was again called to assist. On March 3, 1759 an even larger scouting mission of 358 men was sent out.[14] For the first time, as part of a light infantry training course, regulars accompanied the rangers. This is important, as it shows that such missions were increasingly seen as necessary, and this is the first instance in North America of light infantry acting as intelligence gatherers. In late May Gages Light Infantry had been sent to Fort Edward to reinforce the garrison, "that there may be men enough to send large detachments to the Lake," according to Amherst.[15] When Amherst began his move northwards on June 3, this shift towards light infantry as scouts was cemented, as Gage was sent ahead of the main

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12 Robert Rogers, 51.
13 Ibid., 54.
14 Ibid., 93.
15 J. Amherst, 111.

army with Gages Light Infantry[16], other regulars, and three companies of rangers, preparing the way for their compatriots.[17] The addition of light infantry now allowed scouting missions to be carried out during the campaigning season, as more faith was placed in regulars. On June 25 Haviland was ordered to take a force of three grenadier companies, three light infantry companies, "and as many Rangers as could be got together," to lay in wait for French sorties designed to harass the main army's advance.[18]

This mission is important in that now light infantry were replacing the rotating scouts previously carried out by the rangers, and that regulars are now clearly the focal point of the mission. The number of rangers was not important, but it was necessary that there be six regular companies available. The rangers had built the infrastructure for scouting missions that the light infantry were now to fill.

If, however, a substantial engagement was desired during a scouting mission, grenadiers became the core of the detachment. On July 12 Amherst sent one hundred rangers, sixty of Gages Light Infantry, three companies of grenadiers, and one cannon, "to draw in the enemy . . . " They were supported by two detachments of four hundred provincials and two grenadier companies.[19] Light

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16 This was a regiment composed exclusively of light infantry, also known as the 80th regiment, which was raised by Gage himself. The men from this regiment are distinguished from the light infantry companies of the regiments by referring to them directly as Gages Light Infantry in the narrative.

17 Robert Rogers, 100.

18 J. Amherst, 127.

19 Ibid., 134.

infantry was not yet trusted to carry out such a mission independently.

Light troops were not being pushed out of scouting missions in favour of grenadiers, however. Following the evacuations of Fort Carillon and Crown Point by the French, a series of reconnaissance missions was launched. On August 11, two hundred rangers, one hundred of Gages Light Infantry, one company of light infantry, and one company of grenadiers with two guns, set off to examine the suitability of the Otter river as an alternate line of communications to Lake George.[20] It can be seen that light troops were still the most important part of this expedition.

As a direct result of the success of these and other operations, Amherst seems to have had his faith increased in the usefulness of light infantry. During his advance down the St. Lawrence river in 1760, he sent Haldimand with a detachment of two ranger companies, the first battalion of the Royal Highlanders, and all of the light infantry and grenadiers of the regiments well ahead of the main body. The light infantry and grenadiers would have been in equal numbers, unlike Major Campbell's expedition the previous year when there were more grenadiers than light infantry. Thus, light infantry had at least achieved parity with grenadiers in terms of perceived value on a reconnaissance mission in which contact with the enemy was desired or inevitable, as it was along the St. Lawrence. It should be noted here, however, that another

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20 Ibid., 154.

possible explanation for the different composition of this expedition may be due to the fact that contact does not appear to have been desired so much as it was expected, since Haldimand waited for the main body to come up before moving against the first French defensive work, Fort Lévis. Grenadiers would thus not have been as necessary as the backbone of the detachment.

What the rangers had begun, then, grew in importance until finally light infantry were integrated into scouting activities. These missions evolved from simple intelligence gathering to incursions, and finally to detachments capable of engaging the enemy independently.

Logistical Involvement

Light troops were also involved with logistics. Lines of communication were the lifeblood of an army, and control of them could make the difference in determining just where an army could move to. The use of light troops in this way in North America was rarely decisive, but in Europe the French were forced to retreat more than once when light troops gained control of their supply lines.

Although *jägers* and other light troops were involved very effectively in supply interdiction and protection, they did not replace irregulars as light infantry had rangers. The involvement of light troops with supplies did not, however, begin until 1759. During the retreat after the battle of Bergen (April 13, 1759) the allied army was pressed hard by the pursuing French. Something was

needed to slow the French down, and the *jägers* provided a much needed answer. Under Heinrich Wilhelm von Freytag they descended on the French supply lines causing a great deal of destruction. The French under Contades could not ignore this threat, and consequently they had to detach four battalions of infantry and some of their own light troops on July 5, releasing some pressure from the allied army.[21] During these raids important documents were also captured. As in North America, intelligence gathering missions could also be combined with supply interdiction missions. What is completely different from North America, however, is the independence enjoyed by the light troops in Europe. Freytag did not receive orders to attack; this was done at his own discretion. Rogers and others received their orders directly from superior officers.

Supply protection was also carried out by light troops in Europe, with commendable success. In the 1762 campaign, a large French detachment of eighteen battalions and thirty-eight squadrons was sent to raid allied supply lines. Despite the size of this force light troops guarding the allied rear areas were able to drive the French back before they could cause any damage.[22] Light troops in North America never had to deal with such large opposition.

As with scouting, rangers were the light troops primarily

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21 Savory, 148.

22 Ibid., 379.

involved with interdiction of lines of communication in North America, at least initially. They were meant to harass only, as the impact of these raids was never large enough to induce an enemy force to surrender or retreat. Rogers was sent on numerous raids against Fort Carillon's supply convoys, but the French were only dislodged ultimately by direct assault.

We have already seen that Rogers' scouting missions were often combined with supply interdiction, and the raid of January 14-17, 1756 resulted in the destruction of a shipment of provisions.[23] Colonel Glasier was quick to realize the potential in such raids, so Rogers was sent out on February 29 with the express purpose of destroying French supply stockpiles. On March 12 the mission achieved success with the burning of a large part of the French grain stores at Fort Carillon.[24] News of these successes reached Governor William Shirley of Massachussetts, and he approved fully of the expanded nature of Rogers' raids, ordering him "from time to time, to use your best endeavours to distress the French and their allies, by sacking, burning, and destroying their convoys of provisions by land and water, in any part of the country where you can find them."[25] These winter raids, coupled with a period of renewed activity in late summer that resulted in the destruction of more food supplies could have proved decisive, but the advance on Fort Carillon in 1756 was never pressed vigorously enough nor

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23 Robert Rogers, 8.
24 Ibid., 9.
25 Ibid., 11.

the fort invested closely enough to make them count.

Rogers was also involved in the collection and protection of supplies, as his rangers were well suited to detached, independent duty, and many of them were hunters. As early as August 26, 1755 Rogers had escorted supply convoys from Albany to Fort Edward.[26] Johnson was impressed with the rangers' effectiveness and, in the summer of 1756, he proposed that they should join Indians to protect Oswego's lines of communication to the west.[27] Montcalm's capture of Oswego preempted the realization of this plan, however. Both in the winter of 1756-57 and during Loudoun's stay at Halifax in June, 1757 the rangers were sent foraging for fresh food for the army, particularly important during a long winter and after a long sea voyage to prevent scurvy. The garrisons at Fort Beausejour and Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia were not involved in active campaigning, but the rangers there were a part of the general involvement in foraging activities. On September 9 a group of miners and colliers left Fort Beausejour for coal pits a day's journey away, escorted by regular troops and rangers.[28] The necessity of escorting such parties was shown on December 6 when an unescorted wood-cutting party near Annapolis Royal was ambushed and dispersed by the French.[29] It had been thought that the guns of the fort would have been sufficient to protect the party, but

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26 Ibid., [v].

27 Johnson to Shirley, 10 May 1756, Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:472.

28 John Knox, An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America for the Years 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760, 3 vols. Ed. Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1914), 1:70.

29 Knox, 116-117.

they were not. Improving lines of communication was also a part of this supply protection role, and in August of 1759 while Amherst began the construction of a new fort at Crown Point, two hundred rangers were sent to build a road to the nearest town to secure supplies.[30]

As with scouting, light infantry were also used to keep open supply lines, but they were never sent on a supply interdiction mission, unlike their European counterparts. Once again, it was under Amherst's term as Commander in Chief in North America that any such involvement was achieved.

One of the first supply convoy escort missions for the light infantry occurred during preparations for the 1759 campaign against Fort Carillon. On June 9, seventy men of the 60th Royal Americans, two hundred highlanders, and a body of Massachussetts provincials were ordered to bring up supplies to Fort Edward.[31] It can be seen that, like many scouting missions, the involvement of light infantry was not independent. This time the composition of the force may have been due more to the fact that there was a high desertion rate among the men of the 60th, and a mass desertion may have been feared, but these were the only light infantry available, as Gages Light Infantry was scouting Lake George. Replacement of rangers in these duties was by no means immediate or complete, as on June 20 sixty rangers acted as an escort for a road repair crew

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30 Robert Rogers, 104.

31 J. Amherst, 117.

of eight hundred men.[32] Rangers were simply being channelled into other supply-related activities.

Light infantry also became involved in foraging, albeit indirectly, unlike the rangers. On June 29, 1759 two companies of grenadiers, two companies of light infantry, one hundred rangers and a party of Indians were sent to cover a large fishing expedition on Lake George.[33] The same trends as in scouting can be elucidated here. Although rangers were still used as escorts, they were being replaced by regular troops. The expedition was in potentially hostile territory, so the grenadiers were added to provide a strong backbone. The duties and abilities of grenadiers, light infantry and rangers were seen as being quite separate for this mission, as exemplified when the army landed near Fort Carillon. While the fort was besieged, troops sent to guard the line of communications from the camp to the landing site consisted of rangers, light infantry, and grenadiers, in that order.[34] Obviously it was believed that the rangers could be supported by troops in the immediate vicinity of Fort Carillon if attacked, while the grenadiers were farthest away, and had to be able to hold out without relief for a longer time. The grenadiers were thus seen as stronger than the rangers.

By August the process of replacement of the rangers was

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32 Edmund Baily O'Callaghan (ed.), Commissary Wilson's Orderly Book: Being an Account of the Expedition of the British and Provincial Army Under Major-General Jeffrey Amherst Against Ticonderoga and Crown Point, 1759 (Albany: J. Munsell, 1857), 35.

33 J. Amherst, 129.

34 O'Callaghan, Orderly Book, 102.

complete, as seen in two missions. While the rangers were cutting the road from Crown Point one company of light infantry and one company of grenadiers were sent out to cut timber for the construction of a fort.[35] They were joined by working parties, and the light infantry and grenadiers became guards protecting the workers while gathering the cut timber and hay as well.[36] On August 23, 250 grenadiers, 250 light infantry, and 100 of Gages Light Infantry were sent to escort provisions coming to Crown Point from Fort Ticonderoga.[37] Note the absence of rangers. It would appear that Amherst was testing whether or not it would be feasible to replace irregulars with regulars on these missions, the process of which he considered important. When it proved feasible, the replacement was confirmed.

Wolfe and Murray did not share Amherst's views, however; they believed that irregular light troops still had an important place in such missions. In an effort to prevent Montcalm from being properly supplied in the fall of 1759, and in retaliation for the 'misbehaviour' of the Canadians, Wolfe sent out a detachment of rangers and volunteers to burn the crops before they could be harvested.[38] Some rangers were left behind during this mission to guard the army's cattle stationed on the Ile d'Orleans.[39] This was

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35 J. Amherst, 153.

36 Ibid., 157.

37 O'Callaghan, Orderly Book, 141.

38 Willson, Wolfe, 465.

39 James Wolfe. Instructions to Young Officers; Also His Orders for a Battalion and an Army (London: J. Millan, 1768), 72.

crucial to the health of the army. A reduction in effectiveness through disease due to undernourishment resulted in the lifting of many sieges in this era. After the fall of Quebec, a long winter must have been anticipated, as Murray sent out an expedition of 150 regulars and 350 irregulars (presumably rangers) to Isle Madame, near the Ile d'Orleans, to cut wood for three months from September 26 to December 20.[40] The prominent role of irregular light troops in these expeditions should be noted.

It can be seen that light troops were far more effective and decisive in Europe at cutting and protecting lines of supply than light troops in North America were. Although the developments in this area in North America followed the main lines of those in scouting, which were once again uniquely North American, they were not as important as scouting developments. Irregulars were not replaced completely in this area and light infantry were seldom used. Unlike Europe, light troops could not make a decisive enough impact, so the British did not devote a great deal of attention attempting to integrate the light infantry into this area.

Operations Against the Enemy Rear

Raids into enemy rear areas were not carried out for supply interdiction alone. They could be done with the specific intent of drawing off as many enemy forces from the front lines as possible. Entrapment of an enemy army could also be effected by

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40 Governor James Murray, Journal of the Siege of Quebec (Toronto: Rous & Mann Ltd., 1935), 8.

such a raid. All of these intentions were taken to their fullest stage of development in Europe, as with raids on supply lines, but there were some successes in this area by North American light troops as well.

In North America there was no real chance to affect the movement of field armies by raids into rear areas, but in Europe this was a very important mission carried out by light troops. Light troops were also involved in trying to cut off enemy forces, but on a vastly greater scale than in North America.

The first raid sent out with the object of affecting the deployment of the French took place during Ferdinand's winter campaign in February, 1758. When the main allied army started out to threaten French communications directly and force a withdrawal from Ost Friesland, a detachment of *jägers* was sent on ahead to proclaim itself loudly as the advance guard of the main army and to spread panic in general. The French were taken completely off guard by their appearance and could think of no better solution but withdrawal.[41] All raids were not this successful, however.

Although such missions met with mixed success in North America as well, light troops were involved in them in an increasingly important manner. At the time Amherst was reducing the role of rangers in scouting and supply protection, he was compensating by giving them new missions. Amherst was far from advocating that irregular light troops were useless. When the breaching batteries

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41 Savory, 59-60.

against Fort Carillon were completed on July 24 1759, the outcome of the siege was apparent, and both sides began to plan for the inevitable French attempt to escape. The French had barred access to northern Lake Champlain by a log boom to secure their line of retreat by water. On the night of July 26-27 Amherst sent a party of sixty rangers under Rogers to cut the boom so that British water craft could be moved into place to cut off the French retreat. Fortunately for the French, this was the night they decided to leave the fort, so they could not be cut off. Rogers was, however, able to cut through the boom and catch up with the French supply vessels pulling up the rear. The baggage, fifty barrels of powder, and stockpiles of shot that were captured was a significant loss to the French war effort (the more so since Canada was to be without outside help from April, 1759 until the capitulation in 1760), and a great boon to British efforts the following year.[42]

An even more important assignment was given to Rogers in early 1760. The French had made an early start to the campaign, and Lévis had laid siege to Murray in Quebec. Amherst was not in a position to help directly, but he did feel that a raid deep into Canada by a strong force of fast moving light troops could take some pressure off of Murray. He did not know that the French had already been forced to retreat by the arrival of a British relief fleet. Consequently, on May 25 Rogers led 275 rangers and twenty-five light infantrymen up Lake Champlain. They were ordered

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42 Robert Rogers, 102.

by Amherst "to surprise St. Johns and destroy the Magazines at Chambly . . . while 50 of the 300 were to destroy Wigwam Martinique [a supply depot]. . . . This may alarm the Enemy and may force some of their Troops away from Quebec."[43] On June 15 Rogers reached Fort St. Johns, but he was unable to surprise the fort so tried his luck at a smaller one at St. Thérèse. Rogers was right in doing so, for he was able to rush the main gate successfully, and twenty-four prisoners were taken, in addition to civilian inhabitants.[44] From these he learned that Lévis had withdrawn from Quebec, so he decided that it was time to return to base. Before doing so, the small depot at St. Thérèse was destroyed, including much-needed hay, cattle, horses, provisions, wagons, boats, and the fort itself. In addition, a pursuit force of eight hundred French was concentrating against him.[45] Had Lévis still been at Quebec, these troops would have been sorely missed, and Rogers would have had a very successful mission. Rogers was able to extricate himself in any case.

It is significant that there was some light infantry on the mission, but no grenadiers, presumably because grenadiers did not have the speed of light troops. Thus, the light infantry were included as the only appropriate stiffening agent capable of replacing the grenadiers. That they were included at all is telltale of their importance.

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43 J. Amherst, 203.

44 Robert Rogers, 133.

45 Ibid., 134-135.

So far, it would appear that light troops in North America were more successful at drawing off enemy forces than at cutting them off. However, Amherst once again decided to experiment with a larger involvement by light infantry, this time one year later than his previous experiments in scouting and logistical activities. On August 18, 1760 a detachment composed purely of men from Gages Light Infantry was sent below Fort Lévis to cut off the retreat of the garrison. This move was successful, in that none of the garrison escaped.[46] It should be noted, however, that the French would have had difficulties in retreating from the island the fort was on because of the vast naval superiority enjoyed by the British in the area. There was no such naval superiority on Lake Champlain. Nevertheless, it appeared as if the introduction of regular troops had led to greater success.

The involvement of light troops with raids into rear areas thus met with mixed success in both Europe and in North America. In spite of this, they continued to be used in such capacity until the end of the war, so they must have been seen as effective and well suited to the job. As will be seen shortly in other areas, the emphasis here was on tactical employment in North America (as with cutting of garrisons of forts), as opposed to strategic employment in Europe (attempts to cut off entire armies), with experiences applied accordingly in future British developments.

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46 J. Amherst, 233.

In general, although light troops in North America had many strategic successes, they were not used as widely for strategic purposes as those in Europe, and many missions that were on a strategic level in Europe took on a tactical nature in North America. Several strategic missions in North America can be seen to exhibit a clear trend of replacement of irregulars with regulars. This was the result of internal experimentation, particularly by Jeffery Amherst, which was separate from conditions in Europe but possibly influenced by the successes of *jägers*. Other missions, such as logistical ones, appeared either first in North America or concurrently with missions in Europe, and met with similar levels of success, so they can be said to have developed separately. Strategically, the increasing importance of light troops developed largely independently on either side of the Atlantic. A clear developmental spiral for greater and more important involvement by light troops, and specifically light infantry, is visible in North America.

CHAPTER THREE

OPERATIONAL USES

One of the most effective and important uses of light troops was as the advance, flank or rear guard of a field army.[1] There are few examples in North America where light troops were not so used, at least as an advance guard. The lack of preparedness for ambush by Braddock was a lesson that the British never forgot. Another explanation for the importance of this activity was simply that the terrain was much more closed in North America than it was in Europe, making it more difficult to see the approach of an enemy and react to it. Peripheral protection bought time for this reaction. Nevertheless, the system became so ingrained in North America that it was even used when an army was travelling by water routes where visibility was much better. In Europe it was more common not to have peripheral protection, but there are frequent instances where opposing light troops, acting as the advance guard of the army, met and began a battle long before the main bodies clashed. Once again, North American developments in this area seem to have taken place prior to and independently of any influence from Europe.

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1 These three areas were seen as being quite distinct from one another in the responsibilities and requirements of each, as the author of An Essay on the Command of Small Detachments (London: J. Millan, 1766) tells us on page 8.

Advance Guard

Perhaps the most necessary part of an army to protect was its head. This was the most likely point of contact with the enemy, and it was important to have an advance guard capable of reacting quickly, and standing its ground. Braddock's Defeat telegraphed a shocking message to the British that regular infantry and cavalry alone were no longer sufficient as an advance guard in North America. Braddock followed traditional military practice by designating three hundred regulars of his 1300 men as an advance guard some distance ahead of the main body. Significantly, this was under the command of Gage, and he rectified a great many of the mistakes made in this assignment when he formed Gages Light Infantry.[2] No rangers were included in the advance guard, despite the facts that there were six companies present and Braddock had even raised them specifically "to cover the Main Body of the Army, and shelter it from all Manner of Surprize."[3] Instead, they were placed in the rear guard -- the most unlikely place for contact to occur.

In fact, the advance guard was the first to contact the French and Indians sallying from Fort Duquesne to meet the British, and although both were somewhat surprised to find each other at that point, the tactics of the French and Indians were superior in the reaction that followed. The British fired a strong volley that

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2 Kopperman, 33.

3 Braddock to Sir Thomas Robinson, 18 Mar. 1755, Franklin Thayer Nichols. "The Organization of Braddock's Army," William and Mary Quarterly, No. 4, 1947, 131.

sent many of the Canadian militia fleeing, but while this was taking place they let the Indians file down the flanks of the army and the advance guard itself. Attacked on three sides, the advance guard began to disintegrate, and it fell back on the main body causing a telescoping effect that broke up the British formations and reduced their ability to resist.[4] As a result, the British reasoned that there should be light troops capable of 'beating the enemy at their own game' included in the advance guard to prevent such outflanking in future.

Consequently, the same year as Braddock's Defeat, measures were taken to rectify the situation. As usual, it fell to Rogers to test the new system. On October 15, 1755 he was sent ahead of Major-General Johnson's army advancing against Crown Point with direct orders to lead the advance guard of any French force sent to meet them into an ambush.[5] Dieskau's ambush had been successful not only because of Johnson's lack of intelligence on French designs, but also because the Indians and few provincials of the

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4 Ibid., 60.

5 Robert Rogers, 3. Here is direct evidence to refute Kopperman's claim of an adverse reaction in the British army against tactics involving an ambush (Kopperman, 123-124). He only cites two sources to prove this reaction (Matthew Leslie and Governor Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island) neither of which figure prominently in the development of tactical doctrine during the French and Indian War.

Washington was also impressed by the effect of the ambush during Braddock's Defeat, and fully advocated its use under his command. Advising Captain Henry Harrison at Fort Cumberland, he cautioned

> ...if you ever detach any parties from the Fort, be sure to cover their retreat; and, if possible, draw them between your Fires, by advancing a Body of men before your main Body; with orders to retreat gradually between your parties, which you must have posted securely for that purpose.
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> Washington to Harrison, 19 Apr. 1756, Washington, 1:320.

In other words, this was a feigned withdrawal leading to an ambush.

advance guard could not withstand the French onslaught.[6] The inclusion of rangers in the advance guard was an effort to avoid this collapse in future. Initially there was not much chance to contact the French, as the British advance was quite slow, but on November 4 Rogers came upon a French force unprepared for contact. Subsequently, Rogers called for reinforcements to stage a large-scale ambush, but he was discovered while waiting. Undaunted, he feigned a retreat and ambushed the pursuers with forty men, dispersing them completely.[7]

The very next year Rogers was ordered to do exactly the same thing, and this time the rangers were augmented by Indians. Not only were the rangers and Indians allocated to the advance guard in early September, but flank guard duties were given to them as well in a planned advance down Lake George.[8] Clearly, their importance was increasing, not only as a result of the terrain, but also due to their effectiveness. This time, however, Rogers was unable to prove his worth, as Loudoun called off the advance.

Washington also believed at this time that rangers, and rangers alone, were necessary for peripheral guards. Captain Nicholas Minor was ordered to keep out scouting detachments on the frontiers of Virginia in the summer of 1757. Washington warned him to keep "some alert woodsmen advanced a small distance before, and

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6 Wraxhall to Henry Fox, 27 Sept. 1755, Stanley Pargellis, Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle (New Haven: Archon Books, 1969), 139.

7 Robert Rogers, 4-6.

8 Ibid., 22.

on your flanks . . . In short; you are to use every precaution to prevent surprizes, which generally prove fatal . . . "[9] The "woodsmen" in this instance would have been rangers.

It would be 1758 before the British were again advancing up Lake George, and in June the rangers were once again allocated to provide security for the advance. It was seen fit to add light infantry to the advance guard as well, with the light infantry taking up the position of honour on the right, and the rangers on the left. Once again we see the same replacement of irregulars by regulars beginning as with scouting and supply lines. This is the first such instance that we find in North America, and Amherst followed it up in 1759.

Amherst heard of these successes, and continued this trend during his movement of the victorious Louisbourg force to Fort Edward. Amherst had not been that impressed with the conduct of the rangers during the Louisbourg campaign. Consequently, although he had four companies of rangers with his army, only light infantry and grenadiers were detailed as advance, flank, or rear guards. While leaving the environs of Boston on September 18, 1758 the grenadiers joined the light infantry in the advance guard, apparently to impress the local population. By September 22 the grenadiers had moved to the rear guard leaving only two companies of light infantry as an advance guard, since the march was through

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9 Washington to Minor, 24 June, 1757, Washington, 2:72.

sparsely settled friendly territory. The next day one of these companies was replaced by a grenadier company.[10] The composition of these advance guards was a special circumstance, however. They were abnormally small, since there was no threat to the army, and apparently Amherst was trying to train as many companies as possible in the work of an advance guard, giving the honour to as many as possible, or simply relieving them as they became fatigued, since the advance companies were rotated daily.

These experiments allowed Amherst to use light infantry better in 1759. Marching from Fort Edward to Lake George on June 21, the advance guard of the army was composed of both rangers and Gages Light Infantry -- the rangers were not trusted to precede the army alone.[11] The ascent of the lake was carried out starting on June 26 with three grenadier companies, three light infantry companies, two hundred rangers, and a number of Indians in the advance guard.[12] While the grenadiers were present as backbone for the expected contact (the advance guard was "not only a covering Party to ye Boats, but to attack any Body of the Enemy they may find.") it should be noted that the rangers were still present in substantial numbers.[13] When it was anticipated that the army would be landing at the end of Lake George, Amherst sent 250 of Gages Light Infantry and sixty-three volunteers from the regular infantry in the night

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10 J. Amherst, 86-88.

11 O'Callaghan, Orderly Book, 38.

12 Ibid., 46.

13 Ibid., 49.

of July 15-16 to secure a landing place for the main army to disembark upon and to cut off any French detachments that might oppose them.[14] The lack of rangers (who might have been better suited to a night mission) is telltale. This same condition continued during the advance up Lake Champlain in August. Gages Light Infantry was the only formation deemed necessary to act as advance guard.[15]

Washington was also party to the move away from rangers, but by contrast he replaced them with other irregular troops. During his division's advance on Fort Duquesne in September 1758, his advance guard was composed of Indians and light horse.[16] Different experiments were able to take place in the Ohio valley, as Amherst and Abercromby did not have as much direct control. This was largely the domain of Washington and Governor Robert Dinwiddie, who had their own ideas that were shaped by the different nature of the frontier war there.

Haviland did not agree with the complete removal of rangers either, and continued to use rangers as the advance guard once Amherst had left Lake Champlain in 1760. When Haviland took command of the advance on Isle aux Noix he set six hundred rangers and seventy Indians in line abreast as the advance guard of his flotilla on Lake Champlain. Significantly, Gages Light Infantry and the grenadiers followed in two columns half a mile behind

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14 J. Amherst, 138.
15 Ibid., 150, 179.
16 Washington, 2:298.

this.[17] They were thus relegated to a lower status, but Haviland did not trust the rangers to operate completely on their own, as the regulars were still within easy supporting distance. In fact, they had direct orders to come up on the flanks of the rangers to support them if attacked.[18]

The European conflict was also of a different nature. There the country was open enough to preclude ambushes, so advance guards did not need light troops necessarily, but the French often used light troops as their advance guards, so friendly light troops were seen as being the best to deal with the French light troops. Light troops were also still necessary to buy time for the main army to deploy from column of march. In Ferdinand's 1759 spring campaign against the French in Frankfurt the *jägers* fulfilled their role as advance guard well. As they neared Frankfurt they were opposed by French light troops, who might have stopped a detachment of regulars, but the *jägers* were able to push on to gain the forward position of Windecken while the main body was coming up.[19] However, as with other trends that have been elucidated, there was no initial involvement of irregular troops.

North America was thus unique in its initial involvement of irregular troops, but these proved that advance guard duties could be done best by light troops. When officers with fresh Continental

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17 Robert Rogers, 136.

18 William Amherst, The Journal of William Amherst in America (London: Butler & Tanner, Ltd., 1927), 41.

19 Savory, 125.

experience like Amherst arrived, they placed light infantry in the framework built by the rangers, having seen that light infantry could work in Europe.[20] This replacement was by no means immediate, as commanders were not sure that light infantry could work as well in North America, so there were some voices of reaction. Nevertheless, the replacement was effected with *jägers* providing the example and rangers the framework.

Rearguard

Attacks did not always come from the front, and armies were not always successful; hence the importance of the rearguard. Light troops were particularly well suited to this role, as they were adept at fire and movement, they were mobile, and in the case of light infantry, were capable of standing up to concerted opposition. The greatest value in either Europe or North America was gleaned from the covering of retreats, where many armies were saved from annihilation. Light troops were used concurrently on either side of the Atlantic, and it does not appear that one influenced the other in this aspect.

Otherwise a dismal failure for the British, Braddock's Defeat was not without its bright spots. The action of the rearguard in covering the final retreat was exemplary, and cannot have done less

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20 Although writing at the time of the American Revolution, Thomas Simes exemplified this attitude in his Military Guide for Young Officers (London: J. Humphreys, R. Bell, and R. Aitken, 1776). Even though his experience had mainly been in Germany, he advocated the same basic precepts; "If you are apprehensive of the enemy's wanting to attack you, the grenadiers and light company should be advanced at the head of each column, and small parties of light cavalry to scour the flanks." (page 14)

than to impress observers. There were no regular British infantry in the rearguard; it was composed solely of provincials and one company of rangers, all of whom had experience in forest warfare. It is also significant that the Indians were unable to envelop Braddock's force completely due to the ability of the rearguard to keep them at bay.[21] The rearguard fought conventionally at first, drawing up in line and firing volleys, but when the commander of the rearguard, Colonel Peter Halkett, was killed it reverted to fighting Indian style.[22] A comparison of the effectiveness of the two styles at Braddock's Defeat would have proved which was more useful against Indians, and would have shown that regular infantry was not well suited to rearguard duty. One observer, Francis Peyton, spoke in flowing terms of the phased withdrawal of the rearguard to cover the retreat of the army; "The Colonial Volunteers thus prevented pursuit, and saved the remnant of the British army from destruction."[23]

Surprisingly, not much notice seems to have been taken in Britain. The next reference to a rearguard comes from 1758, on Abercromby's march to Fort Carillon. There, Gages Light Infantry brought up the rear.[24] Perhaps a similar replacement of irregulars by regulars had taken place by that time. Two possible explanations can be offered. Lord Howe was anxious to prove the

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21 Kopperman, 45-46.
22 Ibid., 78.
23 Ibid., 218.
24 Fuller, Light Infantry, 92.

value of light infantry, and wanted to experiment with them in as many roles as possible. Secondly, the light infantry in the army had advanced far enough in Rogers' training program that they could be put on more independent duty such as the rearguard.

Proof that the replacement process was yet in its infancy is given when one notes that the rangers joined the light infantry in covering Abercromby's retreat from Fort Carillon, and that a detachment of 530 rangers, provincials and regulars sent to pursue a French raiding party in early August had the rangers set as the rearguard.[25] As usual, it was Amherst who carried on the process, however, as during his experiments on the march from Boston first light infantry and then grenadiers were tried as the rearguard.[26] The light infantry served the purpose better apparently, as during the advance on Fort Carillon the next year they alone served as the rearguard.[27]

Closer to Fort Carillon, however, the rearguard was augmented by Gages Light Infantry, some grenadiers, three battalions of provincials, and a body of rangers.[28] The fear of a relief force attacking the rear of the army while siege operations were carried on must have been acute. A great deal of regular infantry had been added to create a strong core for the rearguard, and Indian attacks must have been expected, explaining the presence of the rangers.

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25 Fuller, Light Infantry, 91 and Robert Rogers, 85.
26 J. Amherst, 88.
27 O'Callaghan, Orderly Book, 124.
28 Ibid., 143.

Whatever the reason, this is in agreement with the main trend of equalization of status with regular infantry, and use of regular infantry only in face of an expected threat. In fact, Amherst had just heard of an attack on Fort Ontario (near Oswego) by a strong force of French and Indians several weeks before, so he was probably expecting similar opposition.[29]

In contrast to other areas, however, irregulars seem to have continued to be used on occasion in the rearguard. On October 11, 1759 Amherst's expedition to Isle aux Noix was covered by rangers and Indians in the rear. Perhaps as a result of their performance during the siege of Fort Carillon, Amherst saw them as a valuable asset in the rear of an army. While sailing up the lake they were drawn up "in a line to cover the Rear of the Column as Gages did the Front."[30]

Wolfe did not suffer from the same dilemma. For him, irregulars did not belong in the rearguard, but for that matter neither did regular infantry. When he drew up his army on the Plains of Abraham it was light infantry that constituted the rearguard. There was even known to be a substantial threat in the rear in the form of a large force under Bougainville. Wolfe had seen light infantry used at Louisbourg and he knew that it could work well on its own. His faith was justified when Bougainville did send a detachment of infantry and cavalry to take the British

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29 The French did, in fact, try to break another British siege that month, this time at Fort Niagara, with 1700 men. J. Amherst, 151.

30 Ibid., 179.

in the rear. These were summarily repulsed by the light infantry.[31]

Movement from irregulars to regulars was thus not always that clear cut in North America. In several instances the British were realizing that irregulars still had real value. Here, however, the retention of irregulars would not seem to have been prompted by events during Braddock's Defeat.

In Europe there was never any question that *jägers* would do the job adequately. They were not always as independent as in logistics, however. While the allied army was waiting north of Minden on July 21, 1759, they were attacked in the rear by a detachment of French. This move was more detrimental to the French, though, since eight hundred *jägers* and cavalry not only drove them back, but followed them through Osnabrück, seizing the town to secure the right flank of the army and to use it as a base to operate against French communications.[32]

As in other areas then, developments in North America were different from those in Europe. Both areas contained a number of important successes by light troops in the rearguard, however, so it cannot be said conclusively that the British would have built upon the information gained from one or the other. It would seem, though, that light troops proved their worth as a rearguard more on a tactical level, on the battlefield itself, while in Europe it was on an operational level, covering the movement of armies

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31 Willson, Wolfe, 490.

32 Savory, 153.

throughout the campaigning area.

Braddock's Defeat provided both a negative and a positive reinforcing example on the operational level. The lack of success of the advance guard showed that a different approach was needed, and the only light troops available in a hurry to the British in 1755 were the rangers. By the positive reinforcing example of the rearguard it was proven that irregular tactics could work quite well in peripheral protection. The rangers proved that they could do the job adequately until light infantry became available to replace them. Once they were, Amherst set about experimenting with their role both in the advance guard and in the rearguard, and found this satisfactory in both. Some officers agreed with him, while others believed that irregulars were still the best troops suited to peripheral protection. Consequently, rangers remained part of peripheral protection for a time, in a way that irregulars in Europe never did. Nevertheless, light infantry were beginning to push the rangers out of these positions, becoming more European in style. The end product was similar in many respects to the European model, but the path of development that was followed was unique and independent.

CHAPTER FOUR

TACTICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Most of the strategic and operational tasks that we have seen so far have been independent in nature, detached from the main body of the army. It was also possible for light troops to cooperate more closely with the main body, but usually this took place only during a battle, siege or skirmish, where light troops would be reassigned to tactical roles from their operational ones. These can easily be divided into engagement and post-engagement tactical activities. Engagement activities consisted of direct involvement with the line of battle (usually on the flanks), assaulting fortified positions, and camp protection (usually during sieges). Post-engagement activities consisted of pursuit.

A problem that never seemed to be solved on either side of the Atlantic was where the light troops should be placed when deployed in line of battle. They were used mainly on the flanks but <u>not</u> in the reserve. This in itself is significant, as they were seen as important enough to be sent directly into combat from the very beginning. Skirmishing in front of the main battle line was carried out (primarily in Europe), and light troops were also placed in the centre or on the flanks. Light troops could also be used to open a battle or a siege with an assault on an important position. A range of options were open for their actual employment once their place was determined in the line of battle. They could

either attack directly, or via a wide flanking movement, or they could be used to cut off advanced units of the enemy. After a battle was won or lost, light troops were well suited for either pursuing a retreating foe or for covering the retreat of an army. Skirmishing duties were also open to light troops, outside of a field battle, such as protecting an encamped army. Light troops figured prominently in all these areas, but were more frequently used tactically in Europe, where there were far more field battles than in North America. However, the particular tactics used by British light infantry on the battlefield evolved directly on the North American battlefield, independently of tactics in Europe.

On the Flanks

Traditionally, a light infantryman is thought of as a form of skirmisher whose proper place was in front of the line of battle in open order. This is the stereotypical version that appeared during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars which has little or no place during our period. The systems of Henry Bouquet and the Comte de Saxe did call for the light infantry to skirmish, but this part of the system was rarely put to use in reality, it being found more expedient to integrate the light infantry directly into the battle line on its flanks.

Light troops were used mainly on the peripheries of an army, and fell to the flanks of the army naturally when it was deploying into line of battle from march column. It was also thought that they could not stand up to the heavy musket and artillery fire that

the centre usually sustained in a battle. The only exceptions occurred when a force was composed mainly of light troops. In such a case there was no choice but to put light troops in the centre.

To the mind of the British and allied commanders at the time, light troops belonged on the flanks of the line of battle.[1] They were often particularly well suited to that position because an effort was made to anchor the flanks on woods, swamps, or other similar terrain features that would break up an advance. This would make it easier for light troops to halt an attack on the flanks, and possibly to counterattack. There was less chance for light troops to show their worth in this role in North America than in Europe, but in both regions they were put to good use. Nevertheless, the most decisive use was made in Europe, and this would have had the most important impact on British tactical planning.

From the very first battle for the Hanoverians in the Seven Years War it was clear that the light troops were supposed to be on the flanks. William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, was in command of the allied army at the battle of Hastenbeck, July 26, 1757, and he concurred with this view. He ordered three *jäger* companies under Freytag to hold the high wooded ground to the left of his main battle line called the Obensburg. When the French

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1 It should be noted that the same does not apply to the French or Prussians. Broglie exemplifies French light doctrine at its finest, and he took the fear of front line commitment one step further, making the light infantry into more of a reserve unit. Light infantry were to cover the intervals between the battalions in the line of battle, and were only to engage the enemy units if they had been heavily disordered. (Brent Nosworthy. The Anatomy of Victory: Battle Tactics 1689-1763 (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1990), 333-334) Clearly, the British did not develop their early tactical doctrine for the light infantry from Broglie.

attack came, the main thrusts were directed at the centre and the Obensburg, but the *jägers* were better suited to the terrain, and they were able to hold the French off successfully for a considerable period of time.[2]

This battle had been largely a defensive battle, but Ferdinand showed that light troops could be used successfully on the flanks in an offensive battle as well, if supported by regular troops. When Ferdinand emerged from his Diemel river position in the spring of 1762 he preceded his attack on the main French army by an attack on the French right at Sababurg, in a large wood. This was carried out by a brigade of cavalry and four light infantry battalions (including Fraser's Chasseurs) supported by several guns. They were successful, and on June 21 Sababurg fell.[3] The British thus saw firsthand how well light infantry could work if supported.

It would appear that Cumberland was able to communicate this information as early as 1757, after Hastenbeck, for the British were making reforms on their own in 1758 in North America. In July of that year 530 provincials, rangers, and light infantry were sent in pursuit of a French raiding force. On August 8 the detachment was ambushed by five hundred French, but the British were able to deploy immediately. The rangers were unsupported on the right, but the light infantry on the left under Colonel Partridge had provincial troops to support it, while Gages Light Infantry was in

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2 Savory, 31-34.

3 Ibid., 368.

the centre. However, the main French attacks fell on the centre and on the right, so the experiment could not be well tested. Furthermore, the rangers repulsed all attempts to dislodge them and forced the French to flee. The losses reported by Rogers (probably somewhat exaggerated to garner praise from his superiors) were 169 French killed to only thirty-three British casualties (killed, wounded, and missing). Certainly the rangers on the right and Gages Light Infantry in the centre had done a great deal of execution even without support.[4]

This episode did not stymie attempts to strengthen light troops with regular infantry, unlike other areas where irregulars had shown their worth. The force of light troops guarding the bridge near Fort Carillon in 1759 did have grenadiers in direct support of the right flank, and a second line behind consisted of one regular infantry regiment and two provincial regiments, which were to move up in support of the first line should it be attacked.[5]

However, Wolfe must have been impressed by Rogers and Partridge's escapades, for when he drew up his battle line on the Plains of Abraham with two battalions of the 60th and a detachment of light infantry on the far left of the line, they were only supported to their right by a highland battalion. This was a natural evolution from Wolfe's earlier views, before he came to

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4 Robert Rogers, 85-86.

5 W. Amherst, 46.

North America, for as early as 1755 he was developing a battle line where the specialist companies (the grenadiers and the piquets) were to protect the flanks of each battalion.[6] Wolfe, like Amherst, could be reactionary at times, but his views in this instance appeared to be vindicated, for the light infantry performed well. Howe took two companies of light infantry around the French right flank and carried out hit and run raids to draw French attention away from the main line. Near the end of the battle he helped to complete the rout, as the French right saw the centre disintegrating at the same time as they were being opposed to their front and rear, so they withdrew.[7] The light infantry were, after all, in their element, as they were fighting in open woods, and there was no serious opposition other than Canadian militia and Indians.[8] With Wolfe's death on the Plains of Abraham, though, the development of the system of support was continued by other commanders.

This system was put to the test under Murray at the battle of Ste. Foy, near Quebec, on April 28, 1760. There the entire British battle line was composed of regulars with the sole exception of one battalion of the 60th on the right.[9] However, in front of either

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6 Wolfe, Instructions, 49.

7 General George Townshend to William Pitt, 20 Sept. 1759, James Wolfe, Siege of Quebec, 7.

3 Willson, Wolfe, 449.

9 This is the one instance in either North America or Europe where the sources list light infantry as being in the reserve. Another battalion of the 60th and a regular regiment were placed there during the battle. The presence of the light infantry was perhaps due to the fear of envelopment by French light troops.

flank was placed a line of light infantry and rangers.[10] These were not really a skirmish line, as they did not cover the entire battle line, and the light infantry were deployed in close order. Theoretically the regulars behind them were supposed to support them, but let us hear just how well the system worked from Murray himself. According to him, the light infantry,

> with great spirit, forced [a French] corps of grenadiers from a house they occupied to cover their left. Here [Major Dalling] and several of his officers were wounded; his men, however, pursued the fugitives to the second line, which checked our light infantry, who immediately dispersed along the front of our right, which prevented Colonel Burton from taking the advantage of the first impression made on that left flank. The light infantry was immediately ordered to clear the front and regain the right; but in attempting this, they were charged, thrown into confusion, retired to the rear, and never again could be brought up during the action.[11]

Too much seems to have been expected of light infantry alone. In this case everything did go well at first, but problems arose during the pursuit of the first line (which was a general problem with pursuits, as will be seen), and when things did start to go wrong it was too late to offer support. Lévis concurred with this view, and felt "that [Murray] would have beat him if he had supported the attack of the Light Infantry, which fell on the left of the Corps which was formed and would have hindered the other troops from marching up," according to Amherst.[12]

With this lesson and further experimentation, near perfection

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10 On the right and left respectively. Note that the position of honour was given to the regulars again. This is an indication of the replacement of irregulars with regulars.

11 Murray, 27.

12 J. Amherst, 252.

was achieved by 1762. During the invasion of Martinique in January, 1762 the British found their way barred by French troops entrenched atop Morne Grenier and Morne Tortensson, which were two wooded hills. Clearly, the terrain dictated some involvement by light troops, so Major Scott (once again at the head of an ad-hoc corps) and his light infantry were called upon to assault Morne Tortensson. It is unlikely that they could have done much alone, as the French positions were well constructed, so a complete brigade of regular infantry and a detachment of grenadiers was attached to the assault. On January 24 the attack went ahead as planned, and the grenadiers went straight for the trenches while the light infantry and regular infantry outflanked the French positions. The grenadiers were, not surprisingly, unable to make much headway, although they did pin the French in place. The issue was decided by the arrival of the light infantry and regular infantry on the flanks of the French, threatening encirclement, so the French promptly retreated.[13] Thus, after much experimentation in both Europe and in North America, the same system of use of light infantry on the flanks of an army was reached in both locales by 1762 -- by separate paths. The British path was no more straight than the German one, and it is intriguing that after so many successes, failures, wrong turns and new ideas that both armies should arrive at the same place at the same time. This is perhaps not so coincidental, as reforms were begun at the same

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13 Julian Stafford Corbett, England in the Seven Years War: A Study in Combined Strategy, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1918), 2:223.

time, in 1758. That the process took as long as it did can be explained partially by the need to experiment with different methods, and partially by the fact that there were voices of reaction resisting change. What is interesting is that in North America these reactionaries advocated singular reliance on light infantry, as had been done at the start of the war, while in Europe they advocated use of regular infantry, as had been done before the war. Very divergent developments had led to the same product.

Assaulting Strong Positions

Once the need to determine the place and conditions of use had been established for light troops, there still remained their tactical mission. They were called upon to perform a variety of manoeuvres, including wide flanking movements, assaults on strong positions, and cutting off advance parties. Flanking manoeuvres were proposed several times in North America but were seldom employed due to the biases of the commanders. Light troops were used to cut off outposts both at Fort Carillon and Louisbourg, being trusted to approach a fortress in a way that they were not in Europe. However, the most unique involvement of light troops in North America was in assaults.

Morne Tortensson was not the only assault on a fortified position in which light troops were involved. Here, firepower and the raw shock value of the attacking troops was what carried a position. Close order was best for shock value, and light infantry

could be used in close order -- essentially as heavy infantry -- in addition to bringing accurate fire to bear. Being able to assault a strong position was a test for the worth of light infantry in close order. There was less of a need to send the units into their "bath of fire" in Europe, as assaults on strong positions were seen as the domain of regular infantry, and specifically grenadiers. In North America, by contrast, light infantry were used on several occasions in this manner with great success.

At the beginning of the war the British were still using the European system whereby grenadiers were allocated to assault missions. Braddock used them on his march, supported by other regulars, to clear and hold heights that would be dangerous if held by the enemy.[14] This worked well until the actual battle. There the British failed to secure the high ground early on, so the Indians were able to pour down a very effective fire from that quarter. Attempts were made to take the hill, but the fire of the Indians proved superior, and the regulars lost all cohesion.[15]

Due to the wooded nature of the North American battlefield it was realized quickly that light troops would be an important part of any assault, since their accurate firepower could prove decisive. Consequently, the next time high ground needed to be taken, the rangers were called upon. On July 6, 1758 after the

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14 Kopperman, 13.

15 Ibid., 61.

landing of Abercromby's army at the head of Lake George, the rangers were ordered to take the high ground commanding the landing site.[16] The following July they were ordered to take the bridge leading from the landing site to Fort Carillon, which they did, then drove the French from the high ground dominating the bridge.[17] Soon the rangers were even involved in assaulting fortified positions. On July 23 Rogers was sent with two hundred men to attack a small entrenchment near the fort, and he succeeded.[18]

This involvement was next extended to the light infantry. After sailing down the St. Lawrence, the first troops that Wolfe put ashore on the Ile d'Orleans were the rangers and light infantry, "to reconnoitre the country," in spite of the fact that it was not known whether the landing would be opposed.[19] Light infantry were thus drawn into the system to support the rangers while they performed scouting activities. During the siege of Quebec the French erected strong works atop the Beauport shore, consisting of abatis, redoubts, and breastworks. To get to these it was necessary to ascend a steep wooded slope from the tidal flats below. Wolfe toyed with a number of options for breaking these lines. The one actually decided upon detailed nine companies of grenadiers to land and force an advanced entrenchment on July 31, but these were forced back by superior French fire.[20] This made

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16 Robert Rogers, 81.
17 Ibid., 100.
18 Ibid., 101.
19 Wolfe, Instructions, 70.
20 Corbett, 1:441.

Wolfe certain that another option that had not been tried would have been the correct one. This one included having the light infantry scale the heights to establish a foothold within the works after a night march. According to Wolfe, "the light infantry have a good chance to get up the woody hill; trying different places and moving quick to the right, would soon discover a proper place for the rest."[21]

Indeed, six weeks later the light infantry were given their chance to prove themselves when they were sent to climb the cliffs at the Anse au Foulon. Under enemy fire, Colonel William Howe led twenty-four light infantry up the track before dawn.[22] They not only overpowered the sentries at the top, but went on to take and silence two batteries in the rear that had been firing on the British ships below.[23] Wolfe's trust had been vindicated completely.

This trend continued, and in late August of 1760 Amherst was making plans to take Fort Lévis by direct assault. At first these plans included only the grenadiers and two howitzers, but then, as if he suddenly remembered the performance of the rangers two years before, 300 light infantry were ordered to assist. This combination would have been excellent, with the fire of the light infantry neutralizing the French and allowing the grenadiers to storm the walls, but it was never tested, as the French surrendered

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21 Willson, Wolfe, 466.

22 Fuller, Light Infantry, 94.

23 Corbett, 1:468.

on August 25.[24] Nevertheless, it does show an increasing attempt to integrate light infantry tactics with regular ones.

Finally, this integration was tested during the assault on Morne Grenier and Morne Tortensson. While Scott's Light Infantry and the grenadiers were working together to take Morne Tortensson, Major Leland and another detachment of light infantry had a chance to test their skills directly against a redoubt on the top of Morne Grenier. In the night after the assault against Morne Tortensson, Leland was sent around the right of the French positions and managed to capture the redoubt with a mortar and eight guns inside. With support from highlanders and other regulars moving up from below, Leland soon had control of the whole hill.[25] The system did work.

Here light infantry were once again replacing irregulars in a trend that had begun with the rangers' replacement of regulars, or at least their more direct involvement with them. The year 1759 seems to have been very important for this replacement, and it has been shown that signs of change began to appear in 1758. This is the one area that we have seen so far where light troops in Europe were not involved in such developments at all. British inclusion of light troops in assault activities followed a completely independent line of development, and was the logical adjunct to developments in other areas. The simple fact that there was at

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24 W. Amherst, 65.

25 Corbett, 2:224.

least one such independent development shows that the British were pursuing a separate line of experimentation in North America. Once again, Amherst and Wolfe figure prominently in this development, being eager to experiment with new ideas. They were true products of the enlightenment.

Pursuing Beaten Enemies

Light troops were also useful in a pursuit or a retreat. Logically, one would think that pursuit was best performed only by cavalry, but a second glance reveals that light infantry was quite suited to this role as well. The vast majority of most field armies at the time were composed of infantry, and this was especially so in North America. Consequently, pursuing troops could move at the same speed as fleeing troops. In addition to this, cavalry was best used in a mass shock attack, and by the time an army was retreating this shock had already taken its toll. The tendency of a retreating army was to disperse, and here light infantry was much more suitable than most cavalry, since it was capable of operating in open order. Similar arguments apply to light infantry's value in a retreat. Light infantry could deploy quickly from movement column to line if the pursuers drew too close. Cavalry was more necessary in this instance, however, to offset that of the enemy and to launch spoiling charges. Both armies were usually exhausted by the end of the day, though, so effective pursuit was rare. Consequently, although light troops were involved in rearguard actions, they rarely got a chance to

prove their mettle. The only real difference between the North American and European battlefields is that in North America light troops alone were deemed sufficient to escort an army out of danger, while in Europe they were combined with other arms. This was mainly due to the differential strength and nature of the forces arrayed against them.

Following the failed attack on Fort Carillon in 1758, the rangers formed the rearguard without assistance.[26] They were effective, since the only pursuit expected would have been from Indian auxiliaries, as the French troop, in the fort were much too tired to pursue. By contrast, at the battle of Sandershausen the retreat of the allied army was covered by grenadiers and cavalry, assisted by *jägers*. The pursuing French were still quite strong and included a substantial cavalry force, so light troops alone would not have sufficed.[27] What is important is that light troops were used as rearguards in both Europe and North America.

Since pursuit was a more active role, light troops had a better chance to prove how useful they could be after a victory. There were no real field victories for the British to exploit in North America until 1758 at Gabarus Bay, but this was not followed up due to the exhaustion of the landing forces.

Amherst got a chance to try such practices out the next year during his advance on Fort Carillon. Following a sortie from the

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26 Robert Rogers, 84.

27 Savory, 99.

fort by a party of Indians that killed a working party on July 2, a detachment of light infantry and rangers were sent after the raiders. The pursuers arrived too late.[28] It is noteworthy that in this instance Amherst used light infantry in pursuit, as opposed to regular infantry. He must have been satisfied that these were best suited to the role, even if the results were not what they could have been. As in other areas, Colonel Haviland shared the views of his superior. When Indians ambushed a British detachment near Fort Edward on May 13, 1760, Haviland sent Rogers with sixty rangers and thirty light infantry after the Indians. Once again, the raiders were able to escape without injury.[29] It is a testament to how firmly light infantry was valued in this role that they continued to be used despite such failures.

Rogers finally got a chance to prove that Amherst and Haviland's beliefs were justified. Following the French evacuation of Isle aux Noix on August 25, Haviland sent Rogers in pursuit with four hundred rangers and two companies of Indians. Almost immediately two prisoners were taken, and this allowed Rogers to determine the direction of the retreat. Consequently, he came upon the French rearguard of two hundred men, and surprised and dispersed them with heavy loss.[30] Almost certainly, this success can be attributed to the increased number of men involved, but the British did not have a chance to expand upon this success during

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28 W. Amherst, 27.

29 J. Amherst, 200.

30 Robert Rogers, 139-140.

the war for the North American conflict ended soon thereafter. The lesson was not lost on the British officers, however. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Bouquet of the 60th Royal Americans was to note that light troops were to be "enabled by exercise to pursue the enemy closely, when put to flight, and not give them time to rally."[31]

Interestingly, light troops in Europe did not begin to be used in this role until mid-1760; long after the British had begun experimenting in this area. It is obvious that the developments in the British army were independent of those in Europe. Due to the power of field armies in Europe, even when defeated, light troops could not be as effective in pursuit. They tended to be used in pursuit of smaller forces or, if pursuing the whole enemy army, to watch their movements only.

Light troops in Europe did move through a series of stages to a more and more active role in the pursuit of larger and larger enemy forces though. In North America there was less of a possibility to experiment with larger pursuits, as French field armies there were small. There, the problem was less with the size of the pursued, but more with the size of forces available with which to pursue. In both places, through different evolutions, an acceptable formula for the role of light troops in pursuit was found.

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31 Fuller, Light Infantry, 108.

Camp Protection

Although there were many important battles during this period which resulted in retreats and pursuits, sieges were far more commonplace during the eighteenth century. It should not be thought, however, that a siege prevented direct contact between opposing forces. Sieges without at least one sortie by the garrison were rare, and more than one was common. Sorties took the form of a harassment; siege batteries and trenches were destroyed to delay the inevitable or to buy time for a relief force to arrive. Unchecked, such sorties could lead to the lifting of a siege. Consequently, protecting the besieging army from the besieged became important. This was best done by a mobile response force or a screen in front of the working parties. Light troops were well suited to these roles, but their value was exploited fully only in North America. Here, this role was a natural evolution from the important protectional role that while an army was on the move, in the way that light infantry were drawn to the flanks naturally in a battle. Essentially, light troops were drawn in closer when an army was at rest.

In the absence of Loudoun from Fort Edward in the summer of 1757 his provincial attaché, Colonel Phineas Lyman, was able to experiment on his own with these ideas by using the provincial troops at hand at Fort Edward. On June 5 Captain Putnam's ranger company of thirty-three men was ordered to be ready to "March at

an Hours Warning."[32] They were to act as a rapid response force to any threat to the camp, coming up to support the picquets immediately.[33] By August 19 the rangers had taken over all camp protection duties, being on patrol throughout the night.[34] This is the first known instance in North America of such duties being given exclusively to light troops, and apparently Lyman's experiments were watched with some interest by other provincial and British officers, as they reappeared the next year.

There were no offensive siege operations in North America in which the light troops could have been involved until 1758, however. That year was very important as it saw two large sieges -- against Louisbourg and Fort Carillon. Unlike other areas, Rogers was not the first to be involved with experimentation in such a role, as he was at Halifax during Lyman's experiments. However, Rogers' efforts at Fort Carillon in 1758 and those at Louisbourg that same year were to prove independently the value of light troops in a close protective capacity, in the face of a real threat by the enemy, building and expanding on Lyman's experiments.

It was not mere coincidence that the British took up a blocking position on the high ground between Fort Carillon and the landing site on Lake George in 1759. This was designed to pre-empt any sorties from the garrison like the potentially damaging one in 1758. On July 6 of that year Rogers had been guarding the left

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32 Loudoun and Lyman, 19.
33 Ibid., 50.
34 Ibid., 70.

flank of the army while it was in march column near the fort. When he heard that a sizeable body of French had done a wide circuit around the army after coming from the fort, and were now attacking the rear of the army, he set out on his own to show what his rangers could do. Leaving 150 men on the left flank of the British army he took 450 men against the left flank of the attacking French. Lord Howe (who died in the combat) had decided to do the same against their right flank with his light infantry, and together they enveloped the French, taking 167 prisoners.[35] This was the largest victory won solely by light troops in the North American conflict, and it went a long way towards showing just how valuable and effective they could be in such a role.

Wolfe was the first officer to advocate the effectiveness of light troops in a close protective capacity at Louisbourg. Immediately after landing successfully at Gabarus Bay on June 8 he began formulating schemes for their use. To keep the garrison bottled up and to prevent relief efforts he proposed setting up two posts of two hundred regulars and one company of rangers each, at L'Orembec and at the end of the Northeast harbour. The rangers in these detachments were to play the most important role, as they were "to keep a constant patrol, to endeavour to intercept any of the inhabitants of the island, Canadians or others; at least, to give notice of their march . . . "[36] Wolfe thus believed that

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35 Robert Rogers, 82.

36 Willson, Wolfe, 374.

rangers were still useful, but with their own range of activities, and the light infantry were to play an even more crucial role. Under Wolfe's system they were to guard the communications between the main camp and the battery at Lighthouse Point, at the same time acting as a mobile response force under Major Scott against any sallies.[37]

Amherst was convinced and accepted Wolfe's unmodified proposals. The wisdom of this choice was revealed soon after, when on June 13 two hundred French sallied from the fortress. There were forty British at the point of attack, and these were soon joined by "some of the Light Infantry," who drove the French back and caused forty-five casualties.[38] Amherst was suitably impressed, and now went further towards placing his trust in them. Five pickets and "a large body of Light Infantry," were sent closer to the northeast end of the town to interrupt any sorties more directly.[39] This was also a wise decision, as the French planned to sortie once again.

On the night of June 26 a detachment of the Guards was building a redoubt on strategic Green Hill to protect the projected construction of a breaching battery. Suddenly, they were attacked by a party of sixty French, and as Colonel William Amherst (Jeffery's brother and currently his aide de camp) tells us, "The

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37 Ibid., 376. Wolfe used the same system the next year to protect the army while encamped both on the Ile d'Orleans and to the west of Montmorenci falls. There the light infantry were ordered to be ready to march at a moment's notice against any threats. No other units were alerted in this way. (Wolfe, Instructions, 87).

38 J. Amherst, 52.

39 Ibid., 55.

Guard maintained their ground till the Light Infantry came up," but it was Scott who saved the day by driving the French back before they could cause much damage.[40] It is indeed significant that light infantry were able to do better than an elite unit like the Guards and this shows just how effective they could be in a close protective role. Evidently, Amherst thought so, for he added two hundred more light infantry to Major Scott's force the next day.[41]

In Amherst's campaign against Fort Carillon the next year the light infantry were put into a close protective role without hesitation. Prior to his departure from Fort Edward on June 14 he "ordered out the Light Infantry, Grenadiers and Rangers to make a general search round the Camp to try if there were any lurking Indians but found none."[42] Apparently Amherst was not willing to give up completely on the elite grenadiers at this time, but he showed where he placed his greatest trust later in the march. On July 2 he heard shooting and learned of a brush cutting party being attacked by Indians beyond the patrol zone of the flankers. According to Amherst, he "sent instantly to a Company of Light Infantry and Rangers, and they were out as soon as possible . . . "[43] Amherst's response was to call upon his light troops first, as the most capable troops with the fastest response time. Once the siege had begun, Amherst experimented with a more offensive form

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40 W. Amherst, 19.
41 J. Amherst, 59.
42 Ibid., 120.
43 Ibid., 130.

of camp protection. Learning from experiences at Louisbourg, Amherst also sought to pre-empt any sorties, reasoning that the best protection that he could afford his working parties was to keep the French too occupied with defending themselves to act offensively. Consequently, on the night of July 25, sixty rangers were sent to fire into the covered way of the fort to alarm the French.[44] Apparently, this type of protection was successful, for there were no major sorties like there had been at Louisbourg.[45]

In Europe the opposition was often much stronger, fortresses carried heavier and larger calibre guns, and so light troops could not be as effective in a close protective capacity, even though they were supposed to protect an army whether it was encamped or on the march.[46] They are little mentioned as acting as such during sieges or protecting an encamped army, if at all. The few times that they were used like this did not impress contemporaries. On July 2, 1761 Ferdinand's army was encamped at Dortmund ringed by light troops. These brushed with French forces, but the Marquis of Granby, commanding the British contingent, described these as "Frequent skirmishes but nothing of much importance . . . "[47]

Thus, light infantry entered a close protective role fairly

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44 O'Callaghan, Orderly Book, 97.

45 There were, of course, other contributing factors. The garrison of Fort Carillon was smaller, and the fort's guns were not as powerful, to name a few.

46 J.-L. Le Cointe. The Science of Military Posts, for the Use of Regimental Officers, who Frequently Command Detached Parties. (Translated from the French and with an introduction by a British officer.) 1761., iv. Apparently they were to fulfil little more than an alerting informative role, however, since Thomas Simes (who had served in Germany in the Seven Years War) wrote in 1776 that the camp was only to be guarded by small groups of six sentries each -- hardly enough to make any effective resistance much less an effective light infantry unit. (Simes, 24)

47 Savory, 320.

late in the war, but over the three years that they were employed as such in North America they proved that they were very effective, and very valuable. Unlike Hanoverian light troops, North American conditions permitted the light infantry to rise even above elite troops in effectiveness in this area.

It can be seen that light infantry was useful tactically as well. There were few field battles in North America at which light troops could prove their worth, but at each one they did. At Quebec they were invaluable twice -- once in 1759 and once in 1760. Their lack of success in 1760 was more due tc the system of support, rather than any internal composition problem. Once their role in victory had been accomplished, they proved that they were still able to be useful in pursuite, but here their main successes were against hit and run raids, as opposed to the pursuit of large armies. Light infantry could not have been deemed <u>completely</u> successful as an eighteenth century unit had they not been useful in sieges as well. At Louisbourg and Fort Carillon, they showed that they were not only useful but <u>necessary</u> to bring a siege to a swift and successful conclusion. But perhaps the most important development for our purposes was the ability to assault strong positions. This was unique to British light infantry and shows that there was independent development taking place.

CHAPTER FIVE

GOVERNMENT AND OFFICER CORPS INVOLVEMENT

For this integration to take place, there had to be a substantial commitment to North America both in terms of officers and in men so that there would be a pool to draw upon of those wishing to experiment, and a large enough body of men with which to experiment. For this, there had to be a government willing to concentrate on North America as a major front, and Prime Minister William Pitt, seconded ably by Lord John Ligonier as Commander-in-Chief, did just this throughout most of the war. Pitt has come under some criticism recently, and Pargellis in particular argues that, "There are some grounds for believing that [Pitt] hindered quite as much as he contributed to the prosecution of the war."[1] This may have been so for the war in Germany, but Pitt's insistence on sending more and more troops to North America was crucial for the internal development of light infantry. Furthermore, Pitt left the details of running the army to the Commander-in-Chief in North America, including what type of training the troops were to receive. Loudoun was told specifically that it was up to him "to decide on the Time and Manner of Carrying these Attempts into Execution . . ."[2] Pitt and Ligonier also sent picked men to run

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1 Pargellis, Loudoun, 231.

2 Ibid., 232.

the main front for Britain, and were willing to listen to their new ideas.

Indeed, these latter were the most important for the development of light infantry. Without some support from influential members of the officer corps who were willing to experiment with new ideas, it is highly unlikely that the new ideas could have been absorbed at all. They were the vehicles of change within the British army, and men such as Jeffery Amherst and James Wolfe were reformers in the true sense of the word. They were products of the enlightenment, willing to develop new ideas through the use of reason and to experiment with those ideas.

Once these ideas had reached a full stage of development, if they were to lead to any lasting reforms they would have to be codified and somehow accepted into general military practice. It was one thing for an officer to use a system that he had developed but quite another to bring it into general use. One way of doing this was by writing a drill manual, a training manual, or a new system such as "forest fighting". Few of these were printed by British officers serving in North America, but those that were reveal a lot. Another method was by training a core of men around which other units could be built or spread slowly across a number of units. This could be combined with new drill manuals. Extensive training for light infantry was not to begin until Sir John Moore ran the Shorncliffe camp in the first decade of the nineteenth century, but men like Lord Howe were visionaries in this regard and this was certainly the dawn of a new era.

Commitment to the War in North America

Without a positive response by the government, however, this training could not have occurred, and had there been no firm commitment to North America, light infantry would not have developed in the way that they did, if at all. Prime Minister William Pitt and Commander-in-Chief Lord Ligonier both believed in sending large numbers of men to North America, making that the main theatre of war for the British. The necessary preconditions were also present for this support; namely, "the strength of [the British] economy, the relative sophistocation of their public finance and confidence in the stability of the ministry."[3] Heretofore undreamt of attention was thus focused on North America, opening up possibilities for learning from experiences there in a much more important way than had been done before.

At the outset of hostilities in 1754, all eyes in Britain were focused on North America, as there was no conflict with any of the European nations. The excitement of the North American conflict was riveting until late 1756, when Frederick invaded Saxony and the French captured Minorca. For the first two years of the conflict then, the British were able to concentrate almost exclusively on developments in North America. Those two years were crucial in fostering an environment favourable to the creation of light infantry units.

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3 Jeremy Black, A System of Ambition?: British Foreign Policy 1660-1793 (New York: Longman, 1991), 194.

Even when general war did come in 1756 there were almost no preparations in Hanover, since plans were already forming for the capture of Louisbourg in 1757. For this, eight regiments -- the largest British commitment to North America yet -- were organized in January of 1757, sailing on April 16.[4] This proves that a general war in Europe did not draw attention away from North America entirely. Pitt was almost wholly responsible for this attention, having been Prime Minister throughout most of the previous year.

Things began to change as the war in Hanover was steadily lost. It became apparent that Hanover would need more substantial help, but once again North America received priority. The 1758 Louisbourg expedition sailed with eleven thousand men.[5] In spite of the rising cost of the war in North America, the funds were still granted. The nine ranger companies present by the summer of 1758 were the same size as a regular regiment, but cost £35,000 annually to maintain -- £15,000 more than a regular regiment would have cost.[6] Nevertheless, 1758 marked the beginning of a more active British commitment on the Continent. The first contingent of British troops to join Ferdinand on active campaign reached him on August 11 and many British officers were clamouring to go with them. Pitt still advocated concentrating on North America, however, and officers like Amherst and Wolfe were forced to stay

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4 Corbett, 1:156.

5 Ibid., 1:307.

6 Pargellis, Loudoun, 303.

and make the best of it -- which they did admirably. Riding a wave of public opinion that was still favourable to colonial commitments, Pitt planned an even larger commitment to North America for 1759, with substantial reinforcements designated for Quebec, and a large force for the commencement of operations in the West Indies. This brought the total commitment in North America to over thirty thousand men, not including provincial and garrison troops.[7] By April 1760 the total Continental British commitment was twenty thousand men -- only two-thirds of the total North American troop strength.[8]

It was not until late 1758 that there were any substantial number of British officers present to learn directly from the Germans. Any information that would have come from there would have come only in the form of manuals, news, or the few British officers that were present as observers. Impression by direct example and experience is sometimes the best method for learning and digesting new ideas, and this was not generally available to the British from Germany until late 1758. Even until 1760 the commitment remained rather small, and North America was the larger source of integrated material until that time.

It is significant that most of the developments around the use of British light infantry began in mid-1758, before the British received any substantial information from their experiences on the

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7 H.C.B. Rogers, 131.

8 Corbett, 2:83.

Continent. In fact, the Hessian and Brunswick mercenaries, whose composition was determined partially by their British purchasers, did not include *jäger* units until 1758 and 1759 respectively.[9] This shows that British experiences in North America were being brought to bear in an indirect way even in Europe.

Attitude of the Officer Corps

Although governmental support was thus present, the crucial support of the officer corps remained to be won. This was the most important ingredient in the development of light infantry, for if the whole British Army had been sent to North America it would have meant nothing had the officers been unwilling to learn from their experience there. Fortunately many officers were willing, and this opened the way for new developments such as the introduction and increased use of light infantry in the British Army.

It was mainly the younger officers who were most influential in the development of light infantry. As Pargellis says, "a European soldier needed either youth or time to adapt his ideas," to North American conditions.[10] They were anxious to prove their own worth to their superiors and to history, and the evolution of new ideas was one way to earn pride of place. This is not to say that the older men did not play a part. Older men like Lord Loudoun and James Abercromby (both fifty-one in 1756) could be

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9 Savory, 454-456.

10 Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, xix.

receptive to new ideas, and could even develop them themselves. However, it remained to the younger men to put these ideas into extensive practice. There were many variables that could influence the receptiveness of an officer to new ideas and experimentation with them, however. An important factor was whether one had any prior experience with light troops on European battlefields. Many British officers had seen how effective light troops could be, both during the War of Austrian Succession and during the early stages of the Seven Years War in Europe. This experience was largely of an observatory nature, however, and not the beginning of any large-scale development of light infantry as Russell suggests. It was the opinion of light troops that was formed at this time that later became important in facilitating the rise in status that light troops experienced in North America. Rank was also important. Very few officers under the rank of colonel were responsible for introducing new ideas, and even those colonels who were involved were experimenters in the main, and not inventors, following the ideas advocated by their superiors. Fortunately there were enough high ranking inventors, and the number of them increased over time as more and more officers were converted to believing in the value of light infantry in a variety of roles.

In the beginning there were few of these "inventors". Braddock tried to be one of them, but circumstances were not in his favour, and he had no experience in the new methods, being unable or unwilling to adopt them wholeheartedly. When Braddock was sent to North America in 1755 as Commander-in-Chief, he was

responsible to the younger, more inventive Duke of Cumberland who remained in England. Cumberland had experienced the value of light infantry first hand, when the first prototypes created by Saxe broke up his advance at Fontenoy in 1745. As a result, he used light troops during his pursuit of the Jacobite forces to Culloden during the Highland rebellion. In particular, he raised a unit of light troops in England called the "Georgia rangers", originally intended for use in Georgia.[11] These were, as the name suggests, purely irregulars, as they were only used in "small patroles", and were "supported by parties of the regulars," as Cumberland tells us, and were developed more along the lines of pandours or similar Austrian irregular troops, rather than Anglo-American rangers. This was thus not a true light infantry unit, and Cumberland cannot receive credit for their original creation, as Russell seems to suggest.[12] He was convinced of the value of light troops, however, and when Hanoverian light troops were made available to him at Hastenbeck in 1757 he made good use of them. However, in all instances he used light troops in a European manner, drawing no noticeable influence from the Anglo-American rangers or Indian techniques.

This experience with light troops was quite important, however, as it made Cumberland favourable to the inclusion of light troops in Braddock's army in 1755. He allowed Braddock to find

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11 Russell, 637.

12 Ibid.

"such additional Provincial Troops and Irregulars as he may find necessary," to augment his forces.[13]

As the first Commander-in-Chief in North America, Braddock was in his later years (he was 60), and was not receptive enough to new ideas. Fortunately for light infantry, he had several advisors in addition to Cumberland who appreciated the value of light troops. As Fuller says, "there existed in the colonies a class of men from whom, had [Braddock] grasped what Indian warfare meant, he could, in a few weeks, have raised a force which would have defied defeat."[14] A few of these men were present with the expedition. One of these was Sir John St. Clair, and had it not been for his influence it is doubtful that troops like the rangers would have been successfully raised for the expedition. His influence was later replaced by George Washington's, and the importance of this man should not be underestimated, however overemphasized it is by American historians. As we have seen, Washington tried to integrate Indian tactics, and this must have been communicated to Braddock at some point. Both Washington and Stephen advised the British officers with the expedition to train their men in the use of Indian tactics, but this could not have been done without Braddock's sanction.[15] This was in fact given, and Braddock was convinced of the value of irregulars. While raising troops in the spring of 1755, Braddock wrote, "I purpose

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13 Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 134.

14 Fuller, Light Infantry, 80.

15 Kopperman, 104.

to form . . . the following Establishm't which has been agreed to by Gov'r Dinwiddie . . . Four Companies of Foot Rangers or six, if I can get them [of 59 men and officers each] . . ."[16] Most certainly, these ideas would have had an impact on the officers present. Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Gage was friendly with Washington during the expedition, and it was probably as a direct result of this association that Gages Light Infantry was raised -- but only after Braddock was dead.

Certainly there were other officers in North America without any European experience with light troops who were willing to give the new ideas room to grow. Major-General Johnson recognized the value of irregulars in several areas early on when he suggested that, "Irregulars can the best of any Forces in the World Cover His Majesty's Troops thro' these Woods to where their proper Scene of Action lyes. They can also in the Same Manner escort up all their convoys . . ."[17] Johnson was so impressed by Rogers' service in the Crown Point campaign of 1755 that he recommended Rogers to William Alexander, secretary to Governor Shirley of Massachussetts. Shirley was also impressed, partly by Rogers' tales and partly by his letter of introduction (Johnson called him "the most active Man

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16 Braddock to Robert Napier, 17 Mar. 1755, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 78. Braddock was actually able to raise seven companies of rangers, for a total of 372 rangers out of the 800 provincials present. (A Return of the Virginia Mary-Land and North Carolina Troops, Encamp'd at Will's Creek, 8 June 1755, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 88-89.) Unfortunately, most of the men that were raised were not woodsmen. Franklin Nichols cautions that, "No greater error can be made than to classify these troops with Rogers' Rangers . . . who were especially trained and equipped for bushfighting and *la petite guerre.*" (Nichols, 131) They were trained as rangers in the short time available, but they were not as effective as they might have been and were thus not relied upon for scouting or peripheral protection. Braddock preferred to rely on his regulars for peripheral protection. The point that is being made here is that Braddock was unable or unwilling to use his rangers in the manner that would have been most effective.

17 Johnson to Sir Thomas Robinson, 16 Jan. 1756, Sullivan, Johnson Papers, 2:421.

in our Army"), so he gave leave for Rogers to raise an independent company of rangers with Rogers as its captain.[18] This was a quantum leap for light troops, as this ranger unit represented one of the first officially sanctioned light units in the British Army. Shirley was soon replaced by Abercromby as Rogers' superior, but Rogers must have been a convincing orator, for he persuaded Abercromby to give his brother, Richard Rogers, the captaincy of yet another independent ranger company.[19]

Any of the officers that succeeded to the North American command could have killed the concept of integration of light troops easily by relegating them to a less active role, but this was not to be. When Lord Loudoun became Commander-in-Chief in 1756 he reaffirmed the independent status of the two ranger companies, and allowed them to widen their scope of operations. Immediately, he grasped the fact that they could be of use to the army;

> . . . it is impossible for an Army to Act in this Country without Rangers; and there ought to be a considerable body of them, and the breeding them up to that, will be a great advantage to the Country, for they will be able to deal with Indians in their own way . . .[20]

This support was facilitated by the fact that Loudoun had had direct experience with light troops during the War of Austrian

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18 Robert Rogers, 10. Shirley's motives were partially self-serving, as well as admonition of the exploits of the rangers. He was trying to form an exclusively provincial force for service against Crown Point in 1756, and so it would have been in his best interests to promote one of the better provincial units to justify a provincial force through positive example. British officers and government officials alike disapproved of the idea of allowing provincials to pursue an independent course of action, but apparently they did not grasp the significance of this promotion for the Anglo-Americans.

19 Ibid., 17.

20 Loudoun to Cumberland, 22 Nov. 1756, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 269.

Succession. Being from Scotland, Loudoun was used to the irregular tactics used frequently by the Scots, and while under Cumberland during the Highland rebellion he used some of his own clansmen as irregulars to cooperate with the British Army.[21] It would thus be natural to assume that Loudoun would want to have similar troops available in North America, and in fact Loudoun was hoping to get four thousand rangers for the campaign of 1757, but he said that he was willing to settle for two thousand.[22] Nevertheless, Loudoun wanted to ensure that rangers were an acceptable substitute for his highland irregulars, and so sent Captain Abercrombie, nephew to General Abercromby, out on an expedition with the rangers in January of 1757 to give his impressions of them. After seeing an encounter which the rangers won outnumbered three to one, Abercrombie wrote to Rogers after returning that, "You cannot imagine how all ranks of people here are pleased with your conduct and your men's behaviour . . . "[23] Loudoun was one of those so pleased, and authorized the expansion of the establishment of each company from seventy men to one hundred men accordingly. He also soon became the Colonel in chief of the 60th Royal Americans, showing how much faith he had in light troops, and certainly giving their status a boost in the process. Gage was even lent £2600 by Loudoun to help raise Gages Light Infantry.[24] Loudoun firmly

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21 Russell, 637.

22 Loudoun to Cumberland, 22 Nov. 1756, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 279. Even the latter number proved unattainable -- the establishment never rose above nine hundred rangers.

23 Abercrombie to Rogers, 6 Feb. 1757, Robert Rogers, 35.

24 Alden, 42.

believed that Canada could not be conquered by numbers alone -- the situation demanded specialists.[25] Loudoun had learned the value of irregulars in Europe, but it was only in North America that he supported the development of light infantry.

Without question, however, the most important event for the transfer of the irregular techniques of units such as the rangers to regulars was the arrival of Lord Howe at Fort Edward in early 1757. Pargellis has dubbed him "perhaps the ablest officer in the army . . ."[26] Certainly his curiosity was boundless, and he accompanied the rangers on one excursion "to learn our method of marching, ambushing, retreating &c. and upon our return expressed his good opinion of us very generously."[27] Howe was enamoured immediately, and he proposed a training program for light infantry. Loudoun had already contemplated some sort of a replacement the previous winter, as he wrote to Cumberland (who agreed wholeheartedly) that "Some Rangers I shall be obliged to keep all the Winter, till I can make some of our own people fit for that Service."[28] His plan had been to train two companies of every

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25 Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, xviii.

26 Pargellis, Loudoun, 235.

27 Robert Rogers, 41.

28 Loudoun to Cumberland, 20 Aug. 1756, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 224. Cumberland did not place any faith in provincial troops like the rangers. Being an officer of European experience, he placed his faith in regulars and thought that anything the provincials could do, regulars could do better. To Loudoun's letter he responded,

> I hope that you will, in time, teach your Troops to go out upon Scouting Parties: for, 'till Regular Officers with men that they can trust, learn to beat the woods, and to act as Irregulars, you never will gain any certain Intelligence of the Enemy, as I fear, by this time you are convinced that Indian Intelligence and that of Rangers is not at all to be depended upon.
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> Cumberland to Loudoun, 2 Dec. 1756, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 255-256.

The important thing was, however, that Cumberland recognized that forest warfare had different requirements than European warfare, and that regulars could be made to fulfil those requirements.

regular regiment as "ranging companies".[29] Consequently, he was more than happy to approve Howe's program of taking two to seventeen volunteers from each regiment "to be trained to the ranging, or wood-service..."[30] These formed a nucleus for later expansion into light infantry companies. Although Loudoun preceded him with the idea, Howe was crucial for the development of light infantry, for without him it is unlikely that any regulars would have been trained as light infantry. He put into practice what had been thought of previously.

It is true that the 60th Royal Americans were raised in April 1756, with Henry Bouquet and Frederick Haldimand as their lieutenant-colonels, before Howe started his training program, but this regiment was a bit of an anomaly. Bouquet and Haldimand were both Swiss. Although Fuller says that Bouquet "was in no way corrupted by the formal tactics of his age,"[31] he was nevertheless raised with European ideas about the use of light infantry, and he did not really fit into North America at first as a result.[32] In addition to this, the regiment was raised largely in Europe, despite its name. As both officers gained more experience, however, they became more in tune with North American techniques.

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29 Pargellis, Loudoun, 305. This is direct refutation for Peckham's claim that Loudoun was "unimaginative". (Peckham, 157)

Pargellis believes that Loudoun viewed rangers as a necessary evil to be used only until they could be replaced, but then why did Loudoun not take pains to do this as quickly as possible himself? The evidence presented above suggests that he was in fact quite satisfied with rangers, but perhaps he was willing to go either way.

30 Robert Rogers, 41.

31 Fuller, Light Infantry, 101-102.

32 Bouquet had read Turpin de Crissé in its original French version (Russell, 641).

Bouquet showed that he had mastered them at the battle of Bushy Run (August 5-6, 1763), while Haldimand did well as commander of the advance guard during the advance on Fort Lévis. By then Bouquet was a full advocate of American style light infantry, as exemplified by his view that regular infantry "require the assistance of lighter corps, whose dress, arms, and exercises, should be adapted to this new kind of war."[33] Until that time, however, the 60th does not figure prominently in the successes of light infantry, being overshadowed by Gages Light Infantry and Howe's light infantry.

From the creation of the 60th, reliance on light troops increased exponentially as the actions of the rangers and the ministrations of Howe and Rogers increased the status of light troops. In expectation of broadening North American operations to include an attempt on Louisbourg in the summer of 1758 with a large force, Loudoun authorized the formation of four New England ranger companies and one Indian ranger company to augment the two already extant. It was now considered not only desirable, but necessary to have light troops on hand for any operation.

After Abercromby took over from Loudoun, he was able to write;

> Whereas it may be of great use to his Majesty's service in the operations now carrying on for recovering his rights in America, to have a number of men employed in obtaining intelligence of the strength, situation, and motions of the enemy, as well as other services, for which Rangers, or men acquainted with the *woods only are fit* . . . (italics mine)[34]

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33 Ibid., 107.

34 Abercromby to Rogers, 6 Apr. 1758, Robert Rogers, 75.

Six days later we find Howe actually consulting Rogers on matters of strategy! According to Rogers, he "had a most agreeable interview and long conversation concerning the methods of distressing the enemy, and prosecuting the war with vigour the ensuing campaign."[35] The status of light troops and their officers was now quite high.

Another roadblock that the light infantry might have faced was that of the rangers themselves. It might have been anticipated that Rogers would have seen the development of light infantry as a threat to the status of his rangers, but on the contrary he supported them and his valued opinion was added to the weight of others. When his party of 530 rangers, provincials, and regulars, including Gages Light Infantry, was ambushed by five hundred French on August 8, 1758 he found the light infantry a valuable asset. He wrote that they "behaved with great bravery, they being in the center where was at first the hottest fire . . . "[36] When Rogers' background is examined, it becomes apparent why this was the case. He was born in 1731 in Methuen, Massachussetts, but his family soon moved to the frontier town of Dunbarton, New Hampshire.[37] Rogers was thus coming of age at a time and place where guerilla warfare impacted his life directly. From 1745 to 1748, Rogers' home was subjected to numerous hit and run raids by the French and their

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35 Ibid., 76.

36 Ibid., 86.

37 The Encyclopedia Americana: International Edition. 30 vols. (Danbury: Grolier Incorporated, 1989), 23:635.

Indian allies. He would thus have viewed the French as a natural enemy, for the defeat of which any expedient -- even the development of light infantry -- would have been acceptable. Secondly, in addition to living closely with friendly local Indians and learning from them, he also worked closely with British forces during the War of Austrian succession, acting as a scout from 1740 to 1748.[38] He would thus not have been hostile to developments among a friendly force. Indeed, Rogers became a loyalist during the American Revolution. Finally, Rogers was never a strategist or a high ranking officer, nor did he have an expressed desire to be one. The highest rank that he achieved was that of Major, and of the nine ranger companies that he nominally commanded, he never operated directly with more than six. He was thus happy to leave matters involving the British Army proper to higher ranking British officers. As long as he was still an officer and had units to command, Rogers was happy to support any other units that would help him to do his job better.

Amherst supported light infantry over rangers, as has been seen, but he still found value in rangers, probably as a training cadre for light infantry. He called Rogers to his headquarters in February 1759 to tell him that he would accept proposals to augment the ranger companies.[39] In July he went further and ordered each of the ten provincial regiments at Fort Carillon to let Rogers

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38 Ian McCulloch, "Buckskin Soldier: The Rise and Fall of Major Robert Rogers of the Rangers," The Beaver, 73:2, April/May 1993, 17.

39 Ibid., 99.

select thirteen to fourteen men "for the Ranging Service," showing that he thought that keeping a full establishment of rangers was far more important than keeping a full establishment of regular provincial troops.[40] Nevertheless, at the same time steps were being taken to obtain more infantry to fulfil a role that it was perceived the rangers could not. Rogers was informed of this in a letter from Colonel George Townshend, one of Amherst's aides; "We have chosen out one hundred men from each regiment and pitched upon the officers to act this year as light infantry . . . and, in my opinion, are a kind of troops that has been much wanted in this country."[41] The nucleus of light infantry that had been formed in 1757 had proven their worth under Major Scott at Louisbourg and as Gages Light Infantry against Fort Carillon and were being expanded accordingly now.

Where Howe had left off, Amherst continued on. Amherst was one of the most important figures for the development of the light infantry. He experimented with them at every opportunity in almost every area that regular infantry had been used in, adding a few areas in addition to this, often expanding into areas where in Europe only cavalry would have been used. His role as an experimenter cannot be underestimated. What made him so special?

He was born in 1717 to a middle class family, and so was relatively young and impressionable in 1758 so far as officers at

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40 O'Callaghan, Orderly Book, 79.

41 Townshend to Rogers, 26 Feb. 1759, Robert Rogers, 98.

the time went.[42] At the age of eighteen he had joined the army as an ensign, and steadily proceeded to move his way up through the ranks.[43] This allowed him to appreciate several different levels of command, becoming intimate with the activities associated with each. Finally, in 1742 he became an aide-de-camp to Lord Ligonier and remained so until 1747 when he became Cumberland's aide-de-camp, and was with Cumberland in Germany in 1757.[44] This allowed him to appreciate the movement of armies from a staff level, and this was where any changes that occurred in the composition of the army were made. Amherst saw firsthand the value of *jägers* during this time. It also allowed him to compare Ligonier's ideas with Cumberland's. Probably during Amherst's time with Cumberland the value of light troops was instilled, but his actions show that he did not adhere rigidly to the European version of light troops in the same way that Cumberland did.

Part of the reason why Amherst was willing to break away from the European model may have been his lack of a great deal of line experience. Despite his 23 year service record up to 1758, he had had little opportunity to direct large bodies personally, or to coordinate mixed forces.[45] Pargellis and others believe that this was a problem for Amherst, and that he was not a true "genius" of the war, plodding mechanically through his campaigns.[46] To the

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42 J. Amherst, 1.
43 Ibid., 2.
44 Ibid., 3-4.
45 Ibid., 6.
46 Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, xix.

contrary, although his conduct of the campaigns of 1759 and 1760 might have been lacking in imagination and daring, his lack of knowledge of standard strategic, operational and tactical techniques meant that he would have to experiment on his own to find out what worked, developing his own techniques through the use of reason. Rather than simply regurgitating the same doctrine, he was on the cutting edge of research and development. Ultimately, he was very successful in this, and apparently the government thought so too, for he was made Commander-in-Chief in North America in November of 1758. From that point on he was in a position to influence the opinions of his subordinates more directly, winning them over to his side, and this too was crucial for the development of light infantry.

Amherst's younger brother William shared many of his views, since they had a "close association".[47] He was only 26 in 1758, having just joined the army three years before, and thus would have been the most impressionable officer of any we have yet met. Here is another example of an officer who supported light troops without any European experience with them. European experience was desirable in forming good opinions of the value of light troops, but it was not, as Russell suggests, a necessary factor. William's first impressions of light troops in North America made him most supportive of Amherst's replacement of irregulars with regulars. Of the light infantry's landing at Gabarus Bay he wrote; "The men

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47 W. Amherst, 1.

behaved with a great deal of spirit, and in this affair shewed a remarkable instance of coolness in keeping their fire . . . "[48] By contrast he was little impressed with a skirmish between the rangers and a French picket on June 13, mentioning only the use of "some Irregulars of ours . . . "[49] Nonetheless he came to find value in both, and he gives very good evidence for the North American origins of light infantry. His opinion was that "Our Irregulars and Light Infantry are certainly of great use, and should always accompany an Army in this country, as these troops drive [the Indians] out of their shelter, harass them continually and *treat them in their own way.*" (italics mine)[50] This opinion only rose over the course of his service. Perhaps because of his high opinion he was put in charge of the light infantry in Haldimand's advanced guard on the Fort Lévis expedition. After the expedition he wrote of them; "I conceive they know no difficulties. It is a pleasure serving with such a Corps."[51] William was in full agreement with his older brother.

Thomas Gage also became part of Amherst's circle, but his ideas on light infantry actually predated Amherst's, and most other British officers as well. Like Amherst he was young. He was thirty-seven in 1758. He too entered the army early, at the age of twenty. Although he did not serve with Amherst directly until

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48 Ibid., 14.
49 Ibid., 15.
50 Ibid., 16.
51 Ibid., 63.

1760 during the advance on Montreal, his views were reinforced by this association. However, Gage had been busy with his own developments in light infantry before Amherst arrived. According to Gage's biographer, John Alden, Gage "claimed that Braddock would have been successful . . . if he had been able to employ the services of regular troops specially trained for warfare in the woods."[52] It should be noted that regular troops, and not irregular ones, were being discussed. Gage had little respect for undisciplined irregulars like Indians, believing them unreliable. Alden relates that Gage believed that "disciplined troops trained in irregular warfare would be of great value in America because of the peculiar conditions of warfare in the woods . . ."[53] Gage was thus the first known officer in North America to develop the idea of light infantry, but he was unable to act on this initially, as he was busy on a relief expedition to Fort Oswego in 1756. However, Gage was looking for a way to get himself promoted, and Howe's development of light infantry companies late in 1757 gave him a new idea. In December of 1757, he proposed that an entire regiment of light infantry be raised with himself as the colonel.[54] His motives were both self-serving and utilitarian. Loudoun had already approved Howe's development of light infantry companies, and so was pleased to accept Gage's proposal. Gages Light Infantry

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52 John R. Alden. General Gage in America (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 34.

53 Ibid., 42.

54 Ibid.

was thus formed. Under Abercromby at Fort Carillon the following year and later at Fort Niagara in 1759 Gage learned much about irregular tactics, putting them to good use to make Gages Light Infantry an effective unit. As a result, Gage was in full agreement with Amherst when he arrived the next year and he held him in high esteem, as did Wolfe.

Wolfe did not develop his views out of his subordinate association with Amherst either. He was advocating the use of light infantry in a variety of ways before Amherst was, and can perhaps be credited with starting Amherst on his path of experimentation with the light infantry. The conqueror of Quebec (who Myatt has dubbed "the light infantryman par excellence") was younger than Amherst, being born in 1727, also entering the army at a younger age than Amherst -- a mere boy at thirteen.[55]

From 1745 to 1756 Wolfe was stationed at various places in Britain, mainly in Scotland. It was there that the preconditions that were to lead him to believe in light infantry were formed. He wrote in 1750 that "I should imagine that two or three independent Highland companies might be of use; they are hardy, intrepid, accustomed to a rough country . . . "[56] These are three qualities that the training of light infantry would give. Wolfe was familiar with Braddock's Defeat, and surely he must have followed events in North America, for he spoke of "the method of

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55 Willson, Wolfe, 13.
56 Ibid., 141.

the American war," before leaving for Louisbourg in 1758. He also must have found it a very different theatre requiring a specific type of officer, for in a letter to Lord George Sackville he mentioned several officers "formed by nature for the American war."[57]

It is a bit of a mystery where exactly Wolfe acquired the idea to use light infantry. It was certainly not from the rangers. While at Halifax he wrote Sackville that "About 500 Rangers are come, which to appearance are little better than canaille [rabble]."[58] The first mention of "Light Foot" in any of his correspondence occurs in the above letter. Most probably he heard about them while in Halifax from officers with the expedition who had had experience in North America, as the following excerpt from one of his letters sent from there suggests; "Hitherto there has been the most profound ignorance of the nature of the war upon this continent [which] . . . Lord Howe will remedy . . . [59] But Wolfe was not about to leave "the nature of the war" all up to Lord Howe. He was able to build upon what he heard from the other officers, and was not totally blind to the example provided by the rangers, for he felt that "Rogers is an excellent partisan for 2 or 300 men . . . "[60] After using light troops, not only did his opinion of rangers improve, but he advocated an ever more active role for both

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57 Wolfe to Sackville, 11 Feb. 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 360.
58 Wolfe to Sackville, 12 May 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 364.
59 Wolfe to Sackville, 24 May 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 367.
60 Ibid.

the light infantry and the rangers. He wrote Amherst after the fall of Louisbourg that

> reinforcements should certainly be sent to the continent [ie. Fort Edward] without losing a moments' time. The companies of Rangers, and the Light Infantry, would be extremely useful at this juncture . . . [61]

When he was preparing for the expedition against Quebec he found the light infantry very important. He ensured that he had some by writing Amherst that "I hope you have ordered Whitmore to give me the companies of light Infantry from his three battalions [at Louisbourg] . . . "[62] It is noteworthy that Wolfe was not asking for any other troops from Whitmore; just the light infantry. Only one of these companies was sent, and Wolfe felt compelled to write to Whitmore directly that

> it would be much for the public service to let the other two companies of light infantry embark with the army under my command, upon condition of being replaced, man for man, by some of the Rangers . . . who are not so suited for the field . . . [63]

This shows that Wolfe was of one mind with Amherst about the replacement of irregulars with regulars.

He too had "his own special men" as picked subordinate officers.[64] James Murray was one of these. He was born in 1721, and so was also younger than Amherst, but he entered the army only a year after Amherst, and so had no less experience.[65] During the

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61 Wolfe to Amherst, 8 Aug. 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 394.

62 Wolfe to Amherst, 1 May 1759, Willson, Wolfe, 425.

63 Wolfe to Whitmore, 19 May 1759, Willson, Wolfe, 430.

64 Corbett, 1:408.

65 J. Amherst, 16.

War of Austrian Succession he fought in the West Indies, where he must have come across irregular tactics to some extent, as practiced by the French and Spanish.[66] Consequently, Murray was agreeable to continuing Wolfe's use of light infantry. Thus, although it may seem as if the main proponents of light infantry like Howe and Wolfe were all killed, they did leave officers behind who were capable of and willing to carry on reforms.

That such officers existed can be credited to Lord Ligonier's promotion system. There were opportunities for younger men to attain high rank through the death or retirement of a higher ranking officer, and the purchase system that was in place at the time was not as complete an antithesis to a meritocracy as was thought previously.[67] Many times the rank went to the highest bidder, but selection of the applicant by the previous owner was also involved; more often than not on the basis of personal preference. This did not always lead to the most qualified applicant getting the job. Under Ligonier a window of opportunity opened up for talented officers. He refused to allow selection on the basis of personal preference, and demanded that the applicant

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66 Murray, 5.

67 Indeed, Alan J. Guy has pointed out recently that it was particularly from the Regency to the outbreak of the Crimean War that "the officer corps became charged with snobbery and elitism founded on the criteria of wealth and ostentation rather than military merit." (Alan J. Guy, Oeconomy and Discipline: Officership and Administration in the British Army, 1714-1763 (Manchster: Manchester University Press, 1985), 166) However, before the nineteenth century these problems were certainly no stranger to the British Army -- their extent only pales in comparison with the period directly preceding the outbreak of the Crimean War. We have only to look at the War of Austrian Succession to see the partial effects of these problems. Very few officers of the calibre of Marlborough or Wellington were produced then, nor even of the lower calibre of Amherst or Wolfe. Loudoun and Cumberland were among the only competent high-level officers at the time -- and even then their main successes were against the Jacobites.

be qualified for the position.[68] Places thus began to open up for officers like Wolfe who, because of their lack of status and wealth, would not have been able to advance normally, and gave them a chance to make their views known from higher ranking positions. Ligonier's patronage continued for the more talented officers, since he was able to pick the most qualified man for a particular command, who often received a higher local rank. He did this for the Louisbourg expedition of 1758, raising Wolfe to Brigadier General for the expedition. Wolfe's status became more permanent, and Amherst became Commander-in-Chief in North America, so the patronage of Ligonier was crucial for the careers of both men, and for the history of light infantry.

As can be seen, there was a large corps of officers being created who were willing to support the development of light infantry. According to Piers Mackesy, "The officers who had served in America . . . had learned to regard light troops as a vital component of the major battle as well as of the little war of posts."[69] Through allowing imaginative young officers to gain high positions, Ligonier "broke the back of antiquated tradition."[70]

Employment Doctrine

If an officer corps that believed in light infantry had thus been created, it remained for them to translate their ideas into

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68 Glover, 148.

69 Mackesy, 204.

70 Fuller, Light Infantry, ix.

reality. There were two ways of doing this, not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first was to codify the methodology of what was being advocated, and hopefully to publish this on as widely as possible. Unfortunately, none of the officers who were advocating integration of light infantry wrote a monograph that reached the status of an official drill manual, but several publications did enter wide circulation. Some were distributed among the regimental officers of only one regiment. There was a wide range of success, but even if it reached a wide audience this was no guarantee that it would ever be put into practice. A better method was to take action oneself and begin a training program for light infantry. Many officers found this method effective, and it resulted in the actual creation of light infantry units, from platoon size to regimental. It was possible to rely on other officers' manuals for this training, in addition to one's own ideas, and it appears that this was done in a few cases.

This period did not mark the beginning of universal integration of light infantry based on a common methodology. That was to come later, under Sir John Moore. There was a wide variety of manuals, each with its own different precepts, and as we have seen, each commander differed in how he thought light infantry should best be used. Several general manuals appeared before the Seven Years War. Richard Kane and Humphrey Bland, for instance, wrote about the military art in the period of the War of Austrian

Succession, bringing the 1727 manual up to date.[71] However, neither they nor any other author writing in English had addressed the topic of light infantry directly.

Bland's 1727 manual came the closest to providing a basis for the integration of light infantry. He described the proper tactics for an army moving through a forested environment. There was to be a vanguard 200 yards ahead of the main body, and the latter was to be ringed by "reconnaissance parties" who were to be rescued by other parties if attacked, with the main body to be committed only in the event of overwhelming opposition. Braddock's Defeat showed that the range of potential roles was too limited or faulty, but more importantly that the regular infantry used to carry out these duties were not suitable for the role required of them. But there was no suggestion in any published drill manual in English that light infantry might be a suitable replacement.

For this, it was necessary to read French or German authors, such as Saxe and Frederick the Great, who were available in English translation (or in their original French for the many British officers who could understand that language) but only in the latter years of the Seven Years War or even after.[72] A few of these authors did write on the value and use of light infantry, but as Fuller points out, "Even in France, little attention was paid to

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71 Glover, 194-195.

72 Ibid., 195.

Folard, de Saxe, de Broglie and Turpin de Crissé..."[73]

This can be seen by examining Saxe's light infantry system. He proposed integrating light infantry into the French army in the ratio of one light company to every four regular companies.[74] British infantry battalions came to be set at one light infantry company to one grenadier company and eight regular companies. Saxe's actual system was based on earlier ideas by Folard, and involved a complicated interaction between the light infantry and the rest of the army. When the light infantry skirmishers were pressed too closely in front of the line of battle they were to withdraw between the columns of regular infantry behind them.[75] British infantry were used very rarely in a skirmishing role at this time, and were certainly incapable of interpenetration with other units. Saxe's system was thus not adopted at this time.

Turpin de Crissé did write an extensive two-volume work including a great deal on light infantry. He advocated using it in preference to light cavalry in an essentially protective role on the flanks, to hold woods, ravines, and defiles, to guard foragers and convoys and to scout.[76] This encompasses many of the activities that the British ultimately used the light infantry for, and it was generally available in French by 1756. One of the

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73 Fuller, Light Infantry, 117. In addition, in 1758 the directors of the academy of Nismes pointed out in the preface to Le Cointe's treatise on Military Posts that "no one has hitherto methodized" the science of military posts in France. (J.-L. Le Cointe. The Science of Military Posts (1761), v) The situation in France was just as disorganized as it was in Britain -- a situation that lent itself well to independent developments abroad.

74 Fuller, 50.

75 Ibid., 51.

76 Ibid., 116.

officers who read it and recommended it to his friends at that time was James Wolfe. This may account for the attention lavished by Wolfe on light infantry, but does not explain the system he used that was peculiar to North America. For this system he could draw on the personal experiences of American and British officers serving in North America with whom he came into contact. A few of them have left us glimpses into the systems that they used.

Bouquet was among the first to codify his experiences, but they were published only after the Seven Years War, in 1766, so that his fellow officers could not benefit but from hearing of his ideas during the war. His system took the form of a square surrounded by out-rangers, and contained a reserve of *jägers* and light horse to attack the enemy. Washington developed a similar system, and it is possible that he may have related this to Bouquet during the Fort Duquesne campaign. Bouquet was the first to codify the idea, in any case. However, neither officer got a chance to use this system actively in battle.

Rogers was another officer who codified a system for the use of light troops, in 1765. Rogers' system consisted of 28 articles governing the operation of his rangers, and in it can be seen the influence of both European and Indian techniques. Rogers seems to have developed this system sometime in 1757, after several encounters showed him what worked and what did not -- making it conveniently available for Lord Howe.

The first article stressed that hatchets should be carried instead of bayonets, with the influence of Indian tactics being

obvious.[77] This did not have any influence on the light infantry, as the bayonet remained the primary close combat weapon for them.

His second article was concerned that "if your number be small, march in single file . . . sending one man, or more, forward, and the like on each side, at the distance of twenty yards from the main body . . ."[78] Here was Bland's forest marching system in miniature. For larger parties Rogers had his own ideas stated in article VI;

> If you march in a large body of three or four hundred, with a design to attack the enemy, divide your party into three columns, each headed by a proper officer, and let these columns march in single files . . . and let proper guards be kept in the front and rear, and suitable flanking parties at a due distance as before directed with orders to halt on all eminences, to take a view of the surrounding ground, to prevent your being ambushed . . .[79]

Bland's flanking parties were still there, but the internal composition of the force was different.

Rogers had much to say on retreats as well. In article IX he explained that a retreating force should keep up a constant fire as it fell back to defensible ground.[80] Article X stipulated that the force should be dispersed if the odds were overwhelming, to reconvene at an appointed rendezvous; or if the force was surrounded a square was to be formed, "or if in the woods, a circle

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77 Robert Rogers, 43.
78 Ibid., 44.
79 Ibid., 45.
80 Ibid., 46.

is best," making a stand until nightfall covered a withdrawal.[81] Here were some new ideas. As irregular troops the rangers could form squares and circles much easier than close order troops, and certainly close order troops would have been destroyed had they dispersed. These tactics were only suitable to light troops.

Finally, article XXVIII argued that scouts should be sent out ahead of the army to gain information on the enemy "when you may pursue, ambush, and attack them, or let them pass, as prudence shall direct you."[82] In this way, Braddock's 'blind' march through the forest was to be turned into an informed march wherefrom potential advantage could be gained. Rogers' system was thus built upon past mistakes, and synthesized both European and Indian techniques with a few of his own ideas. Rogers' system stood as a functional model for integration of light infantry, but once again, it was published only in 1765, and so could have had an impact only on those whom it would have been able to reach through word of mouth, like Lord Howe.

Since Bouquet and Washington had problems translating their own systems into reality, it can be assumed that any other officer trying to use them would have had no more success than they. In fact, Bouquet was too specific a response to be employed generally, being only designed not to repeat Braddock's Defeat. Rogers would be a more likely candidate for the basis that the British used to

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81 Ibid., 46-47.
82 Ibid., 50.

create their light infantry, but he largely reiterated what was already common knowledge. Article XXVIII -- scouting -- was the only new idea that he codified. Crissé and Bland had stronger direct influences on providing a tangible methodology by which the light infantry could be integrated into the British Army. However, this rough framework was built upon by experiences peculiar to North America, and the manner in which light infantry was integrated would lead it to be a North American creation.

Training

Whether the basis was North American or European, it remained to give the idea practical application, and this was done through training the men. This could be done with or without a manual, but most simply relied on the officer's own experience to shape their men in the desired manner. The clay that was to be shaped was very important for these officers, and many had strict stipulations about the kind of men to be raised or selected from the ranks for training. Once the raw material was selected, it would have to undergo a series of gruelling exercises unique to light troops, in addition to possible regular infantry training depending on whether the unit was a ranger unit or a light infantry unit.

It was realized that unique kinds of officers and men were required for the light troops fairly early on. Even before Wolfe left Halifax in 1758 for Louisbourg, he had been told of the characteristics required for an officer in the light infantry, and when he met two such men he wrote to Sackville that, "We want just

two such men to throw into the light infantry . . . "[83] Washington was more specific when he suggested that officers for the rangers needed to be liked, active, and have "knowledge enough of the woods . . . "[84]

For the men there were similar requirements. Washington was involved with recruiting a new army in the wake of Braddock's Defeat, and he tried to ensure that enough rangers were recruited who were "acquainted with the woods . . . "[85] Similarly, when Rogers was asked to raise more ranger companies, he was not left completely at his own discretion to raise them. General Abercromby told Rogers when he was expanding the ranger companies in February and March of 1757; "You are to enlist no vagrants, but such as you and your officers are acquainted with and who are every way qualified for the duty of Rangers," but did not expand upon what these qualifications were.[86] Lord Loudoun gave more specific instructions when Rogers was permitted to raise more ranger companies in early 1758, when he stated that the men to be raised were to be "well acquainted with the woods, used to hunting, and every way qualified for the Ranging service."[87] These were the requirements for *jägers*, and it is not surprising that both men would have stipulated this, since the bulk of their experience was European. There was nothing said about being capable Indian

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83 Wolfe to Sackville, 24 May 1758, Willson, Wolfe, 369.

84 Washington to Dinwiddie, 24 Oct. 1757, Washington, 2:152.

85 Washington to Robert Calender, 20 Oct. 1755, Washington, 1:218.

86 Robert Rogers, 37.

87 Loudoun to Rogers, 11 Jan. 1758, Robert Rogers, 56.

fighters. They saw the rangers as North American *jägers*, and thus were more amenable to having them in the army.

However, the material for the light infantry were not hunters. The men for this branch were drawn from the ranks of the regular infantry, the main requirements being that the candidate be a good shot and physically fit. Colonel James Prevost of the 60th wanted his recruits to be "sober, young, strong, capable of withstanding fatigue," in short a grenadier without the height requirements.[88] However, this did not mean that the man would have been a hunter in civilian life. As Fuller tells us, "sharpshooters were not true light infantry, but . . . they were the very best material out of which light infantry might be fashioned."[89] Townshend's 100 men drawn from each regiment to be light infantry were chosen on the basis of their marksmanship. The material for British light infantry thus differed from the European model.

The first unit to be trained as light infantry was raised mostly in Europe, but trained in North America. This was the 60th Royal Americans under Colonel James Prevost. It was a unique four battalion unit (many regular regiments consisted of only one or two battalions) with ten companies in each battalion for a total of 4400 men.[90] Throughout early 1756 they were taught to fire at marks and hunted for prizes, constantly decreasing their aiming time. In addition, according to Lord Loudoun's orders, the Royal

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88 Prevost, "Mémoire sur la Guerre d'Amérique" (excerpt), in Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 336.
89 Fuller, Light Infantry, 92.
90 Ibid., 99.

Americans, "in order to qualify them for service of the Woods, . . . are to be taught to load and fire lyeing [sic] on the Ground and kneeling," unlike regular infantry.[91] They learned to disperse and rally by a signal, just like the rangers, through the introduction of the new command "Tree All".[92] Activities performed previously only by the rangers or Indian auxiliaries were now taught to them, such as snow-shoeing, canoe building, and survival techniques. In addition to these they were taught entrenching, tree-felling, and fascine, plank, plough, barrow, bridge, oven and log-house-making.[93] In short, they were becoming more independent troops like the rangers, based mainly on North American ideals. According to H.C.B. Rogers they were a regiment "combining the qualities of the scout with the discipline of the trained soldier."[94] Certainly the British Army did not contain any unit like them in 1756.

Unfortunately, the material that the 60th was made of did not conform to the ideal light infantry material. The men raised for it in Germany were largely deserters, and Prevost summed up their quality as "poor". Those raised in America were, in his words, the "scum of the colonies," composed of more deserters, old men, invalids and thieves who were simply incapable of the tasks

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91 Loudoun to Commanding Officers of the Royal American Regiment, 28 Dec. 1756, Pargellis, Loudoun, 300.

92 Kopperman, 9.

93 H.C.B. Rogers, 71.

94 Ibid.

required of them.[95] Prevost complained of insurmountable language barriers between the officers, who were of varied national backgrounds, as well. In addition, the officers had to suffer the same hardships as the men, such as washing their own clothes and carrying knives and forks.[96] This would have tended to reduce the popularity of serving with the 60th, pushing away talented men who were not used to such inconveniences, but who would otherwise have made excellent officers for the unit. Prevost himself was not of a high calibre, and Pargellis describes his previous military career in Europe as "disastrous".[97] Since a great deal of the success of any unit at the time depended on the officers, this, combined with the quality of the men, may account for the initial mediocre service record of the 60th.

Keeping light infantry units attached to regular infantry units was one way to avoid dissatisfying officers, as officers could retain their accustomed conveniences most of the time while not on detached duty. Thus, the idea to form nuclei of light infantry within regular infantry units was born. It appears that the first officer to suggest this was Lord Loudoun, possibly after receiving a favourable report from Lord Howe following Howe's accompaniment of Rogers on a mission. He may also have been impressed by the rangers and even begun some training integration when he carried out manoeuvres for three weeks with the army at

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95 Prevost to Cumberland, 12 May 1757, Pargellis, Cumberland Papers, 335.

96 H.C.B. Rogers, 72.

97 Pargellis, Loudoun, 61.

Halifax while waiting to attack Louisbourg in July of 1757. In late 1757 Loudoun selected between two and seventeen volunteers from each of seven regiments "to be trained to the ranging, or wood-service."[98] Interestingly, these included volunteers from two battalions of the 60th Royal Americans, indicating that their training was either faulty or incomplete at this time, and shedding light on just how ineffective the material the regiment was made of actually was.

Rogers was the trainer of Loudoun's volunteers, and for ease of training he formed them into a company of fifty-six men.[99] It was not his original intention to train them for operations as companies of light infantry, but this is what resulted from his training. It was at this time that Rogers drew up his twenty-eight articles, since he needed a system with which to train these men, and since Lord Howe was interested in the process that the volunteers would go through. Unfortunately, their training did not go quickly. When Rogers lost 132 out of 180 men in the 'battle' of Rogers' Rock on March 13, 1758, several regimental volunteers accompanied the expedition, and most of these were lost.[100] It is to be expected that only the veteran rangers would have survived, but this and the poor performance of the 60th Royal Americans suggests that it was difficult to train regular infantry in irregular tactics. This did not spell the end of their training

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98 Robert Rogers, 41.
99 Ibid., 43.
100 Ibid., 64.

however, and considerable improvement seems to have been made by the campaigning season of 1758, for the light infantry performed rather well then. As aforementioned, the training program was expanded the following year to include one hundred men from each regiment, giving one light infantry company to each battalion. The light infantry were well on their way to becoming an established part of the British Army.

Qualities necessary for light infantry could all be found amongst North American material, then. But it was developments in European training that gave this material potential, and it is fascinating to see how these ideas moved physically, in the form of the 60th Royal Americans, from Europe to North America where new training techniques were added. It was these preconditions and this prototype light infantry unit that made later developments in training light infantry in North America and in a North American way possible.

None of this interaction would have been possible for the British had there not been a government and an officer corps willing to commit time and energy to the North American conflict, but during the Seven Years War both concentrated heavily on North America like no other war before. This led not only to an increased interaction with the North American setting, but also to an increased respect for methods of warfare that were best suited to it. Consequently, this influenced methods of training light infantry to better interact with this setting. It should not be

supposed, however, that this meant that European techniques were being thrown to the wind. To the contrary, European light infantry drill remained the basis for light infantry in the British Army, while new North American training was added to this. Light infantry in the British Army was thus a harmonic convergence between European and North American styles, which could operate in a superior manner in North America in a variety of necessary functions.

CONCLUSION

Light infantry in the British Army followed an evolutionary development that did not stop with the end of the Seven Years War. Much more remained to be done. By 1760, however, light infantry was entrenched as a part of the British Army. It would not have been feasible for the British simply to create *jäger* units within their army at the start of the Seven Years War. There was no proven doctrine for their use that had been tested by the British, and the officer corps did not believe that such an integration would have been viable or necessary.

The Seven Years War in North America provided proof that light troops could cooperate effectively with the rest of the army, and convinced a substantial number of officers that light infantry could be integrated directly into the British Army. The British needed to be jolted into this mind set, and Braddock's Defeat provided just such a shock. As the only reliable light troops available to the British directly in 1755, it fell to the rangers to be tested in a variety of roles in which the British had failed on the Monongahela. This initial experiment took on a uniquely North American flavour due to the rangers' use of Indian techniques. Rogers was very important in developing an ever larger role for his rangers, proving that light troops could be used in an ever wider range of tasks. Many of the roles that the rangers were made to fulfil were the ones carried out by *jägers*. Yet the

British had to prove to themselves that light troops could be made to fit these roles in a North American context, being the main theatre of war for the British Army, which the rangers did admirably.

They impressed many members of the officer corps, several of whom continued to use them long after light infantry became more generally available. Once rangers proved the worth of light troops, however, a training program was begun to integrate light troops directly into the British Army on a regular level. Thus were the light infantry born. Once they had been created, they too had to be tested in a variety of roles to ensure that regulars could work in a North American context. Amherst was at the forefront of this experiment, and he was able to prove to the satisfaction of most officers serving in North America that light infantry were an important and functional asset to the British Army. This was possible in large part due to their training, which made them capable of operating in a North American context, and made them something quite different than their European counterparts.

Michael Roberts was correct that, for the light infantry at least, the idea came from Europe. However, the manner in which this idea was employed and developed by the British was different from light infantry in Europe. The British carried out a series of independent tests, checking that the end product achieved in Europe was attainable within the British Army as well and making modifications along the way. In this manner light infantry in the

British Army became a unique creation, and continued to be so during developments in the American Revolution and the French Revolutionary Wars, emerging as a fully polished and operable branch of the British Army during the Napoleonic Wars; a shining example for other armies to begin their own paths of development.

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