

# A Different Kind of Courage: The French Military and the Canadian Irregular Soldier during the Seven Years' War

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IN RECENT DECADES two historians of Canada during the Seven Years' War, Guy Frégault and William J. Eccles, have attacked their predecessors' adulation of Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm, by portraying him as a poor strategist, a mediocre tactician, and a defeatist. However true this might be, they also portray the French officer corps, including their commander, as contemptuous of Canadians and irregular warfare.<sup>1</sup> During the course of the Canadian campaign, Montcalm and his officers did demonstrate a general lack of respect for the petty raiding of *la petite guerre* and an ambiguous attitude towards the Canadian soldier. This, however, was less a rejection of irregular warfare than an expression of their belief that a more structured and

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- 1 For historians who favour Montcalm see Francis Parkman, *France and England in North America*, part 7: *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 2 vols. (Boston 1884); Henri-Raymond Casgrain, *Guerre du Canada, 1756–1760: Montcalm et Lévis*, 2 vols. (Quebec 1891); and Lionel-Adolphe Groulx, *Histoire du Canada depuis la découverte*, 2 vols. (Montreal 1950). For highly critical perceptions of the French general see Guy Frégault, *La Guerre de la conquête* (Montreal 1955); William J. Eccles, 'The French Forces in North America during the Seven Years' War,' *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (DCB), III, xv–xxiii; W.J. Eccles, 'Montcalm, Louis-Joseph de, Marquis de Montcalm,' DCB, III: 458–69; and W.J. Eccles, 'Rigaud de Vaudreuil de Cavagnial, Pierre de, Marquis de Vaudreuil,' DCB, IV: 662–74. Charles P. Stacey, *Quebec, 1759: The Siege and the Battle* (Toronto 1959), and George G.F.G. Stanley, *New France: The Last Phase, 1744–1760* (Toronto 1968), maintain a more neutral attitude.

sophisticated use of irregular tactics was necessary when the enemy was no longer simply a colonial militia but a large, well-organized army complete with highly trained regiments of heavy and light infantry. As Ian Steele makes clear, the Seven Years' War in North America marks the end of the days of small-scale raiding and the advent of professional armies on the continent. The war, he states, was won by conventional, European-style battles and sieges, not by skirmishes in the woods.<sup>2</sup>

At first complacent in their use of Canadian irregulars, relying on local practice and their knowledge of the use of light troops in Europe during the War of the Austrian Succession, the French eventually attempted to bring Canadian soldiers onto the conventional battlefield not simply as sharpshooters roaming on the flanks but as actual light infantry operating on the central line of battle in close co-operation with the heavy infantry of the French *troupes de terre*. There is every sign that the Frenchmen finished the campaign convinced by the success of Canadian light troops that units of properly led and disciplined light infantry were a valuable part of a European army.

The War of the Austrian Succession (1740–8) was the training ground of most of the French officers who came to Canada with the Baron von Dieskau and the Marquis de Montcalm, and it was during this war that irregular troops were first employed on a large scale by modern armies. In 1740–1 the young Austrian empress Maria Theresa mobilized her Croatian and Hungarian military borders on the Ottoman frontier and moved them for the first time to the central European front in an attempt to eject Frederick the Great's troops from Silesia. They performed invaluable service in every campaign, and in 1744 Field Marshal Traun successfully forced the Prussians out of Bohemia by threatening Frederick's supply lines and harassing his foraging parties. Over 40,000 Serbo-Croatian 'Grenzer' would serve in the Habsburg armies during the War of the Austrian Succession and about 88,000 during the Seven Years' War.<sup>3</sup> These fierce soldiers were usually dispatched on independent operations against enemy outposts and communications, but sometimes they played a small part on the

2 Ian K. Steele, *Guerrillas and Grenadiers: The Struggle for Canada, 1689–1760* (Toronto 1969). I use the term "irregular" to denote light troops without extensive formal military training. 'Light infantry' I define as formally trained light troops, who were often regulars rather than militia or auxiliaries.

3 With the addition of the Hungarian hussars, these light troops formed a very substantial proportion of the Habsburg forces. John F.C. Fuller, *British Light Infantry in the Eighteenth Century* (London 1925), 46–9; Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia, 1740–1881* (Chicago 1966), 18–20; John Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe, 1648–1789* (New York 1982), 116–17; and Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London 1983), 30

battlefield as sharpshooters posted on the flanks. Faced by these irregulars, the French, Prussians, and British responded by recruiting some light troops of their own. In the Seven Years' War all of the major European armies raised units of irregulars and light infantry and cavalry, and their use gradually became more sophisticated.<sup>4</sup>

The French army began very early to adapt to this new aspect of warfare. Although the use of skirmishers had disappeared in France at the end of the seventeenth century because of the widespread obsession with the firepower of the line, interest in these troops slowly revived during the following decades. There were experiments with skirmishers in military exercises as early as 1727, but only necessity during the 1740s forced the French to raise light troops in any numbers. During the winter of 1744, the Maréchal de Saxe, who had extensive previous experience with light troops in eastern Europe and had written the first modern treatise to deal with the subject, raised a number of *compagnies franches* or free companies for the French army, and would have formed more if the minister of war had approved. He eventually commanded five regiments of light troops, usually combining infantry and cavalry in these units, and by 1748 there were 5000 of them in the French army. At Fontenoy in 1745 Saxe used his irregulars on the battlefield itself, sending a screen of skirmishers against the British centre while he deployed his army. He also stationed Monsieur de Grassin's new 1200-strong Régiment des Arquebusiers in the Bois de Berry on his left flank, where their deadly independent fire or *feu de chasseur* made a British attempt to secure their flank exceedingly difficult. Saxe also used skirmishers at Laufeld in 1747. The tactics of this general, who was one of the greatest commanders of the eighteenth century, were studied with great care by other French officers. Although the French did not make extensive use of skirmishers during the War of the Austrian Succession itself, their presence was customary during the peacetime military exercises of 1748 to 1755 and no French military writer of this period neglected to discuss them.<sup>5</sup>

4 For further discussion of Austrian, Prussian, and British light troops in the European theatre during the Seven Years' War see Fuller, *British Light Infantry*, 59–75; Strachan, *European Armies*, 30–5; Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, 118–20; Rothenberg, *Military Border in Croatia*, 40–52; and Christopher Duffy, *Frederick the Great: A Military Life* (London 1985), 314, 319–20.

5 Maurice de Saxe, *Reveries on the Art of War*, trans. Thomas R. Phillips (Harrisburg, Penn. 1944), 1–11. The *Reveries* were written in 1732 and circulated in manuscript long before they were published in 1757. Saxe deals extensively with irregular infantry and cavalry on pages 40–1, 48, and 50. See also Jean Colin, *L'Infanterie au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: La Tactique* (Paris 1907), 47–51, 71; Robert S. Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare: The Theory of Military Tactics in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York 1957), 84–5; Jon M. White, *Marshal of France: The Life and Times of Maurice, Comte de Saxe* (London 1962), 129, 147, 157–8; Fuller, *British Light Infantry*, 49–54; Strachan, *European Armies*, 31; and Childs, *Armies and Warfare in Europe*, 118.

Montcalm and François-Gaston, Chevalier de Lévis, both served in Bohemia and Piedmont during the War of the Austrian Succession, and had more than enough experience with irregulars on both campaigns.<sup>6</sup> During the operations around Prague in late 1742 and during the subsequent retreat to Germany, Hungarian hussars and other light cavalry constantly harassed French foraging parties and other units, greatly hampering the ability of the Maréchal de Belle-Isle to supply his troops, obtain information about the main Austrian army, or easily manoeuvre his forces.<sup>7</sup> In Piedmont, Charles Emmanuel III organized his Piedmontese mountaineers or *barbets* in militia units, and these men fought beside the king's regular troops in the endless mountain battles of this campaign, also overrunning the French communications outposts in the mountain valleys, taking few prisoners in the process. Throughout most of 1745 and 1746 Montcalm protected sections of the French communications in the Ligurian Alps against repeated attacks by the *barbets*, and in one daring night operation the French colonel led his troops, some of whom were mountain fusiliers, over 'impracticable paths' to surprise and capture 150 *barbets* in a village. To counter the Piedmontese militia, the Franco-Spanish recruited two battalions of Catalonian mountaineers from the Pyrenees called *Miquelets* – many of whom were former bandits – and equipped them with carbines.<sup>8</sup>

The exposure of many members of the officer corps to irregular warfare in Europe made them appreciate the effectiveness of this type of military activity. Irregulars could severely hamper reconnaissance, slow an army's advance, and harry an enemy's communications so severely that large numbers of fighting men had to be withdrawn from the main body simply to guard the army's baggage and lines of supply and communication. There was, as a result, 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, if only to defend one's own force against enemy irregulars.

6 Thomas Chapais, *Le Marquis de Montcalm (1721–1759)* (Quebec 1911), 16–22, and Lévis, *Journal*, *Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis (Lévis MSS)*, 1, 24. Montcalm was aide-de-camp to the Marquis de La Fare in Bohemia, and was colonel of an infantry regiment in Piedmont. Lévis served as a captain in Bohemia and as an adjutant (*aide-major*) with the army in Piedmont; in 1748 he was promoted colonel. Both men displayed extraordinary bravery, and Montcalm suffered wounds on a regular basis.

7 Rohan Butler, *Choiseul*, 1: *Father and Son* (Oxford 1980), 304–5, 343, 363

8 Spenser Wilkinson, *The Defence of Piedmont 1742–1748: A Prelude to the Study of Napoleon* (Oxford 1927), 163–4, 208, 309–17; Butler, *Choiseul*, 1, 500–52; White, *Marshal of France*, 222; Fuller, *British Light Infantry*, 54; and Strachan, *European Armies*, 31



François-Gaston de Lévis, Chevalier de Lévis (1719–87), later the Maréchal Duc de Lévis, who led the French and Canadians to victory at Sainte-Foy. Anonymous portrait, Musée National du Château de Versailles, courtesy of the Archives nationales du Québec à Québec, Collection Initialé (Fonds U3Q P 600–6), nég. no GH 1172–35.

What impressions did French officers have of Canadian soldiers during the first few years of the Seven Years' War? One prominent characteristic of the Canadian *habitants*, noted by all of the officers, was their willingness to perform military service, an attitude which was in striking contrast to that of the average French peasant. The long wars against the Iroquois in the seventeenth century, which forced all Canadian males to take up arms and learn Indian methods of irregular warfare, engendered a military ethos among Canadians which was fostered by intermittent campaigns against the English in company with Canada's Indian allies.<sup>9</sup> The reputation of Canadians as a 'race of soldiers' was confirmed by the French officers, whose constant refrain

<sup>9</sup> See William J. Eccles, 'The Social, Economic, and Political Significance of the Military Establishment in New France,' *Canadian Historical Review* 52 (1971): 1–22, for an examination of the impact of war and the military establishment on Canada's inhabitants.

in their writings was to contrast the Canadians' skill and courage with their indiscipline.<sup>10</sup> Colonel François-Charles de Bourlamaque, for instance, believed that Canada possessed far more 'naturally courageous men' than any other country, and although Canadian militiamen were not accustomed to obedience, when they found firmness and justice in their officers they were quite 'docile.'<sup>11</sup> They possessed a different 'kind of courage,' wrote Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, for like the Indians, Canadians exposed themselves little, organized ambushes, and fought in the woods behind a screen of trees, defeating in this way an entire British army under General Braddock.<sup>12</sup> Despite his criticisms of Canadian indiscipline, Bougainville was careful to qualify his remarks: 'God knows we do not wish to disparage the value of the Canadians ... In the woods, behind trees, no troops are comparable to the natives of this country.'<sup>13</sup> Some of the least charitable comments on Canadians came from the Baron von Dieskau's second-in-command, Pierre-André de Gohin, Chevalier de Montreuil, who, blaming the irregulars for his commander's humiliating defeat at Lake George in 1755, declared sarcastically that the 'braggart' Canadians were well adapted for skirmishing, being 'very brave behind a tree and very timid when not covered.'<sup>14</sup>

- 10 Georges-Marie Butel-Dumont, *Histoire et commerce des colonies angloises dans l'Amérique septentrionale, où l'on trouve l'état actuel de leur population, & des détails curieux sur la constitution de leur gouvernement, principalement sur celui de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, de la Pensilvanie, de la Caroline & de la Géorgie* (Paris 1755), 40
- 11 François-Charles de Bourlamaque, 'Memoire sur le Canada,' *Lévis MSS*, v, 102. See also James Johnstone, 'The Campaign of Canada, 1760,' *Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires, et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France, recueillis aux archives de la Province de Québec ou copiés à l'étranger* (MRNF), iv, 254, 262; Pierre Pouchot, *Memoir Upon the Late War in North America between the French and English, 1755-60*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Franklin B. Hough (Roxbury, Mass. 1866), II, 45; Louis-Guillaume de Parscau du Plessis, 'Journal de la campagne de la Sauvage frégate du Roy, armée au port de Brest, au mois de mars 1756 (écrit pour ma dame),' *Rapport de l'archiviste du Province de Québec* (RAPQ) (1928-9), 221; and Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America*, trans. John R. Foster (Barre, Mass. 1972), 492, for further comments on the warlike spirit of Canadians.
- 12 Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, 'Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France,' RAPQ (1923-4), 58
- 13 Bougainville to Mme Hérault, 20 Feb. 1758, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760*, ed. and trans. Edward P. Hamilton (Norman, OK 1964), 333
- 14 Montreuil to d'Argenson, Montreal, 12 June 1756, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (NYCD), ed. E.B. O'Callaghan (Albany 1859), x, 419. See also anonymous, 'Situation du Canada en hommes, moyens, positions,' RAPQ (1923-4), 9, a memoir probably by Bougainville, and the account by La Pause, who uses almost the same words as this anonymous officer in describing the inability of Canadians to 'defend themselves with countenance.' Jean-Guillaume-Charles Plantavit de La Pause, chevalier de La Pause, 'Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada,' RAPQ (1931-2), 66

Despite a tendency among many officers to make generalizations about Canadian soldiers, most realized that not all Canadian males were experienced irregulars. Stereotypes may have been reinforced, however, by the presence of several hundred *coureurs de bois* and other experienced woodsmen among the militia companies and transport troops, especially before 1785. Captain Jean-Guillaume-Charles de Plantavit de La Pause de Margon, Chevalier de La Pause, found that there was no proper system of drafting soldiers in the parishes, with the result that the same men were chosen each year to fill the parish militia quota. These, according to La Pause, were the poorest *habitants*, presumably men with little land and a greater inclination towards hunting, long-term work as *coureurs de bois*, or related activities which provided the military skills useful for irregular warfare.<sup>15</sup> Bougainville differentiated between the men of the districts of Montreal and Trois-Rivières, who were considered more warlike and accustomed to voyages in the west, and those of the Quebec area, who tended towards proficiency in fishing and other nautical pursuits.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste d'Aleyrac and Montcalm's junior aide-de-camp, Captain Pierre Marcel, made fun of the militia of the cities of Montreal and Quebec, 'composed of all kinds of workers, wholesale merchants, who never go to war.'<sup>17</sup> Despite these views, however, the officers felt that their generalizations about Canadians were justified.

Constant contact with Indian allies in wartime and the success of their tactics resulted in Canadians adopting not only Indian methods of fighting but also their attitudes towards war, such as the idea that victory involved inflicting losses on the enemy without incurring any and that the campaigning season was over when a victory, however insubstantial, had been achieved and honour gratified. In addition, native ritual boasting of prowess in war may have encouraged some Canadian soldiers to advertise their military talents in a flagrant manner. French officers noticed these characteristics, and generally realized that they were cultural borrowings from the Indians, but they were too ethnocentric and accustomed to professional military conduct to sympathize very much with this type of behaviour.

The Canadian penchant for boasting was of minor concern. Boasts 'after the Canadian fashion, that one of their number could drive ten Englishmen' only boosted morale, and this behaviour was considered

15 La Pause, 'Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada,' 10

16 Bougainville, 'Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France,' 58

17 Jean-Baptiste d'Aleyrac, *Aventures militaires au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle d'après les mémoires de Jean-Baptiste d'Aleyrac*, ed. Charles Coste (Paris 1935), 131; Pierre Marcel, 'Journal abrégé de la campagne de 1759 en Canada par M. M[arcel] ayde de camp de M. le Mis. de Montcalm,' in Arthur C. Dougherty and G.W. Parmelee, *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham* (Quebec 1901), v, 299

no more than a minor annoyance.<sup>18</sup> The Canadian and Indian custom of returning home *en masse* every time a 'coup' was made, however, was subjected to considerably more criticism. La Pause recounted how the comical race of Canadians departed after the Battle of Carillon, rushing off in their boats within hours, moving 'day and night, forgetting, losing and often leaving people behind if they did not embark fast enough.' After visiting their families, he noted, they would return at an exceedingly leisurely pace to resume the campaign.<sup>19</sup> At other times, as when muskets had to be fired in an attempt to stem the exodus of Canadian officers and men after the fall of Fort William Henry – a factor which may have influenced Montcalm's decision to discontinue the offensive – the French were even less amused.<sup>20</sup> This behaviour at Oswego and on other occasions decidedly undermined the French officers' respect for Canadian soldiers. Even though they recognized the special nature of the Canadian 'race,' they expected them, as Frenchmen, to be more amenable to discipline than the Indians.

During the early years of the war the French officer corps simply accepted the traditional role of their Canadian militia and Indian allies. The recent battle on the banks of the Monongahela proved that the Canadians already had considerable potential, and there did not seem to be any immediate need to do more than instil Canadians with obedience and a basic orderliness. Captain Pierre Pouchot regarded Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela as an 'impressive lesson' for regular troops who could not fire steadily and were unacquainted with the style of fighting of their opponents, although he did not believe that properly organized and trained regular soldiers should be defeated by irregulars.<sup>21</sup> Training Canadians as heavy infantry was pointless because they already performed satisfactorily as scouts, raiders, and sharpshooters, duties which admirably suited the 'natural spirit' of the local people.<sup>22</sup> French officers, accustomed to the mosaic of provinces which made up their country, each with its own distinct culture and identity, saw Canadians as a very peculiar set of fellow

18 Pouchot, *Memoir*, I, 35, 37, and II, 45

19 La Pause, 'Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada,' 66

20 Bougainville, *Journals*, 174; Stanley, *New France*, 162; Steele, *Guerillas and Grenadiers*, 108; La Pause, 'Journal de l'entrée de la campagne 1760,' *RAPQ* (1932-3), 384; and Lévis, *Journal*, I, 12

21 Pouchot, *Memoir*, I, 41-3

22 This common philosophy of the time was best illustrated by Montesquieu, who in *De l'esprit des lois* explained the idea that people in a particular environment develop a special character which the laws had to be made to fit rather than making people fit the laws.



Frenchmen. It was easiest to adapt to their particular nature and use their skills rather than try to make them more like other Frenchmen and amenable to European-style heavy infantry training. As Pouchot's companion-in-arms Captain Nicolas Sarrebourg de Pontleroy of the Royal Corps of Engineers pointed out, Canadians were brave, but without discipline they could not be expected to fight in open fields against regular troops; they were not even equipped for such an eventuality.<sup>23</sup> The war was not yet desperate enough to require a complete rethinking of the role of irregular troops.

Baron Johann Hermann von Dieskau, who was one of Saxe's aides-de-camp and had experience with light troops in eastern Europe, undoubtedly derived much of his confidence in irregulars from his former commander.<sup>24</sup> However, he learned the limitations of irregular infantry during his campaign against William Johnson in 1755. Leaving behind most of his French troops, he forged ahead with a mixed force of regulars, Canadian militia, and Indians to mount a surprise attack on Fort Edward. He properly posted flank guards of Canadians and Indians to prevent his small column from being ambushed, but was obliged to give up his plans to attack Fort Edward when the Iroquois refused their assistance. He was soundly beaten in an assault on Johnson's entrenchments at the foot of Lake George. Dieskau had not foreseen that Johnson's force would be both entrenched and alerted, for under these conditions he required more regular troops and a few cannon. His Canadians and Indians were simply unable to participate in a conventional assault. While irregulars were occasionally capable of capturing forts and other fortifications if they had the advantage of surprise, they could do little if the garrison was prepared for their attack.<sup>25</sup>

The Marquis de Montcalm, who arrived in New France in 1756 to take command of the French forces, was by a combination of experience, necessity, and advice persuaded to employ the regulars and irregulars in the separate roles to which they were most accustomed. The Chevalier de Montreuil, who condemned the 'blind confidence' of Dieskau in his Canadian advisers, made certain to instruct Montcalm to rely upon his regulars and to employ his

23 Nicolas Sarrebourg de Pontleroy, 'Mémoire et observations sur le project d'attaquer les postes ennemis en avant de Québec, et sur celui de surprendre la place ou de l'enlever de vive force,' 18 Jan. 1760, *Lévis MSS*, iv, 199

24 J.R. Turnbull, 'Dieskau, Jean-Armand (Johan Herman?), Baron de Dieskau,' *DCB*, III, 185-6. Dieskau's first name is sometimes erroneously given as Ludwig August.

25 Steele, *Guerillas and Grenadiers*, 91; Stanley, *New France*, 102-3; and Guy Frégault, *Canada: The War of the Conquest*, trans. Margaret M. Cameron (Toronto 1969), 103-6. This latter book is a translation of *La Guerre de la conquête* (Montreal 1955).

Canadians and Indians only in harassing the enemy.<sup>26</sup> Montcalm viewed raiding expeditions, especially those directed against military targets, as useful in harassing enemy troops and lowering their morale. He also believed that successful raids maintained the offensive spirit in his troops and encouraged the Canadian civilian population, although he abhorred the atrocities committed by his aboriginal allies just as he had hated the tortures inflicted on prisoners by the Slavic Pandours and Italian *barbets*.<sup>27</sup>

Irregulars were perceived to have a particular role: they tied down large numbers of enemy militia on the frontiers and lines of communication, carried out reconnaissance, ambushed detachments of enemy troops, and provided some firepower during sieges and other engagements. Both Captain Jean-Nicolas Desandroüins and Lévis wrote approvingly concerning the contributions of the militia during the sieges of Oswego in 1756 and Fort William Henry the following year. Desandroüins found that the Canadians and Indians showed great enthusiasm at Oswego, and while they wasted a great deal of ammunition firing all day, they did succeed in lowering the garrison's morale. It obviously did not occur to him, however, that they might have captured the fort by themselves, or that the irregulars were anything more than auxiliaries.<sup>28</sup>

The year 1758 was a turning point in the war and in French tactics. For this campaign the British massed an army of 6000 regulars and 9000 provincials at Fort William Henry and advanced on Fort Carillon. Among these regulars were several new specially trained light infantry regiments and Robert Rogers' Corps of Rangers.<sup>29</sup> Few Canadians

26 Chevalier de Montreuil, 'Detail de la marche de Monsieur de Dieskau par Monsieur de Montreuil,' MRNF, IV, 1-4; Montreuil to d'Adabie, St Frédéric, 10 Oct. 1755, MRNF, IV, 9; Montreuil to d'Argenson, Montreal, 2 Nov. 1755, MRNF, IV, 13; and Montreuil to d'Argenson, Montreal, 12 June 1756, NYCD, x, 419. Montcalm, La Pause, and Pouchot shared similar ideas regarding the cause of Dieskau's defeat. See Montcalm to d'Argenson, 28 Aug. 1756, National Archives of Canada (NA), MG 4, A1, vol. 3417, no 208; La Pause, 'Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada,' 20; and Pierre Pouchot, *Memoir*, I, 46-7.

27 Montcalm to Moras, Quebec, 19 Feb. 1758, NYCD, x, 686-7. See also Bougainville, *Journals*, 42.

28 Charles Nicolas Gabriel, *Le Maréchal de camp Desandroüins, 1729-1792: Guerre du Canada, 1756-1760, Guerre de l'indépendance américaine, 1780-1782* (Verdun 1887), 50-64, and W.J. Eccles, 'Lévis,' DCB, IV, 477-82

29 The French officers had a consistently high opinion of British regulars and a consistently low opinion of American provincials. They referred to the provincials only in order to point out their numbers and incompetence. They did, however, have respect for the Royal American Regiment and Rogers' Rangers - both regular units - even though they enjoyed recounting the numerous abortive or disastrous operations mounted by the Rangers. For the development of light infantry tactics in

arrived in time for the Battle of Carillon, and the shortage of irregulars obliged the French to station two companies of *volontaires* in front of the abattis while it was under construction – *volontaires* being the contemporary French term for light infantry. These regular soldiers, probably the pickets from each of the battalions, skirmished all day with the enemy's abundant light troops, and successfully held them at bay while the abattis was hastily completed. Just as the battle opened, the French *volontaires* withdrew to the protection of the abattis or to the army's left flank.<sup>30</sup> A group of 300 Canadians who were present were ordered to leave the protection of the abattis and open independent fire on the flank of one of the attacking British columns, but refused to do so. A few had to have shots fired over their heads to prevent their fleeing the field, although in the latter case Bougainville admitted that 'It is true that these were not Canadians of the good sort.'<sup>31</sup> Canadians were not accustomed to fighting on the open battlefield and, having only *habitant* militia officers and occasionally a Canadian colonial regular officer of the *troupes de la Marine* to lead them, could not easily be coerced into exposing themselves to enemy fire. Even worse than the refusal of the Canadians at Carillon to follow orders was the rout of Canadian troops during a forest encounter in August 1758 with Roger's Rangers.<sup>32</sup>

Montcalm resolved at the end of this campaign that a higher level of discipline and co-operation was needed from his Canadian soldiers. His aide-de-camp and close friend Bougainville concluded, correctly,

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the British army in North America during the Seven Years' War see Peter Russel, 'Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740 to 1760,' *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 35 (1978): 629–52; Fuller, *British Light Infantry*, 76–110; Hugh C.B. Rogers, *The British Army in the Eighteenth Century* (London 1977), 73; Strachan, *European Armies*, 28; and for a long-term view, Peter Paret, 'Colonial Experience and European Military Reform at the End of the Eighteenth Century,' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 37 (1964): 47–59.

- 30 Bougainville, *Journals*, 230. In the French army, pickets were not selected on a rotational basis; instead, they formed permanent units which were often detached for special duties.
- 31 Bougainville, *Journals*, 238. See also Gabriel, *Desandrouins*, 182, and Doreil to Belle-Isle, Quebec, 28 and 31 July 1758, RAPQ (1944–5), 138 and 150–2. In these last two letters, war commissary André Doreil passed on to the minister of war confidential information which he had obtained from Montcalm.
- 32 For French reactions to this incident see Gabriel, *Desandrouins*, 203–6; Bougainville, *Journals*, 261–2, and Montcalm to Moras, Montreal, 11 July 1757, MRNF, IV, 105–6. In 1756 1900 Canadian militiamen served in the ranks, but another 1100 were needed for transport work and for building fortifications. By 1758 1500 Canadians were employed on the western supply routes alone. George F.G. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers: The Military History of an Unmilitary People*, rev. ed. (Toronto 1960), 23

that 'Now war is established here on a European basis of campaign plans, armies, artillery, sieges, battles. It is not a matter of making *coup*, but of conquering or being conquered. What a revolution! What a change!'<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the arrival of large regular armies in America had changed the nature of war on the continent. Montcalm believed that a concentration of his forces was necessary to confront the English along the major invasion routes, and he advocated a release of as many of the troops in the garrisons in the west as possible without undermining the Indian war effort. He saw that the Indians tied down large numbers of enemy militia on the frontiers, but doubted that a major French presence in the west had much effect in diverting British regular troops – the chief danger to New France, in his opinion – away from the central front.<sup>34</sup> The British were better able to respond to attacks by irregulars, and raids against military targets in the Lake George area were becoming more and more costly. Irregulars now found it more difficult to defeat regulars without the support of French or French colonial heavy infantry, and these troops had to be conserved for the principal engagements. Montcalm felt that large-scale raids no longer paid off in terms of the manpower, supplies, and effort invested, and he hoped that the Indians and small numbers of Canadians could maintain sufficient pressure on the English to keep them more or less on the defensive. By the fall of 1758 Montcalm knew that no ambush or raid was going to stem the advance of massive English armies against Montreal or Quebec; what he needed were large numbers of regular soldiers and disciplined light infantry who could be depended on to fight in a series of conventional battles.<sup>35</sup>

Montcalm believed that masses of poorly equipped and undisciplined Canadian militiamen who consumed his extremely limited food

- 33 Bougainville, *Journals*, 252. Henderson believes that Bougainville may have copied passages from Montcalm's journal into his own, rather than the contrary, since duplicated passages often have a later date in Bougainville's journal. In my opinion, however, Bougainville authored parts of the general's official journal, then copied his handiwork into his own a few hours or days later. The style of the common passages seems more characteristic of Bougainville than of Montcalm. I have therefore ascribed the quoted passage to Bougainville and not to Montcalm, who also records it: Montcalm, *Journal*, *Lévis* MSS, VII, 419. Susan W. Henderson, 'The French Regular Officer Corps in Canada, 1755–1760: A Group Portrait' (PHD thesis, University of Maine, Orono, 1975), 115–16
- 34 Stanley, *New France*, 220–1; Steele, *Guerillas and Grenadiers*, 109; Henderson, 'The French Regular Officer Corps in Canada,' 102; Montcalm to Vaudreuil, Carillon, 26 July 1758, NYCD, X, 760–1; Montcalm to Creville, Montreal, 12 April 1759, MRNF, IV, 224–5; and Montcalm to Le Normand, Montreal, 12 April 1759, NYCD, X, 966
- 35 Montcalm, 'Réflexions générales sur les mesures à prendre pour la défense de cette colonie,' 10 Sept. 1758, *Lévis* MSS, IV, 45–6, and Stanley, *New France*, 220–1. Eccles claims, incorrectly, that Montcalm believed that 'the guerrilla warfare on the English colony's frontiers had to cease.' Eccles, 'Montcalm,' 463

supplies were of minimal assistance to his army; rather, he needed regulars to reinforce his depleted battalions, which even at full strength were outnumbered approximately four to one by the British.<sup>36</sup> He therefore obtained Vaudreuil's consent to select 4000 of the best militiamen and divide them into three groups. The first group was to be incorporated into the regular battalions of the line, the second into the *troupes de la Marine*, and the third was to be organized separately in the customary militia brigades. A total of approximately 3000 Canadians were intended for the incorporations.<sup>37</sup>

This reorganization was intended to serve several purposes. First, each company of the *troupes de terre* and *troupes de la Marine* would be augmented by fifteen men, and would therefore add good shots, canoeists, and workers to the existing body of regulars, improving the ability of these troops to fight, travel, and build fortifications. Montcalm hoped to have the French and Canadian soldiers teach each other what they knew, making the regulars better woodsmen and the Canadians more dependable infantrymen. The Canadians, who customarily fell sick in large numbers on campaign because they lacked clothing, proper shelter, and enforced camp sanitation, would now live with the regulars in tents and receive uniforms, food, and other supplies. In addition, there had always been a serious lack of officers among the militia – sometimes only one for every 200 men – which resulted in a lack of supervision, discipline, and leadership in battle. Incorporated troops would receive abundant attention from the numerous officers and sergeants of the French line troops and *troupes de la Marine*, thereby, it was hoped, improving discipline and reducing desertion. Montcalm and his fellow officers claimed to have no worries that Canadians would be mistreated in their new companies, for 'They live very well with our soldiers whom they love,' and their complaints would be addressed by the general himself.<sup>38</sup> The militia and the French-recruited *troupes de la Marine* already camped together, so it was not expected that there would be any serious difficulty in uniting Canadians and the *troupes de terre*.<sup>39</sup>

The 1000 remaining militiamen would be organized in their

36 Bougainville, *Journals*, 199

37 Montcalm, 'Réflexions générales sur les mesures à prendre pour la défense de cette colonie,' 45–8

38 *Ibid.*; anonymous, 'Milices du Canada: inconvenients dans la constitution de ces milices qui empêchent leur utilité; moyens d'en tirer partie, la campagne prochaine,' Jan. 1759, *RAQ* (1923–4), 29–31; and anonymous, 'The Siege of Quebec in 1759,' *The Siege of Quebec in 1759: Three Eye-Witness Accounts*, ed. Jean-Claude Hébert (Quebec 1974), 52. Canadian officers of the *troupes de la Marine* were especially plentiful, for at the beginning of the war sixty of them commanded 900 soldiers. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers*, 27

39 D'Aleynac, *Aventures militaires*, 33, 58

customary 'brigades' of approximately 150 men, each theoretically comprising five companies of thirty men. Three soldiers of the *troupes de la Marine* were usually attached to each company as sergeants, and they gave the Canadians a modicum of discipline and military training.<sup>40</sup> According to Montcalm's plans for 1759, his picked militiamen would be placed under the best militia officers, subjected by special ordinance to the same rules of discipline as the regulars, and since there were fewer militiamen on continuous service, they could be better fed, clothed, armed, and even possibly paid for their longer period on campaign. As a further incentive, Montcalm proposed that distinguished Canadian soldiers receive marks of honour, including gratuities, and that small pensions be granted to those crippled by their wounds. The rest of the militia would remain at home prepared at a moment's notice to assemble and join the troops in the field.<sup>41</sup> All of these ideas centred around an attempt to organize and obtain the most efficient performance possible from irregular troops, either as raiders or as sharpshooters on the edges of the battlefield.

The decision to organize this special militia force to act independently of or in concert with regular troops had the full support of Montcalm's regular officers. Parscau du Plessis and Pouchot both noted the potential of Canadians to form 'light companies,' and in 1757 La Pause had the idea of establishing four companies of *partisans* composed of French and Canadian troops and guided by Indians; at any one time one or two of these companies could be in the field harassing the enemy. Bourlamaque made a similar proposal that a troop of 150 volunteer chasseurs adept at *la petite guerre* be maintained in the colony in peacetime, usefully employing the *coureurs de bois* whom he believed usually resided in unproductive debauchery among the Indians.<sup>42</sup>

Montcalm's intention to create a new army for the campaign of 1759, however, was only partially fulfilled. The *levée en masse* of the Canadian militia and the need to arm, feed, and supply thousands of these soldiers resulted in an abandonment of the plan to organize a set of elite militia brigades. The only special Canadian units to be formed were a small cavalry detachment led by French officers and the *réserve de Repentigny*, which was attached to Bougainville's command to patrol the riverbank upstream from Quebec during the siege. Neither unit

40 Montcalm, 'Réflexions générales sur les mesures à prendre pour la défense de cette colonie,' 45-8, and d'Alelyrac, *Aventures militaires*, 58

41 Montcalm, 'Réflexions générales sur les mesures à prendre pour la défense de cette colonie,' 45-8, and anonymous, 'Milices du Canada,' 29-31

42 Parscau du Plessis, 'Journal de la campagne de *la Sauvage*,' RAPQ (1928-9), 221. Pouchot, *Memoir*, 1, 37; La Pause, 'Mémoire sur la campagne à faire en Canada l'année 1757,' RAPQ (1932-3), 338; and François-Charles de Bourlamaque, 'Memoir on Canada,' NYCD, x, 1149

took part in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.<sup>43</sup> The planned militia incorporations, however, did take place in the late spring, just before the arrival off Quebec of the first ships of a fleet bearing a large British and American colonial army under Major-General James Wolfe. The number of Canadians actually incorporated is unknown, but it is doubtful whether more than 500 or 600 men joined the 3000 or more regulars at Quebec.<sup>44</sup> Montcalm had only three months to train his Canadian regulars, simply an insufficient amount of time to produce the kind of soldier he wanted. Judging by the behaviour of the incorporated Canadians on the Plains of Abraham, it seems that very little effort had been made to drill them at all, and the abysmal performance of the regulars suggests that drill was not a high priority in the French army in Canada. After the battle, one of Montcalm's aides wrote in Montcalm's journal that 'The French soldier no longer knew any discipline, and instead of molding the Canadian, he assumed all of his faults.'<sup>45</sup>

The French officers were extremely pleased by the behaviour of the Canadian militia in the Battle of Montmorency on 31 July, for the militiamen were chiefly responsible for repelling a landing by 500 British grenadiers and Royal Americans. Lining the top of the slope overlooking the river, the militia opened a vigorous fire on the climbing troops, inflicting heavy casualties and forcing them to retreat to their boats. The French regulars, held in reserve immediately behind the Canadians, did not have to be committed to the action.<sup>46</sup> According to Captain Pierre Cassagniau de St Félix of the Régiment de Berry, the French generals lacked 'any great dependence on the prowess of the Canadians' until this action, 'for they intermixed them with their regulars, and gave the latter public orders to shoot any of them that should betray the least timidity: however, they behaved with so much steadiness throughout the whole cannonading, and, upon the approach of [the enemy] troops up the precipice, fired with such great regularity, that they merited the highest applause and confidence from

43 Stacey, *Quebec, 1759*, 117

44 See Lévis, *Journal*, I, 209, and H.-R. Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, II, 97, for an indication of the numbers incorporated; Casgrain suggests several hundred. See Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, III, 154, and John Knox, *An Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America For the Years 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760*, ed. Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto 1914), II, 105-6, for estimates of the size of the French army on the Plains of Abraham.

45 Montcalm, *Journal*, VII, 613

46 For the Battle of Montmorency see Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, II, 133-4; Lévis, *Journal*, I, 187-8; anonymous, 'Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec, from the Journal of a French Officer on Board the Chezine Frigate,' Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, IV, 249-50; Gordon Donaldson, *Battle for a Continent: Quebec 1759* (Toronto 1973), 138-40; Stanley, *New France*, 226-7, and Chapais, *Montcalm*, 610-11.

their Superiors.<sup>47</sup> This experience may have encouraged the officers to believe that the incorporated Canadians and militia would show more steadiness in any upcoming engagements.

On the morning of 13 September 1759, as Wolfe's army assembled on the Plains of Abraham and the French brought up their main force, platoons from the districts of Quebec, Montreal, and Trois-Rivières were detached from their militia brigades and sent forward with the pickets of the Régiment de Guyenne to harass the British troops from behind rocks and bushes all along the front of their line. After pushing back some British advance posts, these soldiers kept up a galling fire on the British regulars. Canadian militia and some Indians scattered in the woods on the two edges of the battlefield also kept up a steady fire from the cover of trees and underbrush.<sup>48</sup> Then, at about ten in the morning, Montcalm ordered the advance. In the centre, the battalions of Béarn and Guyenne formed a single deep column. On their right and left, at some distance, two other bodies of regulars formed shallower columns with a much wider frontage than the central formation. In the columns the incorporated Canadians were sandwiched in the second rank, no doubt to keep them in order. There were almost certainly more of them in the ranks further back in the columns.<sup>49</sup> Montcalm was clearly following the military ordinance of 1755, which recommended that attacks be made by a series of two-battalion columns.<sup>50</sup>

The officers lost control of their men almost immediately. The enthusiastic soldiers surged forward at an excessively fast pace, and as they marched over the rough terrain without pausing to dress ranks, they quickly lost cohesion.<sup>51</sup> As they approached the British line they began to collide with the advanced platoons of Canadian militia, which

47 Pierre Cassagniau de St Félix, cited in Knox, *Historical Journal*, II, 6

48 Armand Joannès (Hermann Johannes), 'Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759 depuis le mois de mai jusqu'en septembre,' Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, IV, 226, and Marcel, 'Journal abrégé de la campagne de 1759 en Canada,' *ibid.*, V, 296

49 Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, III, 160; Foligné, 'Journal de Foligné,' *ibid.*, IV, 205; and La Pause, 'Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada,' 97. For scholarly accounts of the battle see Stacey, *Quebec, 1759*, 145–8; Donaldson, *Battle for a Continent*, 175–83; William J. Eccles, 'The Battle of Quebec: A Reappraisal,' *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* (1977), 70–81. Also, Stanley, *New France*, 299–32; Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, III, 131–72; and Philippe-Baby Casgrain, *Les Batailles des Plaines d'Abraham et de Sainte-Foye* (Quebec 1908), 1–68

50 Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 86. The Ordinance of 1755 was influenced by both Folard and Saxe.

51 H.-R. Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, II, 249; Lévis, *Journal*, I, 209; and Marcel, 'Journal abrégé de la campagne de 1759 en Canada,' Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, V, 296



because of the rapidity of the advance had no time to retire in the intervals between the columns, two of which had very wide frontages. This caused further havoc in the French formations.<sup>52</sup> The columns began to move obliquely towards the British flanks, and at a distance of about 130 metres, extreme musket range, the French troops came to a sudden halt and fired several ineffectual volleys. The incorporated Canadians dropped to the ground to reload, as was their custom in an exposed position, and as the French officers urged the troops to advance, many if not all of the Canadians suddenly deserted their units and retired to the right where the platoons of skirmishers were joining the Canadians and Indians who lined the woods on the British flank.<sup>53</sup> This unorthodox behaviour – which left the regular officers somewhat nonplused – demonstrates just how little instruction the Canadian troops had received or accepted.

Pouchot commended the resistance of the militiamen on the right flank, but he also explained that the main attack 'confused the [incorporated] Canadians who were little accustomed to find themselves out of cover.' This was, however, the kindest assessment of the incorporated Canadians to be made by the French officers whose records are extant. Malartic accused them of cowardice, and others blamed them for setting the French regulars in disarray and abandoning their proper place in the line. The Canadians were shielded from further criticism by the fact that almost immediately after the Canadians left the ranks, the French regulars, who advanced in places to within approximately forty metres of the enemy line, broke under the impact of devastating British volleys and fled madly to the walls of Quebec and across the St Charles River.<sup>54</sup>

At the conclusion of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, as the French regulars abandoned the battlefield in complete disorder, the Canadians went far in redeeming themselves for their somewhat weak performance during the main encounter, this time in their traditional role as irregular soldiers. A quarter of Fraser's Highlanders were shot down as they attempted in vain to drive the Canadian rearguard from the woods, and they were obliged to retreat and regroup. A further attack by 500 British regulars from three regiments finally drove the

52 Joannès, 'Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759,' 226, and Marcel, 'Journal abrégé de la campagne de 1759 en Canada,' 296

53 Joannès, 'Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759,' 226, and Anne-Joseph-Hippolyte de Maurès de Malartic, Comte de Malartic, *Journal des campagnes au Canada de 1755 à 1760 par le comte de Maurès de Malartic*, ed. Gabriel de Maurès de Malartic and Paul Gaffarel (Paris 1890), 285

54 Pouchot, *Memoir*, I, 217; Malartic, *Journal*, 285; Joannès, 'Mémoire sur la campagne de 1759,' 226; and Marcel, 'Journal abrégé de la campagne de 1759 en Canada,' 296

Canadians back to the St Charles.<sup>55</sup> The Chevalier de Johnstone, who observed this half-hour-long rearguard action, had nothing but lavish praise for their performance.<sup>56</sup> Pouchot and several other officers mentioned this resistance with approval, although they deplored the indiscipline among the Canadians in the columns.<sup>57</sup>

The French officers had underestimated the extent to which Canadians were attached to the tactics which they had practised for over four generations. Like the Indians, Canadians firmly believed that they should fight in their traditional manner, even if they recognized that conventional heavy infantry tactics might be appropriate for Europeans. Pre-industrial societies are extremely resistant to change because survival is so closely linked to practices – passed on by an oral tradition – which have been proven effective by generations of experience. Also, unlike the American colonists to the south, Canadians had no tradition of training in conventional tactics to make them open to such ideas. As usual, Canadians did their best in their traditional role fighting as skirmishers, and this would be taken into account when the tactical role of Canadians was reassessed for the next campaign, that of 1760.

The Chevalier de Lévis was not present at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, but the news of the Canadian rearguard action confirmed his already high opinion of the effectiveness of Canadian militiamen when they fought under conditions for which they were trained. Ever since his arrival in Canada he had shown great interest in the use of irregular troops, and this goes far to explain why he was so popular with Vaudreuil and the Canadian officers. As early as 1756, Lévis had outlined the role he expected his light troops to play. In a directive he specified, first, that the '*troupes de la Marine* and those of the colony will fight in their manner on the flanks of the *troupes de terre*.'<sup>58</sup> This role of light troops in guarding the flanks was relatively orthodox in the French army, and was practised from Fontenoy to the middle of the Seven Years' War in both Europe and Canada. Second, Lévis attempted to work out a system whereby regulars and irregulars could support each other in battle and compensate for their respective weaknesses. Of particular significance is the fact that he designated some regular troops to serve as light infantry: 'M. de Montreuil will also detach all the good shots of his regiment, who will fight *à la canadienne*, and will keep

55 Stacey, *Quebec, 1759*, 152; P.-B. Casgrain, *Plaines d'Abraham et Sainte-Foye*, 53–6; Donaldson, *Battle for a Continent*, 187–9; Stanley, *New France*, 232; Chapais, *Montcalm*, 662; and Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, III, 151, 171–2

56 Doughty and Parmelee, *Siege of Quebec*, III, 164, 172

57 Pouchot, *Memoir*, I, 217

58 Lévis, *Journal*, I, 51

together only a part of his detachment to receive those who fight *à la canadienne*, so that, in case they were obliged to withdraw, they could do so with security behind the detachment, which, being in order, would face the enemy and give the troops who had fought as skirmishers [*à la légère*] time to rally and recommence the fight.<sup>59</sup> Light infantry depended on line troops for protection on the open battlefield because they lacked the density to deliver the concentrated firepower of a large body of men. In the days when one musket meant one bullet, a few men could do little harm to an advancing infantry unit unless they continually retreated to a new position and renewed their fire.

Meanwhile, parallel tactical developments were taking place in Germany, where light troops were employed by the French army at Sundershausen and Lutternberg in 1758 and at Bergen, Lippstadt, and Minden the following year. Until 1759 grenadiers, pickets, and entire line battalions detached as *volontaires* were used as light infantry, but during the winter of 1758–9 several regiments decided of their own accord to form detachments of fifty men to serve as light infantry, and these soldiers proved so useful at Bergen, in the retreat from Minden, and in other engagements that at the end of the 1759 campaigning season a number of officers successfully urged the Maréchal de Broglie to institute light infantry companies throughout his army. This allowed a battalion to be a self-contained unit which could depend on itself and not on special light infantry battalions elsewhere in the army when it met the enemy during or between major battles. Despite opposition from the Duc de Choiseul, battalion light infantry companies were confirmed by Broglie's French army drill instructions of 1764 and 1769 and officially instituted in 1776, just in time for the Comte de Rochambeau's campaign in America.<sup>60</sup>

It seems unlikely that Lévis knew of Broglie's reforms of the autumn of 1759, since the British blockade of the St Lawrence began in May and communications with France via Acadia were tenuous in the extreme. This makes it especially interesting that he should organize battalion light infantry companies at exactly the same time as Broglie. Both generals, however, were carrying the primarily post-1748 practice of detaching battalion grenadiers and pickets as skirmishers to its logical conclusion.

During the winter of 1759–60 Lévis decided to continue the incorporation of Canadian troops into the regular battalions, but on a significantly different basis than that envisioned by his later com-

59 Ibid.

60 Colin, *L'Infanterie au dix-huitième siècle*, 75–80, 106–13, 126; Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare*, 92, 98–9; Fuller, *British Light Infantry*, 69–70, 118–23; and Eugène Carrias, *La Pensée militaire française* (Paris 1960), 170

mander. Lévis's instructions for the organization of his army in 1760 specified that three companies of militia would be attached to each regular battalion, and to command these companies he designated 'a captain who would be the best for this assignment and to manage the *habitants* with gentleness, and three lieutenants to command the said companies.'<sup>61</sup> It is especially important to note that these Canadian troops were to be attached to the battalion in independent companies and not merely assimilated into the ranks of the regulars. Their role on the battlefield was explained in detail: 'When it is necessary to march in column, they will march by companies or by half-company at the head of the brigade, and when it is necessary to place themselves in order of battle to fight, they will go forward forming a first line, leaving from one division to the next an equal distance to occupy the entire front of the line.'<sup>62</sup> In other words, the light infantry would spread out to form a skirmishing line in front of the regular troops. 'Once they are thus formed, they will march forward and seek to make use of the most advantageous situations to approach as closely as possible and fire on the enemy, and follow him closely if he withdraws.'<sup>63</sup> Lévis further explained that if the skirmishers were pushed back, they would rally and form line in the intervals between the two-company divisions and then march forward with the whole army, firing volleys and then charging with the bayonet.<sup>64</sup>

We see here the final development of the light infantryman, no longer an irregular sharpshooter roaming on the edges of the battlefield but a regular soldier trained to prepare the way for the decisive attack. This not only required a high degree of training and flexibility, but also called for an intelligent, motivated soldier quite different from the automatons advocated by most of the leading generals of the day.<sup>65</sup> Each regular battalion was equipped with light infantry and could employ them offensively or defensively whenever the need arose.

In the spring of 1760 the Chevalier de Lévis incorporated 2264

61 Lévis, 'Instructions concernant l'ordre dans lequel les milices attachées à chaque bataillon seront formées pour camper et servir pendant la campagne,' *Journal*, 1, 248

62 *Ibid.*, 250. The divisions Lévis mentions here include two companies, each about thirty men strong.

63 *Ibid.*, 250-1

64 *Ibid.*, 251. See also Lévis, 'Instruction concernant les dispositions et ordre de bataille qui doivent suivre toutes les troupes,' and 'Instructions concernant l'ordre dans lequel les milices attachées à chaque bataillon seront formées pour camper et servir pendant la campagne,' *ibid.*, 243-54, as well as Lee Kennett, *The French Armies in the Seven Years' War: A Study in Military Organization and Administration* (Durham, NC 1967), 29-30.

65 Strachan, *European Armies*, 23-5

Canadian militiamen into his eight battalions of *troupes de terre* and two battalions of *troupes de la Marine*.<sup>66</sup> A full 38 per cent of the rank and file of the average battalion was Canadian, with 226 Canadians and 361 regulars in this 'average' unit combining to raise its strength to 587 men. There were, however, significant variations from unit to unit, especially in terms of the proportion of Canadians to Frenchmen. In the case of the Régiment de Languedoc, the incorporated Canadians slightly outnumbered the regulars.<sup>67</sup> At the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the incorporated Canadians had constituted only about 10 per cent of the regulars present. Lévis's militiamen, who wore their traditional costumes and were accompanied by their Canadian *habitant* militia officers and French regular NCOs under the command of French regular officers, were organized in units separate from the French troops in the battalions and, of course, were not officially enlisted in the regular army. While it was usual for three strong companies to be attached to each battalion, in a number of cases more were involved; this is probably due to the fact that Canadian militia companies varied widely in size, and Lévis was reluctant to amalgamate companies from different localities.<sup>68</sup>

The French met the British at Sainte-Foy, on the edge of the Plains of Abraham, and a fierce, desperate battle ensued which left four times as many men dead and wounded as the more celebrated engagement of the previous September.<sup>69</sup> The Canadian militia companies, stationed in front and in the intervals between their battalions, kept up a relentless, accurate fire on the British regulars who, despite repeated attacks, failed to make any impression on their French opponents. The effectiveness of the Canadian troops greatly impressed Malartic: 'The Canadians of the four brigades of the right, those who were in the intervals or in front of the brigades, fired a long time and most opportunely. They did a lot of harm to the English.'<sup>70</sup> A reserve battalion composed of the townsmen of Montreal and Trois-Rivières

66 Data derived from table in Lévis, *Journal*, 1, 257. Lévis lists 6910 troops, including 2264 incorporated militia and militia officers (who were *habitants*, not professionals) 3610 regulars, and 266 regular officers. There was also a battalion of Montreal militia, 180 Canadian cavalry, and 270 Indians.

67 *Ibid.*, 257

68 *Ibid.*, 253, and La Pause, 'Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada,' 107

69 For scholarly accounts of the battle see Jean-Claude Lizotte, Jacques Gervais, and Carl Lavoie, 'La Bataille de Sainte-Foy,' *Mémoire: Magazine d'histoire et patrimoine*, nos 2-3 (1985): 4-21; P.-B. Casgrain, *Plaines d'Abraham et Sainte-Foye*, 69-90; George M. Wrong, *The Fall of Canada: A Chapter in the History of the Seven Years' War* (Oxford 1914), 143-54; Stanley, *New France*, 244-8; Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 11, 348-51; and H.-R. Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, 11, 350-6.

70 Malartic, *Journal*, 319

under Repentigny of the colonial regulars advanced to fill a gap in the line accidentally created by the withdrawal of a battalion of the Régiment de La Reine, and fighting in a semblance of close order kept a battalion of Germans of the Royal American Regiment and other British regulars at bay.<sup>71</sup> The Canadians showed great steadiness and bravery in this battle, and took part in the set-piece attacks which drove in the British flanks and forced General Murray to order a hasty retreat with the loss of all of his guns.<sup>72</sup> Lévis singled out Dominique Nicolas de Laas de Gustede, a captain in the Régiment de La Reine and commander of the 223 Canadians of his battalion, for distinguished conduct. Although Laas never received orders to advance, when he saw Royal Rousillon and Guyenne marching against Fraser's brigade on the British left flank, he led his Canadian soldiers forward to join in the successful attack.<sup>73</sup> Canadian militiamen had already cleared this flank of Murray's light troops by nearly annihilating the force of American and Highland Rangers sent into the woods to operate against the French right.<sup>74</sup> The fact that nearly one-fifth of the French casualties at Sainte-Foy were Canadians suggests just how heavily engaged they were.<sup>75</sup>

Companies of Canadian skirmishers under French officers had formed a long line in front of their battalions, covering both the French heavy infantry and the gaps between the battalions and remaining in position despite British artillery and musket fire at close range. Joined to their respective battalions by French regular officers, they were able to offer valuable assistance to the heavy infantry and were supported by their fire. A Canadian militia battalion under a Canadian colonial regular officer had actually replaced a battalion of regulars in the line of battle, and other Canadian light troops covered the flanks and defeated trained enemy light infantry. Canadian troops had therefore performed in several roles: as skirmishers in front of the heavy infantry preparing and taking part in the decisive attack, as skirmishers acting offensively and defensively on the flanks, and as heavy infantry in the line of battle.

71 P.-B. Casgrain, *Plaines d'Abraham et Sainte-Foye*, 69, 87

72 H.-R. Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, II, 351, 355; Malartic, *Journal*, 319 note; and anonymous, 'Narrative of the Expedition against Quebec, under the orders of Chevalier de Lévis, *Maréchal des Camps et Armées* of the King,' NYCD, x, 1083. This last account is Canadian, and is attached to one of Vaudreuil's letters to Berryer, dated Montreal, 3 May 1760.

73 Lévis, *Journal*, I, 267; H.-R. Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, II, 355-6; Vaudreuil to Berryer, Montreal, 3 May 1760, NYCD, x, 1076; and Stanley, *New France*, 248

74 Stanley, *New France*, 247-8

75 Casgrain's casualty figures are not completely reliable, but they indicate that about 17 per cent of the French casualties were Canadian, or 150 men. Casgrain, *Montcalm et Lévis*, II, 356

French officers, including Lévis, Malartic, and artillery lieutenant Joseph Fournerie de Vezon, were unanimous in praising the steadiness, effectiveness, and dash of the Canadian soldiers, and there is little doubt that the officers considered the military reforms of 1760 a great success.<sup>76</sup>

On both sides of the Atlantic, French military men faced the problem of how to increase the efficiency of irregular soldiers while retaining their special attributes of initiative and independence and their unique fighting skills. On each continent they met the problem in a similar way by giving their irregulars more discipline and better leadership, while at the same time cultivating their special *esprit de corps*. Conventional discipline and irregular tactics were combined to produce a new soldier with the ability to deal with a variety of opponents and battlefield situations. They also increased the co-operation between conventional and light troops until the latter, instead of being employed in a completely auxiliary role as scouts and raiders, became an effective tool on the classic, eighteenth-century battlefield.

The French officers who served in Canada during the Seven Years' War were obliged to fight under conditions which were very different from those which they had known in Europe, but their past experience and awareness of important trends in military tactics helped to prepare them for this new campaign. The growing ability of the enemy to deal with irregulars on their line of march and the likelihood of major encounters between the British and French armies meant that Canadians had to expand their skills by learning to fight on the conventional battlefield against enemy light and heavy infantry. Montcalm displayed a lack of judgment in filling the ranks of his regulars with undrilled Canadians, and was not sufficiently imaginative or ambitious enough to develop a closer co-operation between his regulars and irregulars. This job was left to Lévis to accomplish by placing militia units under regular officers and carefully linking these new light infantry units to his regular battalions so as to ensure close mutual support between these two corps – a change which paralleled reforms taking place simultaneously in the French army in Germany. The result was a decisive victory at Sainte-Foy, and this accomplishment justified the faith French officers had in the potential of Canadian militiamen to become what even they might have considered professional soldiers.

<sup>76</sup> Lévis, *Journal*, 1, 267; Malartic, *Journal*, 319; and Fournerie de Vezon, 'Événements de la guerre en Canada depuis le 13 7bre 1759 jusqu'au 14 juillet 1760,' *RAPQ* (1938-9), 6-7