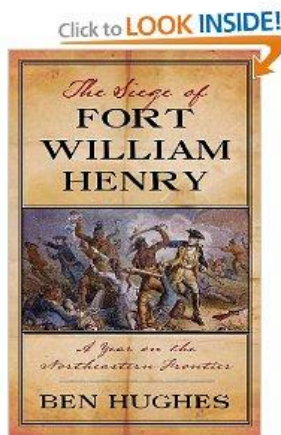


The Siege of Fort William Henry: A Year on the Northeastern Frontier by Ben Hughes and reviewed by Rich Barbuto

All you French and Indian War fans will love this book. The massacre at Fort William Henry, fictionally portrayed in the 1992 movie, 'the Last of the Mohicans', is an iconic event of the F&IW. The truth, different than the movie portrayal, is still quite as terrifying. Massacres are hardly a common wargame subject, but sieges are. Fortunately, this book is more than just about the 1757 siege. It addresses the entire campaign and is sufficiently detailed to provide scenarios to keep the wargamer busy for a long while.

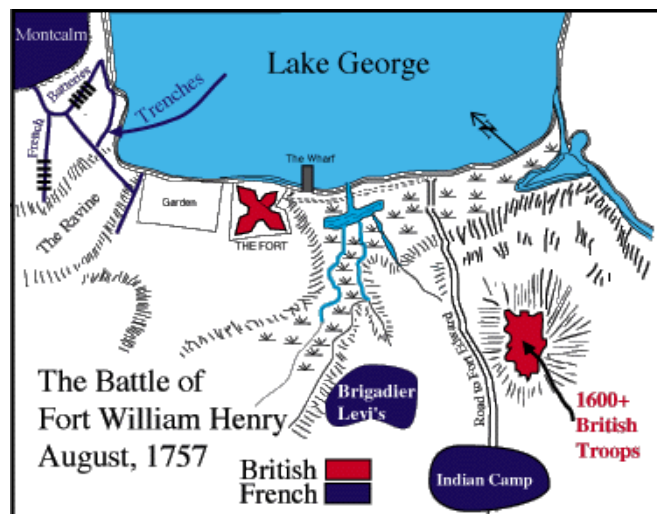


The campaign was situated along the Richelieu River/Lake Champlain/Lake George/Hudson River invasion route that connects Montreal to New York City. Fort William Henry was at the southern end of long, narrow Lake George and guarded the portage between that lake and the Hudson. Fort Edward was on the Hudson, only fourteen miles away. However, twenty miles to the north lay Fort Carillon, a French fortress. Except for waterways, the terrain was mountainous and heavily forested. Tracks through the woods could hardly avoid the numerous sites that provided opportunities for ambush.

The Marquis de Montcalm brought 8000 regulars, militia, and allied native warriors across Lake George and through the forests to lay siege to Fort William Henry, defended by Lieutenant Colonel George Monro and about 2400 regulars of the 35th Foot, American provincials, and a couple companies of rangers. As the French and Indians drew closer, Monro grew increasingly concerned. There were a growing number of ambushes and sightings of Indians close to his fort. Monro sent out 300 provincials in whaleboats to examine the water route across Lake George. More than 450 natives and a small number of French regulars, in canoes, attacked the provincials. In this one-sided battle, 260 provincials were killed or wounded. As the terrified survivors escaped back to his fort, Monro realized the immense size of this impending threat.

Montcalm established a formal siege. French guns smashed the fort. Monro's superior failed to send a relief force. Monro surrendered and received generous terms. His men would be paroled and allowed to march to Fort Edward with their weapons - but no ammunition. Not a cartridge. The natives, thoroughly angry at Montcalm for denying them scalps and captives, fell upon the column and satisfied their blood lust.

This book is a real page-turner. The maps are sufficient to design any number of solo



scenarios. Hughes provides enough detail to easily flesh out a game from ambush in woods or on water to the fight for the fort itself. He provides numbers and types of troops to establish a 'close enough' order of battle for many of the engagements. There is enough biographical data on the key players - French, native, British, and American – to incorporate personality into your game. Rarely has a non-wargaming book provided so much for the soloist. And if you just want to read a gripping story, this is a winner!

The Siege of Fort William Henry: A Year on the Northeastern Frontier

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