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Ghosts of Quebec: Violence and Trauma at the Siege and Battle for Quebec, 1759.

Nick R. Girard

University of Windsor, girard15@uwindsor.ca

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Ghosts of Quebec: Violence and Trauma at the Siege and Battle for Quebec, 1759.

By

Nicholas Rinaldo Girard

A Major Research Paper
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2018

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**Ghosts of Quebec: Violence and Trauma at the Siege and Battle for Quebec,
1759.**

by

Nicholas Rinaldo Girard

APPROVED BY:

G. Teasdale
Department of History

P. Way, Advisor
Department of History

April 25, 2018

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

Ghosts of Quebec spotlights the violence and killing in the Seven Years' War and how it exemplifies a cycle of violence perpetuated by common soldiers. In doing this, the main analysis of this essay includes modern research on violence and killing as well as psychological combat trauma at the Siege of Quebec, 1759. The present literature on the Seven Years' War often assumes a top down approach and emphasizes the roles of leaders and politicians without engaging the combat experience of common soldiers. Research on the siege and battle for Quebec follows a comparable methodology that leaves out the story of common soldiers and analyzes the three-month siege in terms of tactics and strategy. *Ghosts of Quebec* takes a socio-historical approach, applying the literature on killing and psychological trauma in modern warfare to the primary documentation of British soldiers at the siege of Quebec. This essay will fill the void in the historiography of the Seven Years' War and address the guerilla warfare waged by soldiers at Quebec in 1759 as a part of a cycle of violence driven by psychological combat trauma.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my Nonno and Nonna.

Also, those who have helped this paper along and kept me sane (for the most part).
You know whom you are and thank you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my Master Peter Way for all of his help, guidance and brutal honesty. Second, my Nonno, for being my hero and reminding me sometimes that it's better to not worry and "forget about it." Last, and most importantly, my parents and sister, who pushed me, supported me and continue to support me through the good, the bad and the ugly.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The British fleet under the watchful command of Rear-Admiral Philip Durell and General James Wolfe set sail from Louisburg and reached the mouth of the St. Lawrence on June 9th, 1759. The river was largely unexplored by British seamen of this time so it represented a new frontier of warfare. Happening upon two French seamen, the British sought to abduct them to exploit their knowledge of the waterway. These French seamen saw what they thought were French vessels signaling them to board, but in fact, were decoyed on board the disguised enemy warships. The pilots did not cooperate well with their British captors, however, one proclaiming that “Canada should be the grave of the whole army, and he expected in a short time to see the walls ornamented with English scalps.”¹ After the British landed at Quebec this prophecy was made true in a bitter, bloody and brutal series of events.

As the primary British landing force made their way onto the Isle d’Orleans through the landing area at St. Laurent, a group encountered a grizzly message to the British as a whole. A member of one of the ranging parties sent out by Wolfe on the 26th was used as a warning to the British to cease their landings and return to where they came. Troops discovered this “Ranger killed and scalped, and a stake drove through his body.”² The French and their native allies revealed themselves able and willing to use hyper-violence, guerilla tactics including scalping and body mutilation, to repel the British from their lands. Such actions precipitated separate

¹ Matthew C. Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2009), 68.

² Anon., “A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence,” Literary and Historical Society of Quebec,

² Anon., “A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence,” Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, *Historical Documents*, series 4, vol. 1 (1875), 4.

responses by British commanders and soldiers. British commanders condemned these attacks as unjust and against European rules of war. However, soldiers took matters into their own hands and fought the war on the same terms as those of the French and their native allies: scalping, killing prisoners, and wreaking destruction.

The violence at Quebec represents a leitmotif of war found in the North American theatre of the Seven Years' War, a war that began in 1754 with the execution and scalping of a French officer by a Native American accompanying the inexperienced British colonial officer George Washington. Through the intervening years before Quebec, conflict escalated with the forced evacuation of the Acadian people from Nova Scotia, massacres of surrendered British garrisons, and the indiscriminate use of guerrilla warfare and the systematic targeting of civilians, making this conflict one that fell outside the intentional norms of just war. In 1759 the Seven Years' War had been in its third official year and the British fighting the French had no clear endgame in sight. The British victory at Louisburg the previous year had opened up the doors for William Pitt, the British secretary of state in charge of North America, to implement plans against French Canada.³ At Quebec, however, combat took on a decidedly non-European cast, with acts of guerilla violence breeding yet more violence in the conflict and, arguably, causing psychological trauma to the soldiers who experienced in the North American approach.

The purpose of this essay is to shed light on violence and killing in the Seven Years' War and how it exemplifies a cycle of violence perpetuated by common soldiers. The mechanism that will drive this essay forward is the bridge between modern analysis of killing and the 18th century conflict known as the Seven Years' War. A plethora of research exists on combat trauma in 20th century conflicts, but most of the studies on killing and psychological combat trauma assume it to be a modern phenomenon. Conversely, the literature on the Seven Years'

³ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 18-20.

War often assumes a top down approach and emphasizes the roles of leaders and politicians without engaging the combat experience of common soldiers. Research on Quebec follows a similar approach that leaves out the story of the rank-and-file and the trauma they experienced from the style of warfare in which they engaged. The few sources that write on guerilla warfare frame those smaller conflicts in terms of tactics rather than the details of human experience. To fill this gap in the story, this essay will address the guerilla warfare waged by soldiers at Quebec in 1759. It will take a socio-historical approach, applying the literature on killing and psychological trauma in modern warfare to the primary documentation of British soldiers at the siege of Quebec. Combined, the theory and research will help understand the nature of war in North America in 1759—bloody guerilla conflict perpetuated by French, British and Native combatants that spurred a cycle of violent revenge—as well as how the rank-and-file experience shaped the war.

The Seven Years' War in North America witnessed armed conflict that exceeded European norms of violence, including widespread scalping and killing of unarmed prisoners, which established a pattern of escalating violence that culminated at Quebec. This occurred in response to French and Native American scalplings, mutilation, and dismemberment of British prisoners throughout the war. At Quebec, Wolfe's soldiers responded in kind to French aggression, which prompted a cycle of violence between the two armies that peaked in late August 1759 with the killing of French prisoners, including a priest. The violence indicated in these sources and its cyclicity suggests that psychological combat trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may have played a part in this conflict. Soldiers scarred by extreme violence committed against themselves or their comrades turned the same methods onto their enemies in attempts to assuage their grief and satisfy their thirst for vengeance. The siege and

battle for Quebec serves to illuminate that much of the Seven Years' War was waged according to cultural norms alien to Europeans; and, on the British side, that common soldiers, not generals, were largely responsible for its brutal conduct.

Traditional military history tends to naturalize violence and avert its gaze from killing by concentrating on names, dates and places rather than the details of battle. But killing, while “natural” to war is unnatural to human beings. It requires training and disciplinary regimes to coerce the soldier to take the life of an enemy. This does not, however, absolve them from feeling guilt. The act of killing and violence in war has adverse emotional and physical effects on human beings. The more people are exposed to violence and destruction, the more likely they will become psychological casualties of war.⁴ Presenting violence and killing as an unnatural part of human experience will allow for a clear understanding of the brutalization of conflict that occurred in the Seven Years' War. Given the nature of the violence, British soldiers must have experienced some degree of combat trauma, which, in turn, created the circumstances for the hyper-violence that occurred in the siege before the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.

This essay will document the cycle of violence that occurred during the Siege of Quebec from May to September 1759. The Siege of Quebec witnessed many violent acts and traumatic psychological episodes involving the British armed forces. In this instance, violence was unbarred and civilians and soldiers alike, became targets for terror tactics, all part of a revenge narrative precipitated by previous events in the war such as the killing of surrendered garrison members at Fort Oswego (1756) and Fort William Henry (1757). The British considered both incidents unbridled massacres performed by natives aligned with the French under the watchful eye of French leadership. By isolating and documenting the violence that ensued during the

⁴ Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Bay Back Books, 1996), 43-45.

siege of Quebec and applying modern studies of psychological combat trauma, the actions of soldiers can be better understood as being personal, as much as military, in nature.

This paper will first outline the relevant historiography and address research on the psychology of killing in war that will serve as the departure point. Following this section will be a brief chronology of events in the Seven Years' War leading up to the events at Quebec in 1759, in particular episodes of the conflict that had significant impacts on the psyche of British soldiers. An in-depth analysis of the siege of Quebec comprises the main body of this essay. Within this section there will be an assessment of the violence at Quebec in light of contemporary norms on the waging of just war and whether these tactics diverged from acceptable contemporary practices. This essay will conclude that the cycle of violence that culminated at Quebec in 1759 derived from a deep-seated desire for revenge rooted in psychological trauma experienced by British soldiers. The siege and the war as a whole drew from this bloody wellspring.

Chapter 2

Historiography

A number of survey monographs cover the Seven Years' War as a whole. These share several common features, in particular the adoption of a mostly top-down perspective of officers and senior officials. Works by Fred Anderson, Daniel Baugh and William Fowler all fall into this category.

Fred Anderson's *Crucible of War* looks comprehensively at the Seven Years' War. Anderson concentrates on the nature of war in the Americas and how this set the tone for the rest of the conflict on a global scale. He includes chapters on all the major incursions in the North American theatre. A chapter on the Siege of Quebec appropriately titled "Dubious Battle" contains elements that are missing from the discussions of others. He illustrates that the tactics employed by British General James Wolfe rose to unprecedented levels of destruction of civilian property, including atrocities such as mutilation, scalping, and general terror tactics employed in the Quebec countryside.⁵ Anderson does a sufficient job in telling the story of the Seven Years' War, and the chronology of the Siege of Quebec, but lacks analytical depth in describing how soldiers and officers operated on an emotional level in the midst of the conflict. The violence conducted by Wolfe and his soldiers is considered normal by Anderson, even though he identifies the tactics as unusually savage for the time period.⁶ Anderson's wide-ranging look at the war is useful in establishing continuity and connecting the events of the war to each other and how they ultimately led to the American Revolution, but the lack of detail on the specific events at Quebec and other battles require supplemental sourcing. More centrally, countering his normalization of violence at Quebec constitutes one objective of this study.

⁵ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 344-348.

⁶ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 344.

The Global Seven Years' War by Daniel Baugh fills in the blanks left by Anderson and focuses much more on the war globally. In terms of the changing tide of war in the North American front, Baugh pays particular attention to the role of the Atlantic Ocean. An emphasis on naval power and overseas relationships on the workings of the war is evident throughout his book. Baugh's analysis of the capture of Quebec paints a comprehensive picture of the role of the Royal Navy in the operation of the campaign. On this note, he provides a brief overview of the Siege of Quebec, the health of General Wolfe and the state of the navy in terms of involvement in this section of the campaign. However, he does not paint a picture of what the soldiers, sailors, and officers felt or how they operated during this grisly siege. The tactics employed by Wolfe are largely ignored including the intensive naval bombardment of the city, which he states had no strategic purpose aside from demonstrating military superiority.⁷ This work provides a view through the lens of the navy during the Siege of Quebec and the Seven Years' War and how naval power contributed to a British victory.

William Fowler's piece *Empires at War* does exactly what the title suggests: it frames the Seven Years' War in terms of two early-modern empires fighting in what he calls the "first world war."⁸ Much like Anderson's *Crucible of War*, Fowler places the importance of the Seven Years' War on the operations by the French and British in North America. He does not provide the level of detail on every event of the War that Anderson attempts to provide, but he describes the cultural and political background of the war that made the conflict unique within the North American theatre. Fowler portrays the struggle for the colonies of North America as the beginnings of modern conflict and the importance of the fiscal-military state. Fowler emphasizes the importance of economics to the Seven Years' War and how British control of North America

⁷ Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War, 1754-1763* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 408-411.

⁸ William M. Fowler, *Empires at War: The French and Indian War and the Struggle for North America, 1754-1763* (New York: Walker and Company, 2005), 1.

changed the nature of global trade.⁹ This source provides an economic perspective that supplements the tactical aspects of Baugh and Anderson's works.

To successfully outline the violence at Quebec, it is essential to examine the research on the nature of armed conflict in North America the 17th and 18th centuries. Three main perspectives of the conflict are evident: the warfare in North America followed a distinctly North American way of war, to which European soldiers and colonists adapted; warfare followed the military standards of Europe; last, warfare was a hybrid of European and North American methods. The first position is staked out by John Grenier. His *The First Way of War* historicizes the British tactics in the Seven Years' War back to early European settlement. Grenier illustrates that the adaptation of these tactics involved an exchange of warfare practices between native, British and French peoples.¹⁰ Grenier's perspective demonstrates that the Seven Years' War fought in North America formed part of a long history of warfare spawned in North America using ranging tactics and guerilla tactics. Patrick Malone in *The Skulking Way of War* likewise put forward a cultural assimilation model but provided more detail on the process of cultural fusion within North America and how this affected the state of war during the colonial period. Furthermore, he believes that this produced a uniquely American way of warfare that utilized European technology.¹¹ These differing perspectives are important to showcase the arguments made about American style warfare and demonstrate the cultural, political, and technological exchanges between Europeans and natives that ultimately affected warfare in the Seven Years' War.

⁹ Fowler, *Empires at War*, 268-275.

¹⁰ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 116.

¹¹ Patrick Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Oxford: Madison Books, 2000), 1, 27-31.

The cultural contact of Europeans and natives proved significant to warfare in North America. However, Malone and Grenier do not provide the perspective of soldiers on a personal level and how they adjusted to this type of war. European and American tactics and methods of war all had their own unique effect on soldiers. John Ferling's *A Wilderness of Miseries* provides insight into the nature of warfare in the colonies and how it usually occurred on a smaller scale than conflicts in Europe, but often produced more destruction. This text emphasizes that Europeans had to adapt to and overcome the tactics of North America to gain victory in their colonies.¹² However, he supplements this discussion of North American warfare to show how it actually affected common soldiers, the hardship and violence resulting in desertions, massacres and plundering.¹³ The Quebec campaign of 1759 exemplifies the end result of Euro-American adaption to the style of war found in North America. Daniel Beattie demonstrates that European soldiers had to adapt their own technology and tactics to be relevant and effective on the New World battlefield, not only because of cultural differences but also due to environmental differences compared to battlefields in Europe.¹⁴

In contrast to the above sources on colonial warfare, Peter Russell and Guy Chet argue that the Seven Years' War in North America represents a triumph of European tactics and warfare over the primitive style of warfare of the colonies. Russell attacks previous historical representations of regular soldiers and officers as inexperienced with guerilla warfare. He demonstrates that these soldiers in fact had ample experience with irregular tactics in both Scotland and mainland Europe. The failures of European commanders and soldiers in North

¹² John Ferling, *A Wilderness of Miseries: War and Warriors in Early America* (London: Greenwood Press, 1980), 19-21.

¹³ Ferling, *A Wilderness of Miseries*, 93-100.

¹⁴ Daniel J. Beattie, "The Adaptation of the British Army to Wilderness Warfare, 1755-1763," in *Adapting to Conditions: War and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Maarten Ultee (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1986), 56-58.

America did not derive from unfamiliarity and failure to adapt to local conditions, but rather, their failures to apply the lessons learned in Europe to conflict in North America.¹⁵ Chet shows that the tactics of European soldiers proved more effective than the way North American militia and natives fought due to the refinements the regular made based on years of experience in Europe and further afield. This in part had to do with superior technology but Chet prefers the education and experience of European professional soldiers to that of Native Americans and colonial militias.¹⁶ These perspectives favor European excellence over the perceived primitiveness of American ways to wage war.

Armstrong Starkey's *European and Native American Warfare* proposes that colonial warfare resulted from a meld of North American and European warfare, adopting an ethno-historical approach. Starkey dismisses the European versus North American way of war debate as missing the point, instead affirming that these differing types of war happened hand in hand as utilized by both the French and the British.¹⁷ This perspective will predominate in this essay. Although, the North American front of the Seven Years' War was quite different than the battlefields of Europe, ultimately the critical moments were won by European standards, such as the battle at the Plains of Abraham. But from the perspective of common soldiers, the hyper-violence of the North American way of war likely had more of an affect on a personal level.

The British and French military in North America during the Seven Years' War were comprised of two separate parts, not including native allies, the soldiers from mainland Europe and those gathered from the colonies, both marked by distinct societal backgrounds. Provincial

¹⁵ Peter Russell, "Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 35:1 (Jan. 1978): 629-631.

¹⁶ Guy Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 8-11, 142-144.

¹⁷ Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675-1815* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 3-5.

soldiers had various backgrounds depending on the colony of origin but proved to be unused to the regimen of regular discipline and less likely to become professional soldiers.¹⁸ Stephen Brummell views British regular soldiers as coming from the lower ranks of society.¹⁹ Peter Way disagrees with Brummell, alleging that he falls into the trap of adopting the perspective of his sources: British officers from the gentry. Way examines both regular and provincial soldiers. For the former, he focuses on their class status and how force, either the explicit force of impressment or the implicit force of economics, pushed men into the military. Of provincial soldiers, he argues they exercised greater choice in enlistment and opted for colonial service with its higher pay, shorter term, and more benign disciplinary system, yet found themselves subjected to regular army officers.²⁰ Despite these differences, both types of soldiers are drawn into the web of hyper-violence in the Seven Years' War.

Most sources agree on the harsh lifestyle and realities of serving in both the regular and provincial forces during the colonial period. Titus outlines the disciplinary problems the provincial armies faced and how this often translated into issues with desertion and basic unruliness.²¹ However, Anderson posits that provincial soldiers had a relatively gradual transition from civilian life to military life, although harsh discipline still arose in the provincial forces, especially with their interactions with regular forces. Regular discipline, Anderson

¹⁸ Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldier and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: The Institute for Early American History and Culture, 1984), Preface, 9, 111-112; James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 89; Lawrence Delbert Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), xi-xiii

¹⁹ Stephen Brummell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and the War in the Americas 1755-1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 69-79.

²⁰ Peter Way, "The Scum of Every County, The Refuse of Mankind: Recruiting the British Army in the Eighteenth Century," in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative History of Military Labour 1500-2000*, ed. Erik-Jan Zürcher (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), 290-291; Peter Way, "Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War," *Labour History* 44, no. 4 (2003), 456-458.

²¹ James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 91-93, 101.

elaborates, reflected a rather British civilian law.²² The discipline capped an already harsh military lifestyle. Brumwell's chapter "Following the Drum" paints a picture of the cruelty that was involved with being a part of the British army, but his portrayal gives the soldiers little agency when explaining instances of mutiny, conflict with officers, or general disorder.²³

The literature on military life in the colonial period provide their own perspectives on combat and its effects. Anderson and Brumwell in their respected works indict the army as an institution. Combat is not their primary focus. Anderson provides a chapter in *A People's Army* entitled "Battle and its Effects" in which he attempts to provide the provincial common soldiers' perspectives on battle during the colonial period. He emphasizes the terror and destruction they witnessed and how this destruction created "a common memory" among soldiers' records.²⁴ Both these sources, and most of the historiography on military life, while alluding to the violence and terror, fail to address any psychological trauma soldiers may have experienced.

These historiographical shortcomings bleed into studies on specific encounters of the Seven Years' War. *Betrayals* by Ian Steele and Brumwell's *White Devil* portray the battles at Fort William Henry and St. Francis respectively. They each focus on the tactical and graphic details of these encounters between the English and the French along with European interactions with Native Americans. Steele illustrates how the perspective of the extant sources, being overwhelming European in nature, can lead to misinterpretation and inaccurate portrayals of history.²⁵ Brumwell analyzes the St. Francis "massacre" with providing ample background on

²² Anderson, *A People's Army*, 74-83, 121-125.

²³ Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and the War in the Americas 1755-1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 134-135.

²⁴ Anderson, *A People's Army* 152-155.

²⁵ Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry & the 'Massacre'* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 78-80.

the key players, specifically Ranger Robert Rogers.²⁶ The ways in which these texts set up key battles and incursions with social, cultural and political backgrounds as well as ample primary illustrations are successful on many fronts. However, they fail to provide a psychological element to soldiers and their experiences with violence and killing. Furthermore, violence and killing are treated as normal aspects of war and are not indicted in a historical or psychological manner.

Two important works on the Siege and battle for Quebec address the violence and destruction at Quebec. Canadian Historian C.P. Stacey's work *Quebec 1759* offers a comprehensive look at the battle and siege that took place between the British and French forces during the summer of 1759. His top down perspective on the battle falls in line with historical work of Stacey's time, but has elements that lead towards a more social historical approach. Stacey's fifth chapter specifically examines the "cruelty" and "destruction" wrought by Wolfe's forces in the Quebec region. He interestingly attributes the violence at Quebec to the historical creation of an American type of warfare, but also due to the events that happened previous to the Quebec campaign specifically the massacre of Fort William Henry. He demonstrates that General Wolfe wished to repay the French for their actions in previous incursions of the war with his own brand of hyper violence.²⁷ This connection points to the brutalization of warfare found in the conflict by linking Quebec with events like those at Oswego and Fort William Henry. However, Stacey overplays the role of Wolfe and his commanders relative to his soldiers who actually committed the violence and destruction.

Matthew Ward's *The Battle for Quebec 1759* takes a similar approach to Stacey, but provides legal and international context to the actions during the siege. His chapter "The

²⁶ Stephen Brumwell, *White Devil: A True Story of War, Savagery, and Vengeance in Colonial America* (United States of America: Da Capo Press, 2004), 19.

²⁷ C.P. Stacey, *Quebec 1759: The Siege and the Battle* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1959), 88-89.

Distasteful War” illustrates Wolfe’s controversial commands to target civilians and enemy combatants with tactics that even at the time would have been considered relatively harsh. International law during the 1700s, while not as formalized as today, still bore weight with kings, commanders, and politicians on both sides of the war. Ward identifies specific legal premises to provide a measure for the actions of both the French and English during the Siege of Quebec. He charts the steady increase of violence throughout the war in light of international accords.²⁸ Such attention to the legal and political merits of the Wolfe’s methods utilized at Quebec clouds the issue, pushing the soldiers who carried out his orders to the periphery. The men, in many cases, scalped natives and targeted civilians for their own reasons and Wolfe’s orders merely freed their hands. Ward’s use of international law and military practice at the time is interesting, but his reading is subject to interrogation. This essay will demonstrate that Wolfe and his soldiers were essentially in the right with their use of violence and destruction in light of previous encounters with the French and native allies prior to and during the siege of Quebec.

Ward’s book possesses many merits but he misses the mark in not engaging the conflict on the ground with common soldiers, in particular the whirlwind of violence they encountered at Quebec. Furthermore, both Stacey and Ward fail to explain why the British soldiers acted so violently outside the then current norms of war. This essay will provide that depth by attaching modern research on violence, psychological trauma, and PTSD to the Siege and Battle for Quebec.

Current research on the Seven Years’ War more often than not leaves out the personal combat experience of the common soldier, partially because of a lack of information but also because of the difficulty in interpreting soldier’s thoughts and feelings from existing sources.

²⁸ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 123-128.

Modern research on psychological trauma can be applied to the Seven Years' War to shed light on why soldiers killed and committed acts of violence, as well as to gauge the reactions soldiers had to their experience. This understanding can help interpret instances of hyper-violence in the Seven Years' War, specifically that found during the Siege of Quebec in 1759. In terms of research on psychological trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, two strands of research apply to this study. First, sources on killing and what facilitates it in soldiers. Second, research on the effects of psychological trauma and how it manifests in soldiers' actions in and out of battle.

Analysis of soldiers' combat psychology most often involves 20th century conflicts. Historians have long ignored the possibility that soldiers of pre-modern conflicts may have experienced combat fatigue or other psychological trauma. However, human nature persists across time, which begs the question if soldiers of 20th century soldiers can succumb to combat trauma, why not soldiers fighting in the Seven Years' War? This section will provide an overview of modern analysis of combat trauma and fatigue to establish solid ground on which to make an analysis of the Siege of Quebec in light of a brutalization of warfare in the Seven Years' War. War psychology was established as a professional discipline during the First World War. Treatments were often severe and unwelcome by patients. Insane asylums became the home of choice designated by governments for returning soldiers who experienced symptoms of battle fatigue or other war neuroses.²⁹ Because the discipline of psychology started in the 20th century, academics have avoided applying their findings and principles to earlier conflicts.

Military historians have tended to naturalize killing in warfare, seeing it as an inevitable consequence of armed conflict that requires no further scrutiny. More recently, scholars

²⁹ Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, *Shell Shock to PTSD: Military Psychiatry from 1900 to the Gulf War* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2005), 2-7.

investigating the subject argue that killing does not come naturally to humans and has psychological consequences for those combatants entrusted with taking human life. A middle ground exists between the military and psychological approaches where killing in combat and its associated trauma can be explored. Dave Grossman states that armies have deployed tactics to ensure soldiers kill despite their “innate human resistance towards killing one’s own species.”³⁰ Based on 20th century wars, Grossman identifies various factors that facilitate killing, what types of killings are harder to commit, and the effects killing has on soldiers afterwards. One contributing factor to the ease of killing is the idea of “group absolution.” Where a group has a central purpose of committing, whether a platoon or regiment, individuals can commit the “sin” as an anonymous part of the group with less feelings of guilt.³¹ Along with the idea of “Group Absolution,” Grossman states that authority figures like officers play a big role in fostering killing and the escalation of violence. Authority figures that demand violence and killing use their influence to sway soldiers into carrying their orders out to their fullest extent.³² Although Grossman argues that killing is not natural, his study often proves it to be all too natural to war and the human condition. Although soldiers are the ones affected by PTSD and combat trauma, their leaders motivate by fear, encouragement and reward for carrying out violent acts in war. Grossman attributes atrocity in war to soldiers’ sense of the righteousness of their actions, a belief fostered by the military leadership as issued in orders, as well as to previous atrocities committed by the enemy.³³

Soldiers for the most part experience some sort of guilt from their experience in combat. Grossman demonstrates this with experiences ranging from the Napoleonic wars to the modern

³⁰ Dave Grossman, *On Killing*, xxxi.

³¹ Grossman, *On Killing*, 151, 153.

³² Grossman, *On Killing*, 144-145.

³³ Grossman, *On Killing*, 205-213.

Vietnam conflict. The burden is dealt with in a number of different ways in order for soldiers to cope with killing during their constant exposure to conflict.³⁴ Soldiers kill for revenge, under orders, and for survival under the most extreme circumstances. Grossman states that “the soldier is a product of his environment, and violence can beget violence.” This is the case for 98 percent of populations. However, in the two percent Grossman separates, these individuals enjoy killing.³⁵ In essence, Grossman wishes to demonstrate that violence and killing is not natural to human beings. However, examining humanity’s track record with war and violence, this thesis often misses its mark.

The brutalization of war stems from the adverse effects of killing on soldiers in combat. Massacres, the unjust killing of prisoners, and terror tactics do not arise randomly or by coincidence but derive from human experience. In Vietnam War veterans the urge to kill and to brutalize the enemy often derived from losses suffered in guerilla warfare, but could persist into civilian life.³⁶ Shay similarly attested to the hyper vigilance and proneness to unnecessary violence in combat veterans. The constant threats of being attacked by the enemy and being betrayed by their own officers often led to such feelings.³⁷

In *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran*, Harvey J. Schwartz examines the causes and effects of PTSD on Vietnam War veterans as well as how it can be treated.³⁸ Although treatment for PTSD and combat trauma is not germane to this study, the causes of trauma and how they manifest in these soldiers are. Some of his patients displayed tendencies towards violence and had an urge to express these tendencies through violent action, which Schwartz directly related

³⁴ Grossman, *On Killing*, 87-90.

³⁵ These statistics are derived from research on soldiers in the Second World War. Grossman, *On Killing*, 179-181.

³⁶ Harvey J. Schwartz, M.D, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran* (New York: SP Medical & Scientific Books, 1984), 55-56.

³⁷ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994), 170.

³⁸ Schwartz, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran*, 47.

to their experiences in war.³⁹ However, Schwartz fails to provide the mechanisms of combat trauma, he displays the effects on human behavior and how some people can turn to violence as an outlet of this trauma. Schwartz views this behavior as indicative of combat-induced severe paranoia.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Richard Cornfield provides an overview of traumatic neuroses and signifying features of PTSD: chronic irritability and explosively violent reactions.⁴¹ These findings can be applied to soldiers by examining incidents of violence and determining whether these acts can be linked to previous enemy aggressions in campaigns, which would suggest that combat trauma played a part in the violence.

Jonathan Shay argues that moral order or “Themis” hangs on a balance of a commander’s abilities and what soldiers witness on the battlefield. Shay sums up these aspects as the amenities that allow for massacre to occur in war. Shay equates Themis with a moral code of “what’s right” in war at the time. Leaders betraying their soldiers by acting in a rash manner or giving orders leading to unnecessary casualties offended this normative view, resulting in loss of moral order.⁴² The absence of moral order paired to the psychological trauma experienced in combat contributed to hyper-violence among soldiers. Essentially, moral order is lost, violence increases, and trauma ensues, with the cycle repeating. Shay writes of the berserker state observed in the Vietnam War, which drove soldiers to perform terrible feats in battle. A soldier suffers from traumatic events and sometime after unleashes furious violence on the enemy. This often happens where vengeance is sought for lost comrades or as punishment for previous enemy actions in war. A berserk soldier experienced a total loss of morality, where killing and violence

³⁹ Schwartz, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran*, 50-56.

⁴⁰ Schwartz, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran*, 57-59.

⁴¹ Schwartz, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran*, 224.

⁴² Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 26-29.

became an outlet to relieve the pressures of war.⁴³ This phenomenon can result in a cyclical escalation of violence.

Being exposed to extreme violence and killing costs the psyche of any human a substantial price. The critical text in understanding any kind of psychological disorder is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) published by the American Psychological Association. The DSM outlines the exact criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and how it manifests itself in people. First and foremost, “the person who is experiencing PTSD has experienced an event that is outside the range of usual human experience and that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone.”⁴⁴ The experiences of war in general almost always fall into these criteria. But the most important aspects of PTSD to this study are its role in perpetuating violence. PTSD sometimes manifest in the hyper-vigilance of the individual and his or her lashing out violently to any provocation.⁴⁵ Soldiers in the Siege of Quebec saw scalplings, the burning of villages, and violent skirmishes that all potentially contributed to PTSD among combatants, markedly adding to the violence as the campaign continued.

Emily Ozer and Daniel Weiss discuss the vague aspects of the DSM’s definition of the initial cause of PTSD. The initial traumatic event happens, but the DSM does not go into explaining the biological and psychological functions that give rise to PTSD. Furthermore, they address the issue where PTSD affects some people by “traumatic events” but not others. On this note, Ozer and Weiss stress that the “traumatic event” must be out of the norm of regular daily activities and there must be a biological “arousal” of feeling and hormones that serve as the

⁴³ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 77-79.

⁴⁴ Jones and Wessely, *Shell Shock to PTSD*, 236.

⁴⁵ Jones and Wessely, *Shell Shock to PTSD*, 236.

precursor to the symptoms of PTSD.⁴⁶ This source provides extra depth to the DSM definition. Situations of day-to-day violence when on campaign or soldiers serving in long-term sieges experience the type of traumatic events that cause psychological trauma. This includes all types of warfare, but specifically close guerilla warfare and hand-to-hand combat.

The historiography on the Seven Years' War and the Siege and battle for Quebec in 1759 is largely missing a discussion on the psychological consequences of witnessing and taking part in violence. Sources like Shay, Grossman and Schwartz all illustrate that PTSD and combat trauma have symptoms that manifest in actions of extreme violence. Furthermore, studies on the Seven Years' War often naturalize violence in combat, taking it at face value from their sources. This can be problematic and misses the human experience. All of these studies can be applied to the Siege of Quebec to demonstrate that soldiers who fought there may have in fact suffered from what now is known as PTSD or other psychological ailments in the same way modern soldiers had been affected. Grossman's study on killing and violence in war demonstrates a number of details that apply directly to the siege of Quebec. The way in which soldiers react to violence, the important role of authority figures, and the nature of the violence can shed light on how soldiers may have dealt with the situation at the siege of Quebec. Second, sources on PTSD and combat trauma like Shay, Schwartz and the DSM-IV show exactly what happens from combat and what the symptoms look like in soldiers. Importantly, soldiers at Quebec exhibited both the symptoms of hyper-vigilance and violent behavior. This can cause soldiers to act out in an irrational manner, often contrary to their normal levels of violence in conflict. Such was the case at Quebec as the siege progressed from British landings in June 1759 to their final confrontation with the French on the Plains of Abraham in September.

⁴⁶ Emily J. Ozer, and Daniel S. Weiss, "Who Develops Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?" *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13 (August 2004): 171.

Chapter 3

Leading up to Quebec

The Seven Years' War, by many accounts, is considered to be one of the first world scale wars. It involved action in the Old World of Europe, in European colonies of North America and the Caribbean, as well as in Africa and Asia. This essay focuses on the North American front of the war involving the British, French and their corresponding Native allies. Incidents occurring early in the war set in motion a cycle of violence that prepared British soldiers to engage in a campaign of hyper-violence with French troops and their native allies during the siege of Quebec in 1759.

The origin of the conflict had much to do with the expanding global presence of European empires for land and resources. Both Daniel Baugh and Fred Anderson explain that the origins of the Seven Years' War lie within the conclusion of the previous conflict between France and Britain in 1748. The balance of power in North America, according to Anderson, was held between the Tripartite Agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy, the British, and the French empires. However, at this time the expansion of settlements into the frontier and the weakening of native powers left a power void in North America.⁴⁷ A critical aspect of the escalation of conflict in the 1750s was the expansion of trade into the Ohio Valley. Both French and British traders looking to expand their colonial and economic influence in the region contested regularly for control. Small conflicts arose between these traders over economic competition, which resulted in many deaths of civilian traders. Subsequently, this encouraged a French military presence in the Ohio valley.⁴⁸ The type of warfare seen in these conflicts between the French, British, and natives included many of bloody tactics to be seen at Quebec,

⁴⁷ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 11-14.

⁴⁸ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War*, 47-55.

1759, such as scalping and the killing of noncombatants.⁴⁹ Violence between the French and the English was nothing new to the world at this time, but examining the nature of this violence and how it evolved is important to this study. How did the cycle of violence unwind and to what purpose?

The penetration of British settlers and traders into the Ohio Valley threatened French claims on the area. This forced the hand of Quebec and Versailles to take direct action in preventing this expansion of control. French soldiers proceeded to occupy the region and establish forts.⁵⁰ In light of this expanded military presence, the conflict took a turn for the worst as a result of the actions of an inexperienced colonial officer. This first major event of the conflict happened in 1754, some two years before the Declaration of War between France and Britain. Alarmed by news of the building of French Fort Duquesne at the present-day location of Pittsburgh, Virginia dispatched the young officer George Washington to protect British interests in the Ohio Valley. Governor Robert Dinwiddie instructed him to “act on the [defensive], but in Case any Attempts are made to obstruct the works or interrupt our Settlements by any persons whatsoever, You are to restrain all such Offenders, & in case of resistance to make prisoners of or kill & destroy them.”⁵¹ These orders enabled a drastic escalation of conflict in the North American frontier. Groups of soldiers were no longer stationed to defend colonial stakes, but to seek out French and Native infiltrators and destroy them if necessary.

During the spring of 1754, at the time Dinwiddie issued his orders, a French officer, Coulon de Villiers de Jumonville, was sent out to gather intelligence on Washington’s party. These two opposing forces engaged one another in a time of political peace, concluding with Washington’s party defeating that of Jumonville. Following this defeat, Washington took

⁴⁹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 39.

⁵⁰ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years’ War*, 57-58.

⁵¹ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 51.

Jumonville prisoner and allowed his native companion Tanacharison to kill him despite being a disarmed prisoner.⁵² However, Washington had attacked the French forces in an arguably unprovoked manner allowing his allied Natives to scalp and desecrate the corpses of the French soldiers.⁵³ Washington, following this event, was forced by pursuing French forces to retreat to Fort Necessity. A larger French force consisting of Native soldiers surrounded Washington's garrison. They feared the worst from French revenge and surrendered to prevent a massacre.⁵⁴ This heinous act of war by the soldiers and natives under Washington as well as the French attacks at Oswego and Fort William Henry in ensuing years set the precedent for the level of violence to be expected in this conflict, setting in motion a series of leading directly to the Siege of Quebec.

The manner in which the Seven Years' War was fought in Europe differed significantly from that in North America, where scalping, and the killing of non-combatants or prisoners proved commonplace. Colonial officials and colonial soldiers ignored contemporary rules of war so as to combat Native attacks. Grenier states that during the 1600s, colonies turned to an "extirpative war" which consisted of "unlimited warfare" including civilian casualties, civilian crops being destroyed and the destruction of civilian property.⁵⁵ This specifically North American type of war escalated from the killing of Jumonville.

The Sieges of Fort Oswego and Fort William Henry had a significant impact on both the way the British soldiers saw the war and the political atmosphere surrounding the war. The fall of Fort Oswego in 1756 exemplified to the British the violent measures the French and their allies were prepared to take. The French took the fort with relative ease, promising the garrison

⁵² Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 53.

⁵³ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 53.

⁵⁴ Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 185.

⁵⁵ Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*, 21.

safe conducts. French irregulars and natives, however, proceeded to kill, scalp, and plunder the surrendered British soldiers, wounded, and civilians. Not all involved were killed, and the remaining were taken prisoner by the French.⁵⁶ This was the largest group of British prisoners taken by the French at this time. Although Oswego was not as large of a military loss as Fort William Henry was a year later, but the killing offered the British fodder for propaganda characterizing the French and their native allies as cruel and barbaric.⁵⁷ The reports of this massacre at Oswego were greatly exaggerated, with “embellished” tales being passed throughout British channels causing fear and havoc among frontier settlements.⁵⁸ However, British perception of these attacks is important to understanding the spread of fear and hatred towards the French and their Native allies. A letter between British lords reports that “the whole garrison was put to the sword, and the dead bodies of our countrymen denied even the sacred rite of sepulture.”⁵⁹ The theme of French perfidy grew over the war.

The infamous fall of Fort William Henry further exemplifies the ever-present potential for violence in the alliance between the French and native peoples. Fort William Henry was defeated with relative ease. The French lay siege to the fort and within days the British had surrendered. The British were allowed an honorable retreat to Fort Edward with full military honours based on their gallant efforts in defending the fort. Natives entered the fort and killed the remaining wounded soldiers. They then followed the British retreat to Fort Edward, attacking men, women and children, who were either taken captive or scalped to Montcalm’s dismay. A

⁵⁶ Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*, 200-201.

⁵⁷ Timothy J. Shannon, “French and Indian Cruelty? The Fate of the Oswego Prisoners of War, 1756-1758,” *New York History*, 95, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 382-383.

⁵⁸ Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry & the “Massacre”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 78-80.

⁵⁹ Anonymous, “A Review of the Military Operations in North America From the Commencement of the French Hostilities on the Frontiers of Virginia in 1753 to the Surrender of Oswego on 14th of August, 1756,” in *a Letter to a Nobleman* (Dublin: P. Wilson and J. Exshaw), 180, https://archive.org/details/cihm_20441 (accessed December 2017).

French missionary, Pere Roubaud, witnessed a native warrior having “carried in his hand a human head, from which trickled streams of blood, and which he displayed as the most splendid prize that he could have secured.”⁶⁰ British accounts pointed to the French failure to insure the articles of surrender.⁶¹ One source not present at the event, reported in his journal based on correspondences he received days after the attack and by examining the ruins of the fort, where he found bodies “barbarously murdered.”⁶² Officers were stripped of their clothing and scalped alive on their retreat to Fort Edward. Natives “ravaged women and children” while being a constant nuisance to the retreating British forces.⁶³ In addition to officers and British subjects, British aligned Natives and “negroes” were also subjected to the wrath of native looters. A “negro” was burned alive according to Joseph Frye who was present at the Siege and surrender. Frye insisted that British officers and soldiers plead for protection from Natives, but were refused on all accounts.⁶⁴ The French were perceived to be in control of their native allies and allowed them to their own devices. Whether this was true or not, the fact of the matter is that they were perceived to allow massacre to ensue. A civilian among the retreating forces recalls natives that “drank the blood of their victims as it flowed from fatal wound(s).” This all occurred as what he describes as 10,000 French soldiers standing idle in witness.⁶⁵

The British viewed this “massacre” at Fort William Henry as a purposeful neglect of the articles of surrender. Montcalm during the siege had threatened to allow his native allies to

⁶⁰ Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry & the “Massacre,”* 109-111.

⁶¹ Seth Metcalf, *Diary and Journal of Seth Metcalf* (Boston: The Historical Records Survey, 1939), 10; James Furnis, “An Eyewitness Account by James Furnis of the Surrender of Fort William Henry, August 1757,” ed. William S. Ewing, *New York History* 42, no. 3 (July 1961): 312-13; Rufus Putnam, *Journal of Gen. Rufus Putnam: Kept in Northern New York during Four Campaigns of the Old French and Indian War* (Albany: Joel Munsell’s Sons, 1886), 41.

⁶² Rufus Putnam, *Journal of Gen. Rufus Putnam: Kept in Northern New York during Four Campaigns of the Old French and Indian War* (Albany: Joel Munsell’s Sons, 1886) 46.

⁶³ Metcalf, *Diary and Journal of Seth Metcalf*, 10.

⁶⁴ Joseph Frye, “Joseph Frye’s Journal and Map of the Siege of Fort William Henry,” ed. James L. Kouchan, *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 15, no. 5 (1993): 356.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, “An Account of the Massacre at Fort William-Henry in 1757. From Carver’s Travels,” in *The Rural Magazine* (May 1, 1795), *American Periodicals*, 3.

wreak havoc on the Fort if they continued to resist. However, once the British Fort capitulated Montcalm, according to his journals, pled to Native elders to curb their warriors from their usual methods.⁶⁶ According to these journals, Montcalm was not the butcher British sources claimed him to be, but subject to a difficult relationship with his native allies he had to depend on. British sources clearly show the French in a negative light. Steele argues this has led to a distortion of events at William Henry. Nonetheless, this misperception fed British attitudes of French and Indian cruelty that informed the violence at the Siege of Quebec.

These disasters encouraged the British military to meet the French with more violent acts as the tide of war turned in their favor. Restorative violence was the name of the game for the British in the events following the fall of Fort William Henry. A pamphlet published in 1761 illustrates this sentiment. “The Cruel Massacre of the Protestants, in North America” maintains that the French and their native allies condoned and openly used scalping and attacks on civilians. The pamphlet exclaims that natives “revenge themselves of the English; therefore they have no mercy to man, women or child, but put all to the sword ... killing and scalping them, fleaing the skin and hair from their head, and every one of these they carry to the French, they give them as a reward 40 shillings a piece.”⁶⁷ The British believed that the French harnessed their native allies to terrorize the British into submission. Propaganda of this temper inflamed British passions against the French.

The French had won a number of victories against the British with the taking of Fort William Henry, Fort Oswego and sustained a guerilla war against British North America. Massacre and extreme violence was the common denominator of tactics among the belligerent powers present in North America. The forts taken were pillaged and leveled by the French

⁶⁶ Louis-Joseph Montcalm de Saint-Veran, *Journal du Darquis de Montcalm Durant Ses Campagnes en Canada De 1756-1759* (Quebec: Imprimerie de L. J. Fabrique, 1895), 278, 291-292.

⁶⁷ “The Cruel Massacre of the Protestants, in North America,” Church –Yard Bow Lane, London 1761, 3.

forces and their Native allies. Prisoners, non-combatants and surrendered soldiers were all subject to the full force of native tactics. These people were kidnapped, scalped and murdered in cold blood by what would seem unified French-Indian combatants.⁶⁸ Although British soldiers and civilians probably embellished some of these reports, their impact on British perception should not be undervalued to the siege and battle for Quebec.

The French actively employed what was considered irregular tactics and soldiers during their campaigns during the Seven Years' War in North America. Furthermore, their allied Natives and irregular soldiers preferred to utilize guerilla tactics to terrorize and demoralize British soldiers and civilians. Over one hundred years of cultural hybridization of fighting tactics in North America informed combat during the Seven Years' War. Native groups did not fight their intertribal conflicts in the same manner in which nation states fought in Europe. Natives chose to fight under the cover of night or during the early hours of the morning. Furthermore, they avoided head on confrontations and favoured a "skulking" type of warfare.⁶⁹ Skulking warfare would certainly have been a terrifying encounter for British soldiers and civilians. An account described native warfare as "so many [mischiefs] in a secret sly, skulking way, no man knew well how to find them." This "skulking" often concluded in brutal killings, the desecration of bodies and the scalping of soldiers and civilians alike.⁷⁰ Europeans who landed in North America and came into conflict with native groups had to adapt, culminating in the Seven Years' War where Europeans willfully adopted these tactics.

To understand the British adoption of similar violent measures following 1757, it is important to first understand the key military groups undertaking this violence: rangers and

⁶⁸ Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies and Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America* (New York: Norton, 1988), 318-319.

⁶⁹ Patrick Malone, *The Skulking Way of War* (Oxford: Madison Books, 2000), 29-31.

⁷⁰ Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*, 32.

Highlanders. Natives were seen as savages and the British felt the need to employ “savage tactics” to defeat them. The British had a hard time procuring native allies as well as employing them as successfully as the French. Colonial rangers, seen by many as the answer to this predicament, saw action in much of the war. Developing rangers was an idea that began in the late 1600s in order to protect colonies and colonial investments from native attacks. Highly mobile Native forces often defeated a militia commander Benjamin Church during this time period with “skulking” tactics. Church protested that they “must make business of the war as the enemy did.”⁷¹ The first ranger units resulted. During the Seven Years’ War, the British employed rangers for what modern tacticians would consider to be special operations or covert affairs. They took war and violence to the natives and the French by attacking combatants and civilians with what the French called *petite guerre*, in modern terminology guerilla warfare. They raided Native villages and defended the outer edges of the frontier. They were well liked among British provincial forces but not well understood by the British regular army.⁷² Despite this mistrust or misunderstanding, the British army was forced to utilize the skills of the rangers due to French success in the first half of the war such as Braddock’s defeat on the Monongahela.⁷³ To fight this kind of war, the British had to fully embrace *petite guerre* themselves and utilize to the fullest their own rangers. Despite issues with contrasting ideals of discipline between the provincial rangers and British regular army, they proved to be useful in doing the “distasteful work” regular in which troops and officers did not wish to participate. At the sieges of Louisburg and Quebec rangers would terrorize French subjects and wreak havoc on

⁷¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*, 32-33.

⁷² John Grenier, “‘Of Great Utility’: The Public Identity of Early American Rangers and Its Impact on American Society,” *War and Society* 21 (May 2003), 3-4.

⁷³ Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*, 119-121.

the countryside in attempts to force surrender.⁷⁴ However, the British army desired a force more subject to its control whilst still being capable of such violence.

Scottish Highlanders had a long history of rebellion against both the British and their lowland counterparts. They had a culture that the English-speaking world did not understand but perceived as barbaric and warlike in nature. Highlander soldiers had a long history of serving as mercenaries, fighting on all sides of the Thirty Years' War for example.⁷⁵ Although respected as warriors and feared as a rebellious element to British supremacy, this did earn them the mantle of a civilized people by their English overlords.⁷⁶ The Highlands must also be considered a separate part of Scotland, despite often being grouped in with the people of the Lowlands. Their history and cultural structure often mirrors that of native groups in North America. They both had clan systems of family; both were misunderstood groups on the periphery, and the British considered both ferocious savages.⁷⁷ Importantly, their history rivaling the British and their perceived savagery set the tone for their importance in fighting for the British in the Seven Years' War.

Highlanders took to violence for restorative means. They were seen as vengeful in the name of justice to whatever offended them or caused them wrongdoing.⁷⁸ The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46 hardened the savage image of the Highlanders in British minds. The highlanders used irregular methods in waging war reminiscent of native tactics in North America. British officers often viewed them with disdain and scorn, but also recognized that they were the perfect balance to the "savagery" of natives in the New World. General Wolfe

⁷⁴ Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814*,

⁷⁵ Colin G. Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 89.

⁷⁶ Hew Strachan, "Scotland's Military identity," in *The Scottish Historical Review* 87 (Oct 2006): 317-319.

⁷⁷ Colin G. Calloway, "Sir William Johnson, Highland Scots and American Indians," in *New York History* 89 (Spring 2008): 166-168.

⁷⁸ Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders*, 64-65.

recognized their use in his campaigns because of their abilities to fight on the same level of violence and irregularity as French Canadian natives.⁷⁹ They served essentially as British shock troops alongside the attacks headed by the Rangers. The British expected them to fight with ferocity and strike fear into the enemy. The main advantage to using Highlanders in battle was they were considered lesser humans and more expendable compared to regular British soldiers. The casualty rate for Anglo-American soldiers at the end of the Seven Years' War was nine percent, for the Highlanders thirty-two percent.⁸⁰ Ticonderoga, Louisburg and Quebec all dealt the highlanders significant losses, whetting their appetite for further violence.

The battle of Carillon (or the battle for Ticonderoga) in July 1758 was the worst defeat the British forces endured during the Seven Years' War. The battle was an embarrassing attempt by the British to turn the tide of war and take the offensive against the French. General Abercrombie commanded the British forces against this strategic fort not far from the ashes of Fort William Henry in hopes to turn the tide of war against the French.⁸¹ In the preceding winter, an advanced force of rangers commanded by Robert Rogers was overwhelmed by French and native irregulars. Half of Rogers' force was eliminated on this simple scouting mission, including an officer and his accompanying party who were surrounded by the French and forced to surrender. In naive hopes of fair treatment, these soldiers were tied up to trees and "hewn to pieces."⁸² The rangers would not forget this violence as the tide of war turned in favor of the British.

Despite what the British learned about waging a traditional European war in North America, General Abercrombie was set on taking Fort Carillon with a head on assault. The

⁷⁹ Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders*, 91-92.

⁸⁰ Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders*, 95-97.

⁸¹ Anderson, *The Crucible of War*, 240.

⁸² Robert Rogers, *Journals of Robert Rogers of the Rangers: Exploits of Rogers & the Rangers from 1755-1761 in the French and Indian War in His Own Words* (N.p.: Leonaur Ltd., 2005), 75-76.

French abandoned their fort, destroying it and establishing an “abatis” of fallen trees and obstacles on the high ground just outside of Fort Carillon. Abercrombie, ordered soldiers without the cover of artillery, to storm the abatis to find a well-armed and prepared French army.⁸³ This proved to be a grave and horrific mistake for British soldiers. David Perry, a provincial soldier at the time, described the ground as scattered with the bodies of his comrades, dismembered, dead, screaming in pain or some combination of all three. He took cover behind a stump, affirming: “A man could not stand erect without being hit, any more than he could stand out in a shower, without having drops of rain fall upon him.”⁸⁴

British Highlanders were the only units to scale the French abatis and engage the French with every means they had available to them, firearm, sword, and bayonet. Lieutenant Colonel Archelaus Fuller, a member of the provincial soldiers at Carillon, remembers the sight of soldier’s limbs being blown off in their attempt to take French positions. As fast as soldiers got up the defenses they were taken down by small arms fire.⁸⁵ They fought with the ferocity that gave them their warlike reputation across Europe. However, this viciousness could not turn the tide in favor of the British once more. The highlander regiments suffered the worst casualties of the battle for Ticonderoga. They were the last to be informed about a retreat and paid dearly for this. Half of the highlanders who participated lost their lives during this incident. This half was lost in a bloody firefight that would be forever imprinted on the people who survived.⁸⁶ An embarrassing loss for the British, this battle cost over five hundred British soldiers killed and

⁸³ Anderson, *The Crucible of War*, 242-243.

⁸⁴ David Perry, *Recollections of an Old Soldier. The Life of Captain David Perry, A Soldier of the French and Revolutionary Wars* (Windsor: Printed at the Republican & Yeoman Print Office, 1822), 9-10.

⁸⁵ Archelaus Fuller, “Journal of Col. Archelaus Fuller of Middleton, Mass,” in “The Expedition Against Ticonderoga in 1758,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 46 (1910), 214.

⁸⁶ Archibald Forbes, *The Black Watch: The Record of an Historic Regiment* (New York: Scribners, 1896), 54-55.

1,500 wounded compared to less than 200 French officers and men killed or wounded.⁸⁷ The British army and leadership needed a win to overcome this horrific loss of life and spirit. The coastal fortress of the French king's namesake, Louisburg, proved to be a bloody triumph for the British.

In 1758, Louisburg became the prime objective of William Pitt, who dispatched a force of 14,000 men, mostly British regular troops to the fortress on Cape Breton Island.⁸⁸ General Jeffery Amherst was in charge of this reputable force with his Brigadiers General Edward Whitmore, Wolfe and Charles Lawrence to direct operations on the line of battle and Admiral Edward Boscawen to direct naval operations.⁸⁹ General Wolfe was the first to successfully land out of the 300 boats crammed with 10,000 troops. Miraculously, a boat of his Highlanders saw an opening with cover to shelter a landing which allowed for the British mount what seemed on the surface to be a typical European styled siege.⁹⁰ The Highlanders had suffered again in this landing, however. James Thompson, who would also be at Quebec, elaborated on his comrades being killed by artillery and gunfire at the landing, as well as suffering the bloody tactics French natives used against their enemies thereafter.⁹¹

General Wolfe and Amherst understood that corrective action needed to be taken against the French for the massacres at Oswego and Fort William Henry. Furthermore, Wolfe in a letter to Sackville before Siege states that the soldiers "are irritated against the enemy and have a quarrel of their own to decide besides public cause."⁹² British Generals had their mission to win the war, but the soldiers had their own personal missions of revenge and bloodlust, although

⁸⁷ Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies and Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America* (New York: Norton, 1988), 364.

⁸⁸ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763*, 338-339.

⁸⁹ Anderson, *The Crucible of War*, 251.

⁹⁰ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years' War 1754-1763*, 343-348.

⁹¹ James Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army: James Thompson, Gentleman Volunteer 1733-1830*, ed. Earl John Chapman and Ian Macpherson McCulloch (Montreal: Robin Brass Studio, 2010), 148-149.

⁹² "Wolfe to Sackville, May 12, 1758," *Wolfe Letters*, 364.

some generals were not completely above the sentiments of their soldiers. Amherst makes mention that native tactics were “not war, but murder.”⁹³ Wolfe capitalized on the disdain for French Canadian and native soldiers with an interesting episode during the siege. A large bodied native gunman was found shot in the groin. Wolfe amused by this ordered the native’s body to be taken up to camp and strung up on display like wild game.⁹⁴ Actions such as this would have fed into British hatred for natives as well as encouraged more violent action.

The events at Fort William Henry and Oswego would have been common knowledge to many soldiers and officers alike during the Louisburg campaign. Pamphlets and propaganda readily prepared British soldiers for the tactics of the French and natives. One example published later on in the war warns British subjects of the “heathen” natives and how they will “come killing and scalping them, fleaing the skin and hair from their head.”⁹⁵ British soldiers responded to the French and their native allies in kind with their own brand of violence.

As the 300 landing ships inched towards the shoreline of Louisburg, soldiers experienced heavy fire, the swell of the ocean and the grim possibility of a painful death at the hands of musket fire, artillery or bladed weapons. Grenadiers, Highlanders and Light Infantry units engaged the French and rushed their positions. They endured constant attacks from lurking Canadians and Indians throughout the campaign.⁹⁶ The attack resulted in a typical European styled siege including entrenchments and bombardments on the fortress.⁹⁷ Violent actions peppered throughout this siege with Highlanders countering in kind the violence of the French

⁹³ David Gordon, “Gordon’s Journal of the Siege of Louisburg, 1758,” *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, vol. 5 (Halifax, 1887), 108.

⁹⁴ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 148-149.

⁹⁵ *The Cruel Massacre of the Protestants, in North America* (London: Church–Yard Bow Lane, 1761), 2-3.

⁹⁶ A Spectator, *Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisburg in June and July 1758* (London: W. Owen, 1758), 13-21.

⁹⁷ Gordon, “Gordon’s Journal of the Siege of Louisburg, 1758,” 111-116.

and natives. Admiral Boscowen's slave⁹⁸ bore witness to the brutality of the Highlander regiments, stating that he held in his hand the scalp of a native king who was allied with the French at Louisbourg. The highlanders took credit for this kill and kept this scalp with its ornamental headdress as a trophy of their vengeance.⁹⁹ A merchant corroborated this story adding that the highlanders not only scalped, but also decapitated many enemy.¹⁰⁰ This scene would have been reminiscent of the defeat of Fort William Henry, but the difference being the Highlanders were not motivated by scalp bounties or looting. Furthermore, important to note is the fact that Highlanders were new to North America and quickly adopted North American tactics and methods to fighting the French and their Native allies.

The British gave no quarter to anyone resisting their invasion of Louisburg in 1758. After their musket and pistols were discharged at the enemy, soldiers were expected to engage the enemy with hand weapons, which would have proven to be a bloody, brutal scene.¹⁰¹ David Gordon, who was present at the events of Louisburg, specifically notes that they sought to punish the French for their deeds in previous encounters and avenge the people of Fort William Henry with a no mercy policy.¹⁰²

Amherst and Wolfe knew the accepted levels of violence in an honorable war and officially would have condemned practices such as scalping and beheading. However there is a departure from these policies that fall in line with their soldier's lust for revenge. Wolfe in a letter to Sackville at the end of July admits that his soldiers were practicing scalping and "behaved with distinction" while doing so. He admits that it would be his "pleasure to see the

⁹⁸ Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa was one of the first to write a narrative of his time as a slave. This document is both important to Black history and provides a unique perspective on the events of the Seven Years' War.

⁹⁹ Olaudah Equiano, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), 70.

¹⁰⁰ A Merchant at Halifax to Joseph Turner, 20 June, 1758, in Samuel Hazard, ed. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 1, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1853), 443.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, "Pilot of the English Admiral to his Friend at Halifax, 13 June 1758," in Samuel Hazard, ed. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Series 1, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Joseph Severns & Co., 1853), 444.

¹⁰² Gordon, "Gordon's Journal of the Siege of Louisburg, 1758," 136.

Canadian vermin sacked and pillaged and justly repaid for their unheard of cruelty.”¹⁰³ British soldiers repaid this “cruelty” in part at Louisburg, but still felt there was a debt outstanding.

Louisburg flew the white flag of surrender and requested they would be able to receive the articles of surrender. Amherst responded in a short message stating the only terms of capitulation would be their complete surrender. All people who took up arms against the British were taken prisoner and sent back to Britain. Women, children and civilians living in and around Louisburg were shipped back to France.¹⁰⁴ The Acadians on the Ile St Jean were rounded up and sent to France along with their brethren from Louisburg.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, the Mi’kmaq and Abenaki tribes who assisted the French were hunted down and killed by the British. Wolfe approvingly mentioned that they were a dastardly set of bloody rascals” and allowed his soldiers to “cut them to pieces whenever we found them, in return for a thousand acts of cruelty and barbarity.”¹⁰⁶ This move by Amherst and Wolfe was the new policy towards the French in light of their antics at Fort William Henry and Oswego. They were not allowed the honors of surrender because British leadership and the public behind deemed them not deserving.

From this point on, the door was opened for the British to make their move to Quebec. The progressively increasing violence of the encounters of the Seven Years’ War up to this point are important in understand the violence that followed in Quebec and also to understand why this violence occurred. The British mounted their expedition against the heart of French Canada a year after the Louisbourg expedition. This attack on Quebec will serve as the core of this essays attempt to document and illuminate the violence in the North American front of the Seven Years’ War as well as provide illustration to psychological trauma of soldiers and armies in this war.

¹⁰³ James Wolfe, “Wolfe to Sackville, 30 July 1758,” *Wolfe Letters*, 388-389.

¹⁰⁴ A Spectator, *Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisburg in June and July 1758* (London: W. Owen, 1758), 51.

¹⁰⁵ Baugh, *The Global Seven Years’ War 1754-1763*, 348.

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, *The Crucible of War*, 254.

Chapter 4

Quebec 1759

The story of British victory at Quebec was riddled with hyper-violence marking the culmination of the brutalization of warfare that began with the attacks at Oswego and Fort William Henry in the years prior. Contrary to most depictions of this battle, this paper focuses on the experience of British soldiers with guerilla warfare at Quebec. Officers like Wolfe and his brigadiers would have been privy to the violence during the siege of Quebec, but their soldiers lived it every day with constant native and French attacks, which they met with their own reprisals.

Collective memories of previous battles in North America, as well as the massacres that occurred, are essential in understanding the violence of the siege of Quebec in 1759. British soldiers, for the most part not new to the horrors of war, either had direct experience with French and native tactics or had heard of them from comrades. The testimonies from these officers and soldiers of their experiences informed the knowledge of the eight thousand British soldiers that landed on Quebec to take the fortress city from the French. The introduction of this essay outlined the story of the British journey down the St. Lawrence. This chapter will evaluate the incidents that occurred directly after the landings from the point in which the British saw their deceased comrade impaled on a stake.

The British had Quebec as the main objective of their campaign in North America since before the siege of Louisburg in 1758. This city held a strategic value for taking New France as well as a symbolic value, demoralizing New France into surrender. William Pitt had intended on sweeping through North America and taking Quebec in 1758, but the length of time required to take Louisbourg and the failure at Carillon prevented this undertaking. Pitt in 1759 intended to

finish this objective and capture the city by means of an invasion of the St Lawrence.¹⁰⁷ James Wolfe, a hero at Louisbourg, was entrusted with the campaign against Quebec. Wolfe would take an underwhelming army of 8,000 troops in a fleet commanded by Admiral Charles Saunders.¹⁰⁸ Brigadier generals Robert Monkton, James Murray, and George Townshend seconded Wolfe. These generals commanded a force that had four years of experience fighting the French and their Indian allies in North America. The army consisted mostly of British regular soldiers, but some provincial and ranger units provided support. Many of these soldiers were not new to the conditions in North America, having had time to alter their training techniques and tactics to match the French, which gave them a significant advantage to the British Army of previous years.¹⁰⁹

The French fighting forces at Quebec had a completely different experience preparing for battle in 1759. Montcalm commanded a *troupe de la marine* force similar sized to Wolfe's army, but also five battalions of *troupes de terre*, a sizable native Canadian and militia force and several parties of Native Americans.¹¹⁰ Natives were the chief culprits of French guerrilla attacks during the siege of Quebec. This use of irregular tactics would prove to be the most significant point of tension between Montcalm and Vaudreuil, who disagreed over the use of irregular versus European tactics. This argument is often cited as Montcalm's downfall as a commander in North America. Martin Nicolai attributes Montcalm's failure to his experience as an officer and how he did not stay the course by using irregular warfare and challenged the British in the open field. Montcalm had been experienced mostly with leading regular troops

¹⁰⁷ Stacey, *Quebec 1759: The Siege and the Battle*, 1-2.

¹⁰⁸ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 35-36.

¹⁰⁹ Stacey, *Quebec 1759: The Siege and the Battle*, 5-6.

¹¹⁰ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec*, 68-69.

with old world tactics and utilized irregulars and natives in a harassing manner at Quebec.¹¹¹ The French supplemented their forces widely by recruiting as many native warriors as possible. Despite arguments, the French needed these natives and their irregular tactics to wage an effective war against the British.¹¹² Furthermore, Montcalm felt that if Quebec fell the war was lost.¹¹³ Once the French learned of the coming British hostilities towards Quebec, they began their preparations for their British guests. The tactical split did not affect much of the siege because it was in almost entirely fought within the terms of Vaudreuil's choice of war until the final moments when these two forces met on the Plains of Abraham.

Quebec was a walled fortress city bordered by water on two sides, the south and east, with cliffs along the St. Lawrence, making it reminiscent of European fortress cities, but the French deemed such defenses insufficient.¹¹⁴ They built up their defenses with stockades in critical strategic defense points around Quebec as well as new batteries to fend of the invading British army. They set up trenches at the falls of Montmorency and prepared fire rafts to set aflame enemy ships.¹¹⁵ Women, children, and non-essential personnel were sent away to safer locations close to Quebec, while all men able to bear arms were mobilized to defend the city.¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, the residents of Quebec had become concerned for their lives and livelihoods once the British invaders laid siege and built batteries with which to bombard the city.¹¹⁷ The people

¹¹¹ Martin Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage: The French Military and the Canadian Irregular Soldier during the Seven Years' War," *Canadian Historical Review* 70, no. 1 (March 1989), 61-62.

¹¹² Peter Macleod, "Microbes and Muskets: Smallpox and the Participation of the Amerindian Allies of New France in the Seven Years' War," *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 1 (Winter, 1992), 47.

¹¹³ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 44-51.

¹¹⁴ Stacey, *Quebec 1759: The Siege and the Battle*, 27, 35-36.

¹¹⁵ "Narrative of the Siege of Quebec Published by the French, Department de la Guerre, Paris," *Document Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. 10, ed. E.B. O'Calaghan (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1858), 993-994.

¹¹⁶ "Narrative of the Siege of Quebec Published by the French, Department de la Guerre, Paris," 994.

¹¹⁷ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 79-80.

of Quebec prepared as much as they could regarding defenses, but their best defense would prove to be the guerilla violence with which they met the British army.

June and July

The British expeditionary force of 8,500 regulars and provincial soldiers sailed out of Louisburg on June 4th. On June 9th, the British expedition reached the mouth of the St Lawrence, and by the 26th of June, Quebec hove in sight of the fleet.¹¹⁸ The British secured their landing at the Ile d'Orleans with a vanguard force of rangers on June 27th. On the 29th, they crossed to the south shore of the St. Lawrence across from Quebec to establish a base at Pointe-Levy.¹¹⁹ Later, on July 8th, the British would establish another camp on the north shore of the St, Lawrence, just east of the Montmorency River and Montcalm's base of operations at Beauport. The goal of the British was to force the French to face them in open battle.¹²⁰ The establishment of each camp by the British met with resistance from French militia and their allied native warriors, making for warfare with little restraint on the level of violence.

They British attempted a landing on the Isle d'Orleans opposite Quebec on the 26th. Wolfe first dispatched a scouting party of rangers and light infantry in order to determine the levels of resistance, nature of the defenses, and to find suitable areas for a general landing and basecamp. These soldiers were met with some resistance and sustained casualties. Knox notes that a lieutenant with forty rangers had engaged the enemy during their night landing on the 26th and was forced to retreat to a farmhouse until the morning of the 27th. These rangers had one casualty who was found "scalped and butchered in a very barbarous manner." The morning of the 27th the British began their full landing without significant resistance.¹²¹ Six companies of

¹¹⁸ Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 344; Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 66-67.

¹¹⁹ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 71-74.

¹²⁰ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 96-100.

¹²¹ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 71.

rangers and one light infantry unit were dispatched to carry out the scouting of the Isle d'Orleans.¹²² As the primary British landing force made their way onto the Isle d'Orleans through the landing area at St. Laurent, a group encountered a grizzly message to the British as a whole. A member of one of the ranging parties sent out by Wolfe on the 26th was used as a warning to the British to cease their landings and return to where they came. Troops discovered this "Ranger killed and scalped, and a stake drove through his body."¹²³ With this act, the French and their native allies revealed themselves able and willing to use scalping and hyper violent guerilla tactics to repel the British from their lands. From this point, the violence at Quebec started immediately with scalplings and random attacks. These actions precipitated separate responses by both British commanders and soldiers. British commanders condemned these attacks as unjust and against the rules of war, whereas soldiers took matters into their own hands and fought the war on the same terms of scalping and hyper-violence.

Wolfe had already prepared a manifesto to Canada on the subject of such tactics, but these events gave it added gravity. Posted on the 28th before much of the British forces had landed, this manifesto made a note of the previous atrocities the British believed the French responsible for in the war.

The formidable sea and land armament which the people of Canada now behold in the heart of their country is intended by the King, my master, to check the insolence of France, to revenge the insults offered to the British colonies, and to entirely deprive France of their most valuable settlement in North America ... The King of Great Britain wages no war with the industrious peasant, the sacred

¹²² John Knox, *The Siege of Quebec and the Campaigns in North America 1757-1760*, ed. Brian Connell, (Mississauga: Pendragon House, 1980), 129.

¹²³ Anon., *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 4.

orders of religion, or the defenseless women and children; to these, in their distressful circumstances, his royal clemency offers protection. The people may remain unmolested on their lands, inhabit their houses, and enjoy their religion in security ... But if by a vain obstinacy and misguided valor they presume to appear in arms, they must expect the most fatal consequences—their habitations destroyed, their harvest utterly ruined and the only passage for relief stopped up by a most formidable fleet.¹²⁴

The British had a score to settle despite the mercy offered in his manifesto. Later in his manifesto, Wolfe mentions the infractions committed against the British earlier in the war, maintaining if the French taking up arms at Quebec, “the law of nations justify the waste of war, as necessary to crush an ungenerous enemy.”¹²⁵ Wolfe’s promise of a violent response to any resistance would be realized as the months of July and August unfolded.

The Quarter Master Sergeant John Johnson provides a rank-and-file perspective of the manifesto in his journals. It threatened all citizens tempted to take up arms against the British with violence and cruelty. It also used strong language to describe the Canadian irregulars and Natives condemning their use of scalping and skulking. Wolfe called French and native tactics in the past savage and inhumane, warning they would answer them with ferocity if used against British soldiers.¹²⁶ Previous encounters with the French and their native allies undoubtedly influenced its drafting, with Wolfe condemning their actions at Oswego and William Henry as

¹²⁴ Wolfe, *Life and letters of Wolfe*, 439-440.

¹²⁵ Wolfe, *Life and letters of Wolfe*, 440.

¹²⁶ John Johnson was a Clerk and Quarter Master Sergeant for the 58th regiment and witnessed both the fall of Quebec as well as the reduction of Canada. “Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec and Total Reduction of Canada in 1759 and 1760 By John Johnson,” in Arthur Doughty, ed., *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, Volume 5 (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 80.

against the “maxims of war.”¹²⁷ Wolfe and his army invading Quebec saw themselves as carrying out a just punishment, in the case of which the French did not cooperate with their British counterparts. This prevailing British feeling toward the French explains the levels of violence adopted seemingly at odds with international norms of warfare.

This manifesto also expressed a contemporary understanding of just warfare in 1759 on an international level that would have come into play with officers in the British Army. Emerich de Vattel’s *Law of Nations*, published in 1758, served as a precursor to international accords signed in later centuries by Western nations and represented the general thinking of the time regarding the proper conduct of war. The book’s importance to this study lies in its providing an understanding of how Europeans sought to limit violence and fight a “just war” against their enemies.¹²⁸ Wolfe sending his manifesto to the leaders of Quebec falls in line with conducting a just war against the French. He gave them what seemed to be a fair chance to stay out of combat, but events on the ground almost immediately overtook the promise of fair treatment. And as guerilla warfare reigned through July and into August, Wolfe’s willingness to exercise mercy yielded to unlimited war.

Vattel outlined in Chapter eight of the “Rights of Nations” that levels of violence allowed in war depended on the relationship between enemies. Vattel stated, “the enemy who attacks me unjustly, gives me an undoubted right to repel his violence,” which could translate into an equal or more significant action to ensure victory or survival. This did not include violence in what he calls unjust actions. In addition, quarter or mercy must be given to capitulated enemies and any force used must be only enough to ensure victory not torture of the enemy. A few loopholes allowed generals and soldiers to exterminate enemies for the safety of their armies within the

¹²⁷ “Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec and Total Reduction of Canada in 1759 and 1760 By John Johnson,” 82.

¹²⁸ Emerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations or Principles of the Law of Nature Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns* (London: Paternoster-Row, 1797), 346-363.

boundaries of how their men had been treated in captivity or in battle.¹²⁹ One such exception allowed soldiers not to give quarter to the enemy if they were guilty of an “enormous breach of the law of nations, and particularly when he has violated the laws of war.” Furthermore, in this scenario the “inhuman” enemy was to be treated as soldiers have been treated in previous encounters.¹³⁰ In the case of the siege and battle for Quebec 1759, the actions of the French and their native allies at Oswego and Fort William Henry could be seen as just provocation for similar treatment of them when prisoners.

Europeans conducted war in this fashion within a vacuum of 18th-century political philosophy. The realities of North American warfare did not entirely accord with these ideals, neither for natives, the French, nor the British. The attacks by French-allied natives on the surrendered garrisons at Fort William Henry and Oswego prior to Quebec had angered the British, which translated to little patience with international guidelines at Quebec and bloody retribution for crimes. This mentality may have seemed unjust to European eyes, but in fact was a part of the North American way of fighting a war. This unlimited warfare represented a tradition of war that accepted blurring the lines between combatants and noncombatants.¹³¹ But even within European norms, razing an enemy city or not giving quarter was allowed when the enemy had violated the laws of war. In this context equal action against your enemy become punishment, not a crime.¹³² Punishment to fit the “crimes” committed played out over the course of July and August 1759, culminating with the battle on the Plains of Abraham and the departure of *petite guerre* for European norms of warfare.

¹²⁹ Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, 347-348.

¹³⁰ Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, 347-348.

¹³¹ Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 10.

¹³² Vattel, *The Law of Nation*, 348.

Following taking control of the Isle d'Orleans at the end of June, the British army then moved to take Point Levi, directly across from Quebec, where they met considerable resistance. Upon landing at Levi, Hopson's Grenadiers and the rangers accompanying them were attacked immediately. The Day after landing, a "body of Canadians and Indians incommoded our troops at Point Levi ... their commander being kill'd, they dispersed." The grenadiers sustained three casualties in this encounter. These attacks occurred near daily for the British occupiers of Point Levi and were met in kind.¹³³ A group of Whitmore's grenadiers on July 1st went on a simple foraging party at Point Levi and were taken by surprise by French irregulars. Two men were killed and scalped by the enemy.¹³⁴ Throughout the campaign, soldiers who strayed out for food or to go to the bathroom risked brutal attack by the enemy. Wolfe stressed in his orders during July that soldiers should never travel or gather provisions alone, so as to prevent or curb guerilla attacks by Canadians and natives.¹³⁵ Where Wolfe pursued diplomacy to counteract these attacks, British soldiers unilaterally took revenge with their own hands on the French and natives.

The rangers with Monckton at Levi engaged the enemy on the 30th of June. Turning to tactics generally scorned by the British as being savage in manner, these rangers killed and scalped three of the enemy.¹³⁶ As the source does not directly state that these enemy soldiers were native, French militiamen or colonial troops could have fallen under the scalping knives of rangers. The Highlander units at Levi also experienced action, the enemy almost completely surrounding Thompson's unit.¹³⁷ Fraser's Highlanders took four French irregular soldiers' lives

¹³³ Sergeant Major of Gen. Hopson's Grenadiers, *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 1-3; Anon., *Journal of the Siege by a Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot*, 8-11.

¹³⁴ Anon, *Journal NY Mercury 1759,4*; Anon., *Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*,5.

¹³⁵ "General Orders in Wolfe's Army during the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence, 1759," in *Manuscripts Relating to the Early History of Canada*, fourth series (Quebec: Dawson & Co., 1875), 27.

¹³⁶ Anon., *Journal at the expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 5.

¹³⁷ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*,178.

in capturing the ground of Point Levi. However, Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser noted the morning after this encounter finding two of Whitmore's soldiers killed and scalped on Orleans. Fraser called the attack a "murder," noting the bodies were "cruelly mangled" by natives allied with the French. This provides a window into soldiers' feelings towards the violence.¹³⁸ This developing violence was thus reciprocal: the French and natives attacked the British and the British attacked the French with similar tactics. Between the first of July to the British landing at the Montmorency on the 8th of July, the back and forth violence began to ramp up.

Wolfe most likely realized the state of warfare that his soldiers would face while he planned his campaign against Quebec. He issued a general order forbidding scalping and condemned the targeting of civilian or church property.¹³⁹ British and French officials agreed under a flag of truce on the 4th of July to curb the use of scalping, but combatants on both sides paid little heed.¹⁴⁰ These orders indicated a disconnection between the British officers at Quebec and their soldiers, however. Wolfe attempted to curb his soldiers' actions but to little effect as enemy skulking parties continue to gall the men. The Generals could not or chose not to take measures to control their soldiers fully, probably in order to maintain tactical pressure and to ensure victory.

Wolfe resolved to establish a base on the north side of the St. Lawrence across the Montmorency River from the French position at Beauport, in hopes of prodding Montcalm's forces into open battle. This move closer to the enemy enhanced the opportunity for scalping and attacks. Any soldier or groups of soldiers who ventured out of the security of the rest of the army was fair game for native and French-Canadian attacks. Captain Benoni Dank's Rangers on

¹³⁸ *Anonymous, Journal of the Particular Transactions During the Siege of Quebec at Anchor Opposite the Island of Orleans by An Officer of Fraser's Regiment* (Quebec: Nuns of the Franciscan Covent, 1901),1-2.

¹³⁹ "General Orders in Wolfe's Army," 14, 19.

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Doughty, "Letters from a Volunteer," in *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, Volume 5 (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 17.

July 9th skirmished with a group of natives at Montmorency. The report states that the British “killed and wounded about thirty” and “three Indian scalps were taken from the enemy.”¹⁴¹ On the 10th, Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser recounted in his journal that they skirmished and captured prisoners, during which twelve of Captain John Gorham's Rangers were killed close to general Townshend’s camp. Also, the day before this attack, a company of rangers was sent to the south of the river to scout and engage the enemy. They took the one-man prisoner and two of his children. Fraser recorded that the rangers “murdered“ the prisoners in a “most inhuman manner,“ due to their fears that the children's screams would lead to their discovery by nearby war parties. However, Fraser elucidated that the rangers boasted about these killings, which he found surprising for people of European descent to fall to the “cowardice“ and “barbarity” of North American natives.¹⁴² British soldiers and officers openly admitted to scalping natives in the aftermath of the shift to Montmorency, evidence of retribution for the attacks natives carried out against the British.

While these attacks continued throughout the month of July, the British managed to sustain heavy artillery fire on the city of Quebec. This artillery did not hone in on only potential military targets but also intended to terrorize the citizens into capitulating. On the 13th of July, they managed to set fire to the upper town of Quebec. While not unheard of for warfare during the 1700s, this shelling exemplifies the destruction wrought by the English against French infrastructure during the siege. While British soldiers were being surprised and scalped, the French people were losing their lives and livelihoods in the fires of Quebec.

¹⁴¹ Anon., *Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 6-7.

¹⁴² Malcolm Fraser, *Extract From a Manuscript Journal, Relating to the Operations Before Quebec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Fraser, Then Lieutenant of the 78th (Fraser's Highlanders) and Serving in that Campaign*, (Quebec: The Literary and Historical Society, 1868), 6-7.

Fraser's Highlanders had already proved their capability in their differing experiences in Scotland and combat at Louisburg alongside their former enemy James Wolfe. On July 17th, the Highlanders were attacked on the Montmorency side of the St. Lawrence, and five men were killed and scalped.¹⁴³ In an attempted retaliation for this event, a Canadian and his son were captured in the wake of this incursion a few days later. In accordance with the way civilians were treated when captured previously in the siege they should have been interrogated and then let go. A witness to the event states: "one of our men fired at him, and notwithstanding his seeing it impossible to escape, being surrounded by 100 men, he returned the fire and killed the soldier...it was with great difficulty his life was suffered from the fury of the men." Officers, in light of perceived higher morality, spared the man from their men. However, the soldiers' "fury" indicated that the desire for revenge outweighed finer sentiments among the rank-and-file.

Wolfe also sent out larger scouting parties to gather intelligence and harass the French into submission, bringing those who resisted in as prisoners so as to send a stern message.¹⁴⁴ On July 21st, Wolfe dispatched soldiers under the command of Colonel Guy Carleton to Pointe-aux-Trembles with this objective in mind. The landing party captured a number of women they rounded up and kept on Admiral Saunders's ship.¹⁴⁵ Evidently, this caused turmoil among both the French and one of Wolfe's Brigadier Generals, George Townshend. General Montcalm noted in his journal that Wolfe only took "the prettiest women" insinuating a salacious intent.¹⁴⁶ However, other French sources stated that the prisoners were treated with complete respect and were "quite happy" with their stay with the British.¹⁴⁷ Most British officers noted how these

¹⁴³ Arthur Doughty, "Journal of the Particular Transactions," in *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, Volume 5 (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 171.

¹⁴⁴ Wolfe, "Letter to William Pitt," in *Life and Letters of Wolfe*, 454-456.

¹⁴⁵ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 82-84.

¹⁴⁶ Casgrain, ed., *Journal du Montcalm*, 580.

¹⁴⁷ Anon., *Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec From the Journal of a French officer*, ed. Captain R. Gardiner (Quebec: Printed by the Franciscan Convent, 1901), 23.

prisoners were returned the next day under truce,¹⁴⁸ making this relatively benign compared to other actions by Wolfe and his soldiers. However, one witness of the siege notes that returning these unscathed prisoners under a flag of truce so soon was a testament to British “lenity shown to the enemy,” from which they “find little benefit accrue to us from them, they continue to scalp every person who is unhappy enough to fall in their hands.”¹⁴⁹

Wolfe continued with his plan to harass the enemy, with cattle being targeted for extermination or capture and prisoners taken. This was unusual for European standards where non-combatants were usually ignored or left alone during wartime incursions.¹⁵⁰ Townshend, despite growing tensions between himself and Wolfe, was ordered to send his soldiers to “take up their ground” and carry out these orders.¹⁵¹ Knox recorded a number of these depredations such as when the light infantry “brought in some cattle and plunder, also a man and boy, whom they surprised ... as they were fishing.”¹⁵² Knox also told of Colonel Fraser's detachment bringing back “prisoners, with some of their effects and near three hundred black cattle, sheep hogs, and horses.” Knox elaborated that this action accorded with the laws of nations compared to the French who opted for “repeated barbarities.”¹⁵³ Clemency to civilians was not the concern of enlisted personnel more focused on exacting revenge and instilling terror, which would, in turn, become Wolfe’s objective as well.

Terror and destruction were rampant in the constant skirmishes and attacks around Quebec during July. Then late that month, rumors circulated amongst the ranks that three captured Royal Americans were to be burned by French allied natives. As a result of this grizzly

¹⁴⁸ Anon., *Journal of the Particular Transactions During the Siege of Quebec at Anchor Opposite the Island of Orleans by An Officer of Fraser's Regiment* 11.

¹⁴⁹ Anon., *An Accurate and Authentic Journal of the Siege of Quebec 1759 by a Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot* (London: J. Robinson, 1759), 17-18.

¹⁵⁰ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 82-83.

¹⁵¹ Townshend, *Townshend Papers*, 250-251.

¹⁵² Knox, *The Siege of Quebec and the Campaigns in North America 1757-1760*, 150.

¹⁵³ Knox, *The Siege of Quebec and the Campaigns in North America 1757-1760*, 152-153.

rumor, Wolfe accused the French General of playing the part of “an assassin ... employing Indians to pick off his sentries.”¹⁵⁴ Wolfe (in a letter written for him by Isaac Barre) threatened Vaudreuil that if the three soldiers were in fact burned alive, it would be met with “the severest reprisals, all distinction will cease between Frenchmen, Canadians and Indians; all will be treated as a cruel and barbarous mob thirsting for human blood.”¹⁵⁵ This letter reveals the anger and frustration Wolfe and his soldiers felt towards French action at Quebec and their conduct throughout the war. Vaudreuil, in a letter written on his behalf by Louis Antoine de Bougainville, quickly dismissed these reports of the Royal Americans as rumors intended to discredit the honor of French forces. Bougainville cautioned Wolfe, “your excellency ought to have regarded as soldiers’ gossip the proceeds related in the intercepted letter; the fate of those three prisoners has been the same as that of all others taken by the Indians; the King has ransomed them out of their hands at considerable expense.”¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, Bougainville affirmed the historical record reflected their “justification in the matter of the infraction of the capitulation of Fort William Henry.”¹⁵⁷ This exchange of comments, letters and threats illustrates the importance of the cycle of violence to the campaign. Yes, officers such as Wolfe and Montcalm had roles in directing their soldiers, but ultimately the actions of soldiers on the ground dictated what happened.

In light of the rumors of violence and the hard evidence of violence committed against his men, Wolfe and his army started to intensify their violent measures against the people of Quebec. From late July, the bombardment of the city increased and the civilian targets suffered

¹⁵⁴ Anon., *Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ Barré to Bougainville, date, and Bougainville to Barre, date, found in “Extract of a journal kept at the army commanded by the late Lieutenant-General de Montcalm,” *DRCHSNY*, 10: 1027-28.

¹⁵⁶ Barré to Bougainville, date, and Bougainville to Barre, date, found in “Extract of a journal kept at the army commanded by the late Lieutenant-General de Montcalm,” *DRCHSNY*, 10: 1027-28.

¹⁵⁷ Barré to Bougainville letters found in “Extract of a journal kept at the army commanded by the late Lieutenant-General de Montcalm,” *DRCHSNY*, 10: 1027-28

more than they had earlier in the campaign.¹⁵⁸ Wolfe expressed the British frustration with the people of New France and their continued resistance against the invasion force of Quebec with a second manifesto on July 25th, 1759, which read:

His Excellency, indignant at the little regard paid by the inhabitants of Canada to his proclamation of the 29th of last month, is determined no longer to listen to the sentiments of humanity which prompted him to solace people blind to their own interests.

The Canadians have, by their conduct, proved themselves unworthy the advantageous offers he held out to them. Wherefore he has issued orders to the Commanders of his Light Infantry and other officers, to proceed into the country and to seize and bring in the farmers and their cattle, and to destroy and lay waste what they shall judge proper. As for the rest, as it is disagreeable to have recourse to the barbarous extremities whereof the Canadians and Indians, their allies, have given the example, he proposes to postpone until the 10th of August next, the decision on the fate of the prisoners on whom he will use reprisals unless the Canadians, in the meantime come and submit to the terms of the first proclamation, and thereby excite his clemency and induce him to mildness.¹⁵⁹

Wolfe lashed out at the people of Canada for their resistance and their continued use of guerrilla tactics against his soldiers. The manifesto's promise to discontinue British attacks on the French people should they give up resistance was never put to the test.

¹⁵⁸ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 123.

¹⁵⁹ Wolfe, "Manifesto, Signed John Dellines, 25 July 1759," *DRCHSNY*, 10, 1047-48.

These warnings from Wolfe had little effect on the operations of the French against the British invasion. Seemingly, Wolfe had no intention of keeping to his ultimatum which was to serve as a warning to non-combatants. A day after his second manifesto he issued an order that revised his orders from June forbidding scalping.¹⁶⁰ Henceforth, his soldiers could make an exception “when the enemy are Indians or dressed like Indians.”¹⁶¹ Wolfe probably felt that if non-combatants were dressed as Indians they were in fact combatants with intention to mount attacks on British soldiers. With this fateful late July order, the enemies of the British at Quebec all became potential targets for scalping depending on what they chose to wear. Vaudrieul, for his part, threatened to “give no quarter to officers or men that fall into his hands, if his Canadians are ill-treated.”¹⁶²

The scope for such violence widened after July 31st. General Wolfe, under criticism from his brigadiers, decided upon an amphibious attack just west of the Montmorency Falls, by which he hoped to secure a landing and provoke the French to leave their encampment at Beauport to give battle.¹⁶³ This would place them on the French flank with but the steep shoreline between. Another detachment would join them from the camp east of the Montmorency by fording the river’s mouth at low tide. This plan, originally set for the 30th of July, was delayed due to weather and indecisive leadership. Because of these delays, the French were able to prepare for the attack. Disorder and confusion prevailed because of difficulties landing and soldiers not following orders. The main force tasked with taking the Montmorency beaches was the British Grenadiers. The shock troops of their time, these soldiers were expected to maintain full composure and professionalism in the most extreme combat. The grenadiers failed in that

¹⁶⁰ Wolfe, *General Orders in Wolfe’s Army*, 14.

¹⁶¹ Wolfe, *Wolfe’s Orderly Book*, 7.

¹⁶² Anon, *Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 10.

¹⁶³ Stacey, *Quebec 1759*, 65-69.

regard, letting a blind rage take over. Forgetting their general orders, they haphazardly stormed the occupied upper shoreline, only to be repulsed, leading to British withdrawal.¹⁶⁴ Wolfe in his letters to William Pitt placed the blame on the grenadiers for the failure. However, he also mentioned the enemy natives “murdering” his wounded soldiers and scalping the dead and alive alike.¹⁶⁵ Use of the term murder term insinuates that these killings and attacks fell outside the expected killings of war.

The loss at the Montmorency cost the British approximately 400 fighting men.¹⁶⁶ Many of these casualties were wounded men left behind, taken prisoner and for whom the French-allied natives showed no mercy. James Thompson, present at the attack, affirmed the French sat back as their Native allies flew to scalp the British who came to hand.¹⁶⁷ Malcolm Fraser witnessed “some men coming down from the trenches where some of our people lay killed; we imagined they were Indians sent to scalp them.” The Quarter Master Sergeant John Johnson also witnessed this slaughter, stating that the natives’ “chief thirst is after blood.” Furthermore, he specifically pointed out that they performed these attacks within eyesight of the retreating British soldiers and French commanders.¹⁶⁸ In the view of the British, the French had let loose these natives to terrorize the British. This would provide the justification the British would need in their later actions towards the French throughout the month of August, which witnessed the sheer brutalization that encounters between the French and the British could yield.

¹⁶⁴ Carleton, *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 11.

¹⁶⁵ G. Palmer, ed., “Letter from Major-General Wolfe to Secretary Pitt, dated Headquarters at Montmorency in the River St. Lawrence, September 2, 1759,” in *Official Documents Relative to the Operations of the British Army Employed in the Reduction of Canada(s) Under Major-General Wolfe, Amherst in the Years 1759 and 1760 with Descriptions of Quebec and Montreal* (Philadelphia: G. Palmer, 1813), 7-8.

¹⁶⁶ Sergeant Major of Gen. Hopson’s Grenadiers, *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence* (Boston: Fowle & Draper, 1759), 10.

¹⁶⁷ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe’s Army*, 181.

¹⁶⁸ “Memoirs of the Siege of Quebec and Total Reduction of Canada in 1759 and 1760 By John Johnson,” 89.

Frustration and anger seized the British ranks in the aftermath of the Battle of Montmorency. Men had suffered death, wounds, or exposure to extreme violence almost daily and conducted their own retaliation against the French. The 31st marked a change in policy for British officers and the interpretation of the rules of war would fall under the second manifesto of July 25th. Wolfe now essentially supported letting his soldiers do what they wanted to French combatants and noncombatants to ensure victory. The treatment of wounded soldiers at the Montmorency nullified any mercy Wolfe's men had for the French and the severity of action mentioned in the manifesto was then implemented to its fullest.¹⁶⁹ Despite how Ward and Stacey have portrayed the siege of Quebec, this was not Wolfe or Montcalm's war. The actions of Wolfe at the end of July was merely to rein in his soldiers who had and would continue to act on their own according to a battle plan of violent revenge.

August

General Wolfe had grown anxious for an open field battle with the French but could not bring it to fruition. The failure at Montmorency and the constant attacks from natives and French irregulars took a toll on his soldiers. General Townshend, one of Wolfe's least supportive brigadiers, wrote about the general's choice to employ terror tactics to force the hand of the French. "I have never served so disagreeable a campaign like this. Our unequal force has reduced our operations to a scene of skirmishing, cruelty and devastation. It is a war of the worst shape."¹⁷⁰ Although it seemed to shock Townshend, the previous two months at Quebec and the

¹⁶⁹ "Letters and Papers Relating to the Siege of Quebec in the Possession of the Marques Townshend," in Arthur Doughty, ed., *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, Volume 5 (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 18.

¹⁷⁰ George Townshend, "Letters and Papers Relating to the Siege of Quebec: 1758-1759," in *The Manuscripts of the Marquess Townshend*, ed. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1887), 308-309.

four years before that at war with the French in North America proved that the terror of skirmishing, cruelty, and devastation had prevailed throughout.

The violence promised in both of Wolfe's manifestos to Canada came to pass in August, as soldiers in tandem with artillery destroyed much of the countryside. Parishes, churches and civilian targets such as family houses and crops were among the cinders left behind by the British. They took their general's frustration as an open invitation to do more of what they were doing all along and wreak havoc on the countryside.¹⁷¹ Civilians either directly or indirectly involved in the fighting now fell under British muskets, cannons, and blades. The British adopted some of the guerrilla tactics the French had employed against them to exact revenge for previous atrocities.

The British rangers spearheaded this new official policy of devastation. They had been the most exposed to the everyday attacks from natives and Canadians as they manned scouting parties through the region. Naturally, they would have the most to repay to their enemies and had the means with their assignments in August to "scour the country," destroying all property, food, and resistance, sparing only women, the elderly and children.¹⁷² Although the British army had already been conducting their own operations in this manner, they had been restrained because of possible backlash from officers. In August, however, they had little to no restraints and were permitted to use every means necessary to bring victory. Wolfe's late July order allowing them to scalp any native or Canadian militiaman if dressed like natives had freed the hands of British soldiers.¹⁷³ Revenge was at hand.

Both sides practiced scalping widely during this time period, both in the land surrounding Quebec and those areas to which Gorham's Rangers and General Monkton's Highlanders and

¹⁷¹ "Letters and Papers Relating to the Siege of Quebec in the Possession of the Marques Townshend," 18.

¹⁷² Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 123-124.

¹⁷³ Wolfe's Orderly Book, July 27, 1759, 7.

light infantrymen were sent to lay waste.¹⁷⁴ Militia and natives skulking in the forest often fired upon British rangers and light infantrymen on their mission of destruction. David Perry recalled a number of instances where they “burn[ed] and destroy[ed] everything” in their path. These attacks would continue into September, even during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham.¹⁷⁵ The British conducted a reign of terror against the French, who took matters above and beyond the accepted scope of war. This action must be understood in the context of what happened at the Montmorency and their perceptions of the atrocity of William Henry. Furthermore, the constant guerilla attacks that occurred throughout the events of the siege to this point influenced the level of violence with which the British soldiers chose to attack the French and their allies.

Wolfe recorded in his journal on both August 2nd and 7th that “a detachment was sent out to scour the country.”¹⁷⁶ These entries would prove to be his last in his journal that remains incomplete. On August 4th, Gorham’s Rangers were shipped to the north shore of the St. Lawrence between La Petite Riviere and La Malbaie, several kilometers down the St. Lawrence River from Quebec, with orders to destroy everything in their path on their return to camp.¹⁷⁷ The Rangers had their work cut out for them as they travelled back up to meet the rest of the army at Quebec, leaving the land behind them in ashes. On August 12th Gorham’s Rangers entered the village of St. Paul.¹⁷⁸ They skirmished with the enemy during that afternoon, “drove them from their covering in the wood, and clear’d the village which they burnt, consisting of 50 fine houses and barns; destroyed most of their cattle.”¹⁷⁹ These attacks targeted Canadians and

¹⁷⁴ Anon., Genuine letters from a Volunteer, 20; “Journal Of Captain Montessor,” in *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle on the Plains of Abraham*, Volume 4 (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 317.

¹⁷⁵ Perry, *Recollections of an Old Soldier*, 22-24.

¹⁷⁶ *Wolfe’s Journal*, August 2, 7, 1759.

¹⁷⁷ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 124-125.

¹⁷⁸ Anon., *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 13

¹⁷⁹ Sergeant Major of Gen. Hopson’s Grenadiers, *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 6-7.

their settlements rather than natives. Between this time and the 16th of September, these rangers burned, ravaged and destroyed farms, property, and crops, killing those who resisted.

In tandem with British attacks on the settlements below Quebec, the British sought to terrorize settlements upstream from the city. Wolfe Dispatched Brigadier General Murray with a detachment of 1,200 men to destroy settlements, disrupt supply lines, and attack a small French naval presence.¹⁸⁰ French forces had repelled Murray on two occasions before he managed to land on the south shore at St. Croix opposite of Point Aux Tremble. They engaged the enemy on this shore a few times with considerable casualties. Four hundred of Murray's soldiers were attacked on the 13th of August and sustained casualties. In reciprocation for this attack, Murray ordered that all of the houses east of their position to be set on fire. Also, a manifesto was fixed to a church at St. Croix that promised if hostilities continued "no quarter will be given [to] the inhabitants when taken."¹⁸¹ The threat of retaliatory violence against civilians falls in line with much of the conflict already seen at Quebec. When seven marines from Murray's detachment were ambushed and "massacred and left on the beach in order to be discovered,"¹⁸² this sparked much outrage amongst the ranks. In retaliation, civilian properties all around their operations, about three miles east of St. Nicholas, were set on fire to retaliate against French "cruelty."¹⁸³ With reports of the attacks of Murray's group spreading through British lines, soldiers on the Montmorency side and Point Orleans followed suit with the destruction of civilian property and

¹⁸⁰ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 125.

¹⁸¹ Anon., *Journal of the Particular Transactions During the Siege of Quebec at Anchor Opposite the Island of Orleans by An Officer of Fraser's Regiment*, 17-22.

¹⁸² Anon., *Journal of the Particular Transactions During the Siege of Quebec at Anchor Opposite the Island of Orleans by An Officer of Fraser's Regiment* 22; Anon., *Authentic Journal by a Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot*, 25-27.

¹⁸³ Anon., *Journal of the Particular Transactions During the Siege of Quebec at Anchor Opposite the Island of Orleans by An Officer of Fraser's Regiment*, 22-23.

habitations.¹⁸⁴ These destructive raids leveled most of the habitations and almost guaranteed that people in Quebec would starve for the winter months as cattle and farmland were destroyed.¹⁸⁵

While Gorham ravaged the settlements of Quebec and Murray mounted his attacks upriver, a fateful incident of violence occurred at Saint Joachim and Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré across from Ile d'Orleans east of Quebec City marking the culmination of the guerrilla warfare. On the 10th of August, Wolfe received intelligence of militia activity at this strategic position where a French priest led locals in resistance to the British. Wolfe sent a detachment of 70 Royal Americans to investigate and quell these attacks at St. Joachim. Immediately upon their arrival they were fired upon, wounding four grenadiers, and retreated because of this heavy resistance.¹⁸⁶ This forced Wolfe to send a more considerable force, a detachment of 150 men from the Highland regiments, to St. Joachim on August 17th. They managed to hold their position in the town as the enemy retreated to a position adjacent to St. Joachim. The Highlanders held their position in the French Priest's house until the 22nd when Wolfe sent a final detachment of light infantry and Rangers, led by Captain Alexander Montgomery, to support the Highlanders.¹⁸⁷ What happened must be understood in the context set of the style of warfare pursued by common soldiers during the siege and not solely Wolfe's loosening of the rules on scalping in late July and campaign of devastation in August.

On the 23rd, the Rangers and Light Infantrymen fought and defeated the militia. David Perry recalls that their standing orders were to "kill all and give no quarters."¹⁸⁸ The Highlanders, Rangers and light infantry, held the surrendered French militiamen but Captain

¹⁸⁴ Anon., *Authentic Journal by a Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot*, 25-27.

¹⁸⁵ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 126.

¹⁸⁶ Anon., "Journal of the Expedition," 12; Montresor, "Journal of the Siege," 327; Townshend, "Townshend Papers," 260.

¹⁸⁷ Fraser, *Extract From a Manuscript Journal, Relating to the Operations Before Quebec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Fraser, Then Lieutenant of the 78th (Fraser's Highlanders) and Serving in that Campaign*, 147-148.

¹⁸⁸ Perry, *Recollections of an Old Soldier*, 16.

Montgomery ordered the prisoners to be killed, the French priest among them.¹⁸⁹ Fraser recounted this event with scorn and disgust:

There were several of the enemy killed, and wounded, and a few prisoners were taken, all of whom the barbarous Captain Montgomery, who commands us, ordered to be butchered in a most inhuman and cruel manner; particularly two [who [sic] I sent prisoners by a sergeant, after giving them quarter, and engaging that they should not be killed, were one shot, and the other knocked down with a tomahawk (a little hatchet) and both scalped in my absence, by the rascally sergeant neglecting to acquaint Montgomery that I wanted them saved.

Despite Fraser's promise of mercy Fraser's attempts, Montgomery superseded his order and the soldiers willingly killed the prisoners.¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, regular British soldiers relatively new to North American warfare led this incident. British regular soldiers in tandem with rangers and Highlanders killing a priest marks a departure from regular army practices and proves that some embraced the North American guerilla tactics, utilizing scalping and the killing of prisoners as a means of revenge.

British officers and enlisted men held polarized views over this event. Wolfe did not condone these actions according to Thompson's testimony.¹⁹¹ Montgomery likely acted on his own because of personal experience: his brother recently had been killed in the war and had his body "cruelly mangled by Canadians."¹⁹² Montgomery succumbed to a primal reaction against the French and abused his power to exact revenge. In this desire for revenge, he hewed closer to

¹⁸⁹ Malcolm Fraser, *Extract From a Manuscript Journal, Relating to the Operations Before Quebec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Fraser, Then Lieutenant of the 78th (Fraser's Highlanders) and Serving in that Campaign*, 13-14; James Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 185; "Townshend Papers," 261; Sergeant Major of Gen. Hopson's Grenadiers, *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 7.

¹⁹⁰ Fraser, *Extract From a Manuscript Journal, Relating to the Operations Before Quebec in 1759, kept by Colonel Malcolm Fraser, Then Lieutenant of the 78th (Fraser's Highlanders) and Serving in that Campaign*, 13-14.

¹⁹¹ Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 185.

¹⁹² Thompson, *A Bard of Wolfe's Army*, 185.

enlisted men than to the officer class. The killing of the priest illustrated how soldiers dominated the direction of the siege. Perry, who recalled of the priest's killing that they "deliberately blew his brains out," expressed no remorse.¹⁹³ Some officers shared this opinion. Townshend reports on the incident with no concern.¹⁹⁴ A journal entry from a gentleman witness of the events at Quebec, although not of the incident itself, stated that the priest and his companions were killed in "return for many acts of cruelty."¹⁹⁵ A revenge narrative had essentially taken over the war, one powered by the events that occurred at Oswego, Fort William Henry, and countless native incursions on American settlements. The British saw themselves no longer as just an invasion force, but as a force of reckoning and punishment. The French, of course, expressed outrage at the killing. Montcalm had received reports of what had transpired at the village and asserted that the priest had been "so mutilated" that it was difficult to identify the corpse of the clergyman.¹⁹⁶ An officer characterized the killing of the priest, his companions and the destruction of the parish as an "inhuman" act and affirmed natives to be "less cruel" than the British soldiers responsible.¹⁹⁷

This incident and the cruelty and destruction conducted with the oversight of Wolfe, however, must be understood in the context of the rules and common sentiments of war in 1759. Whether the killing of the priest and prisoners was justified can be argued from the different perspectives of international law or of British common soldiers, British officers, and the French. Matthew Ward argues that the killing of the priest and the actions Wolfe took in the war were not justified within the parameters of international law of the time. Using Vattel as a guide, he

¹⁹³ Perry, *Recollections of an Old Soldier*, 16.

¹⁹⁴ Townshend, "Townshend Papers," 261.

¹⁹⁵ Anon., *Authentic Journal by a Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot*, 27-28.

¹⁹⁶ Montcalm, *Journal du Darquis de Montcalm Durant Ses Campagnes en Canada De 1756-1759*, 600-601.

¹⁹⁷ Ayde De Camp de M. Le Mis de Montcalm, "Journal Abrege de la Campagne De 1759 en Canada," in Arthur Doughty, ed., *The Siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, Volume 5 (Quebec: Dussault & Proulx, 1901), 292-93.

deems Wolfe's actions during late-July and August to be uncalled for and not bound by military necessity alone. The indictment Ward makes is not isolated to any specific event such as the killing of the priest, but the entirety of the operation. The destruction of civilian houses and noncombatant property did not accord with Vattel's rules of punishment, he maintains, but "vengeance." Ward states, "The raids Wolfe authorized went much farther than the destruction of stores and supplies, and military necessity alone cannot explain or justify the ways in which these raids were conducted."¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, Ward interprets Wolfe captured of women and children at Point Aux-Trembles as unjust and blatant mistreatment of civilians, even though these civilians were returned within a 24-hour period unscathed.¹⁹⁹ Although vengeance may be an accurate characterization of British actions, responsibility must be delegated to the right perpetrators. Wolfe and his men operated on two different levels of legality and understanding of a just war. Moreover, a closer look at Vattel's work undermines Ward's accusations and provides some justification for Wolfe and his men.

Destruction of property, civilian and military, must be judged not by modern concepts but in line with the thinking of 18th-century soldiers and lawmakers. Wolfe sent out rangers to root out resistance in the countryside. These rangers would then later in August be a part of the burning of towns from their landings to the final moments of the siege and battle. Ward understands this as Wolfe overstepping the legal boundaries of just war.²⁰⁰ However, Vattel allowed for such destruction under certain conditions. Vattel affirmed that when "a country is totally ravaged, towns and villages are sacked and delivered up a prey to fire and sword," this is to be met with "chastising an unjust and barbarous nation of checking her brutality."²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 127-128.

¹⁹⁹ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 83.

²⁰⁰ Ward, *The Battle for Quebec 1759*, 127-128.

²⁰¹ Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, 367.

Essentially, according to Vattel, countries may treat their enemy with an eye-for-an-eye mentality of correctional violence. Wolfe and his men sought to keep the French in check in light of their own attacks on British outposts, forts, and civilian property throughout the war.

The killing of the priest and his parishioners by Montgomery and his men similarly initially seems illegal according to Vattel's principles, but significantly, the lawyer does allow for such actions under certain conditions. Vattel states specifically "quarter is to be given to those who lay down their arms."²⁰² However, he continued, where "as a prince or general has a right to sacrifice his enemies' lives to his own safety and that of his men,- it appears, that, if he has to do with an inhuman enemy who frequently commits such enormities, he is authorized to refuse quarter ... and to treat them as his people have been treated."²⁰³ The British landed at Quebec to find harsh resistance and a deceased ranger on a stake.²⁰⁴ In addition to the day-to-day violence, scalping and attacks, wounded British were completely mistreated by French at the landings at the Montmorency falls. The French resistance at St. Joachim provided the last bit of evidence that allowed British soldiers and Wolfe to actually justify their actions in an international setting. Vattel's principles of punishment then do seem to offer support for Wolfe's policies at Quebec that shifted towards violence and destruction following Montmorency and the events of late July. Furthermore, what happened at the massacres of Oswego and Fort William Henry, among other incidents, essentially provided Wolfe and his men the legal justification to allow for the killing and scalping of French prisoners including a priest.

The month of August closed with the British forces mobilizing for their final push to take the city of Quebec, during which both sides pursued the same guerilla actions. The British Rangers and Highlanders were continued targeting towns and villages surrounding Quebec.

²⁰² Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, 348.

²⁰³ Vattel, *The Law of Nations*, 349.

²⁰⁴ Anon., *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 4.

Gorham's rangers were entrusted with continuing the policy of destruction from the end of the month to the final moments of the siege. On August 30th Gorham was sent with a detachment of 200 men to the south shore of Quebec to "burn and destroy the country."²⁰⁵ The soldiers did not spare any crops, livestock, or surrounding buildings and likely produced civilian casualties as well. This destruction continued until the final battle on the Plains of Abraham.

The final act of violence took the form of European style battle on the Plains of Abraham. Wolfe received what he had hoped for when landing at Quebec: a chance to face the French on the open field utilizing regular tactics. This was a departure from the war his army had seen for the past few months. The battle ended with a British victory and the deaths of both Montcalm and Wolfe. The episode was quite typical of a European battle with two opposing columns of soldiers taking turns firing flintlock muskets at each other. Along with musket and cannon fire, ranging soldiers on the outside acted as snipers.²⁰⁶ One highlight of the battle directly referenced the guerilla conflict, however. The Highland regiments, victims of many French and Indian attacks, had a reputation of being fierce warriors. As the French retreated to the walls of Quebec from their embarrassing defeat, Highlanders saw an opportunity for revenge and took it to unleash the fury that had been building up since their arrival on June. Rather than reveling in the defeat of the French and tending to their wounded, these soldiers in berserker-like state unsheathed their broadswords and pursued the enemy.²⁰⁷ The highlanders chased the French, hacking at their backs as they fled in fear. This scene attests to what war can do to the psyche of soldiers.

²⁰⁵ Anon., *A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence*, 15.

²⁰⁶ Anderson, *The Crucible of War*, 360-362,

²⁰⁷ *An Accurate and Authentic Journal of the Siege of Quebec, 1759. By A Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot* (London: J. Robinson, 1759), 42.

French officers who were captured by the British pled for the lives and quarter. Knox recalls that they were “extremely apprehensive of being rigorously treated; for, conscious of their inhuman behavior to our troops upon a former occasion,” they declared “they were not at Fort William Henry in the year 1757.”²⁰⁸ Their being taken prisoner without incident marked the end of the hyper violence at Quebec, but the devil’s work had already been done. A soldier affirmed of that summer, “we burned and destroyed upwards of 1400 fine farm-houses, for we, during the siege were masters of a great part of their country.” The same soldier said that Quebec would take “half a century to recover the damage.”²⁰⁹ This half a century of damage ran deeper than the wounds and destruction of property, but some soldiers would have experienced immediate psychological damage as a result of the violence in the Siege of Quebec 1759.

²⁰⁸ Knox, *The Siege of Quebec and the Campaigns in North America 1757-1760*, 199.

²⁰⁹ Anon., “A Journal of the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence”, *New York Mercury* 1759, 13-14.

Chapter 5

Why Such Violence?

From June to September 1759, the British army maintained a siege characterized by guerilla warfare that likely had adverse mental effects on its soldiers. Applying modern research on combat psychological trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to 18th century warfare presents evidential problems that cannot be fully rectified, making it impossible to know whether combatants in the Seven Years' War suffered such trauma. However, the existing records allows the historian to track the actions of soldiers and from this to determine whether these actions reflect symptoms of the disorder; and, further, whether combat psychological trauma and PTSD may have played a role in the escalation of violence at Quebec. Combat in the American theatre in the Seven Years' War often took the form of guerilla tactics meant to inspire terror and dread in the enemy, similar in ways to the Vietnam War, which brought PTSD to light as a recognized condition. Although interpreting events centuries before modern conflict and modern medicine has its limitations, one could argue that human revulsion to killing, in particular killing involving body mutilation or dismemberment, remains constant. Inferences can be drawn from modern warfare and its subsequent psychological disorders in order to understand the brutalization of warfare that occurred during the Siege of Quebec and the Seven Years' War as a whole.

Being exposed to extreme violence and killing costs the psyche of any human a substantial price. The DSM-IV states that PTSD can occur in a person almost immediately after a traumatic event, a classification that could be applied to many of the violent incidents experienced by soldiers in active combat during the Seven Years' War.²¹⁰ A study of the Second World War determined that after 60 days of continuous combat (being continuously exposed to

²¹⁰ Jones and Wesseley, *Shell Shock to PTSD*, 237.

gunfire, skirmishes, and killing), 98 percent of soldiers that survived the fighting would suffer from some sort of psychological disorder.²¹¹ The Siege of Quebec lasted three months, with soldiers serving throughout the campaign exposed to the constant threat of native raids and skirmishes with the enemy. This suggests that the soldiery at Quebec could have experienced a similar mental toll.

Certain factors may have worked to blunt the psychological trauma. Conceiving of the mindset of the military as a group rather than as of individual can shed light on soldiers committing acts of violence and killing during the siege without experiencing any sense of second-guessing or remorse immediately after the event. Grossman calls this “group absolution,” where soldiers freely commit acts of killing violence or destruction with anonymity amongst a group of other perpetrators.²¹² Foot soldiers also operated within a hierarchy of ranked authority that blunted any individual sense of guilt. The power of an officer was a critical factor in forcing soldiers to preform their duty in the workplace or battlefield, which in many cases include acts of violence or killing. Furthermore, Grossman writes four “authority factors” that hardens the relationship between the killer and those who give the order to kill. The most important of which are the legitimacy of an authority figure’s demands and the intensity of these demands. The legitimacy of authority figures within the military operated to strip soldiers of free will.²¹³ Military discipline during the Seven Years’ War was quite harsh and unforgiving, with offenses meriting both corporal and capital punishment. These punishments were also administered in public, which legitimized an officer’s authority and that of the military enterprise. People who deserted would often receive upwards of a thousand lashes or public

²¹¹ The other two percent consisted of individuals predisposed to killing with psychopathic tendencies that desensitized them to killing, or in other words natural killers. Grossman, *On Killing*, 43-44.

²¹² Grossman, *On Killing*, 151-153.

²¹³ Grossman, *On Killing*, 144-145.

execution administered by the hand of authority.²¹⁴ The violence of the Siege of Quebec must be placed into this context with the rest of the war. Violence and killing did not happen in a vacuum but was a critical part of military life in which a soldier followed orders or suffered grievously. Throughout the campaign the British leaders promoted violence. Wolfe's manifestos, his scouring parties, the campaign of destruction and his order on scalping all provided the necessary literature that further enabled the violence that was already ensuing. The combination of the authoritarian power structure, group psychology, and harsh discipline in the military conditioned men to violence and killing, but it came at a cost.

Shay argues that moral order or "Themis" hangs on a balance of a commander's abilities and what soldiers witness on the battlefield. Shay sums up these aspects as the amenities that allow for massacre to occur in war.²¹⁵ The best example of this is the killing and scalping of the priest in August 1759. The orders "kill all and give no quarter" along with the standing orders in August that allowed for the use of scalping only on people dressed as natives were taken to brutal extremes.²¹⁶ Group absolution, the military institution and the breakdown of morality affected the army collectively. A number of soldiers in both the Highlanders and Rangers were witness to this cruel event but chose to do nothing and allowed it to happen. Furthermore, commanders broke the legal and military barriers that would normally prevent or hamper massacres like this from happening. This is all attributed to a group psychological process that is involved with the brutalization of war.

At the same time, soldiers acted violently on their own with little guidance from authorities in a fashion best explained by a violent thirst for revenge on the French and natives.

²¹⁴ Agostini, "'Deserted His Majesty's Service': Military Runaways, the British-American Press, and the Problem of Desertion during the Seven Years' War," 967.

²¹⁵ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 26-29.

²¹⁶ Perry, *Recollections of an Old Soldier*, 18.

The longer soldiers are exposed to combat, the more they are likely to be affected and show symptoms of disorder.²¹⁷ The constant skirmishing and ambushes the British invasion force dealt with created the conditions for these psychological disorders. As demonstrated above, the French and their Native allies conducted a guerilla war that took the lives of many British regular soldiers and irregular soldiers. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can manifest in numerous different ways from similar situations. Veterans of the Vietnam War often suffered from some of the most severe, violent symptoms because of the “hyper vigilance” created by a guerilla conflict. The lynchpin of symptoms is the effects of traumatic events experienced outside of the usual experience of the individual.²¹⁸ Two soldiers posted on sentry duty at Quebec were startled to the point of discharging his weapon into the dark forest line at no particular target. They were then sentenced by the Colonel to serve their next sentry duty dressed as women.²¹⁹ While this case may seem interesting and embarrassing for the chap dressed as a woman, it reveals the immense pressures to which soldiers were subjected. These soldiers discharging their weapons due to fear may indicate “hyper vigilance” in light of the constant attacks from French guerillas and the general nature of the conflict, suggesting a form of PTSD or mental breakdown.

Actions borne out of fear are quite relatable if one tries to comprehend battle through the eyes of soldiers. This excuses the explosive, violent reactions, such as following retreating soldiers swinging a claymore at their backs. These reactions can happen well after a soldier’s service, or in many cases during a conflict.²²⁰ The killing of the priest could be seen as occurring within the framework of group absolution about which Grossman wrote, but it can also be

²¹⁷ Grossman, *On Killing*, 43-44.

²¹⁸ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 167-170.

²¹⁹ “General Orders in Wolfe’s Army during the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence, 1759,” in *Manuscripts Relating to the Early History of Canada*, fourth series (Quebec: Dawson & Co., 1875), 43.

²²⁰ Harvey J. Schwartz, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran* (New York: SP Medical & Scientific Books, 1984), 224.

attributed to this heightened use of violence and explosive reaction. The Highlanders and Rangers present at the attack included soldiers who had witnessed horrifying events beforehand.²²¹ The violence resulted not only from a desire for revenge for past atrocities conducted by the French and their native allies, but also, possibly, from a deeper psychological affliction resulting from the excessive violence of the siege.

PTSD and other neuroses stem from the stressful situations soldiers are forced to endure on a daily basis. Historians often understand PTSD and other neuroses in purely academic terms rather than as lived by soldiers. Facing danger or witnessing brutality spawns chemical reactions in the brain related to primal instincts such as “fight or flight” in people. Prolonged exposure to such visceral threat can cause a re-wiring of the brain physiologically.²²² Soldiers in the Seven Years’ War were affected by these simple biological functions to danger and stress just as soldiers in the 20th century. The violence in Quebec was in part directed by General Wolfe and his Brigadiers, but as primarily perpetuated by enlisted soldiers and lower ranking officers doing the fighting. Psychological trauma can lead to soldiers shutting down, as did the two sentries who fired their weapons into the dark at an imagined enemy. Or it can breed hyper-violence among those affected, as evident among Highlander soldiers at the end of the Battle on the Plains of Abraham.²²³ Soldiers acting in this fashion match Shay’s description of the “berserker.”

The DSM IV states that a symptom of PTSD is the “persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma) as indicated by irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, hyper vigilance and exaggerated startle response.”²²⁴ The exaggerated startled

²²¹ Perry, *Recollections of an Old Soldier*, 18.

²²² Emily J. Ozer, and Daniel S. Weiss, “Who Develops Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 13 (August 2004): 169-170.

²²³ *An Accurate and Authentic Journal of the Siege of Quebec, 1759. By A Gentleman in an Eminent Station on the Spot*, 42.

²²⁴ Jones and Wesseley, *Shell Shock to PTSD*, 237.

response and the presence of violent angry outbursts are the important symptoms to note when studying the actions of the soldiers who fought during the Siege of Quebec. This is the contradictory part of the definition of PTSD that does not exactly paint a picture of how these symptoms manifest themselves within the context of a battle. These symptoms are hard to identify in living examples let alone people who have been dead for centuries. However, documenting violence over a course of years and in the few months that the Siege of Quebec occurred, it is quite possible that some if not all of these soldiers suffered from PTSD.

Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam* deals specifically with the mental state a soldier finds himself in during a time of heightened stress in battle. He wrote of the berserker state observed in the Vietnam War, which drove soldiers to perform terrible feats in battle. Soldiers experienced a total loss of emotion or morality, where killing and violence was an outlet to relieve the pressures of war. A justification for many of these soldiers' actions is the saying "don't get mad, get even."²²⁵ This resonates with the entirety of the Siege of Quebec as an entity. Personally and collectively British soldiers seemed to work on this revenge protocol. The escalation of violence in August was in direct relation to the constant attacks and scalping of British soldiers besieging Quebec. Furthermore, the "massacres" at Fort William Henry and Oswego also were at the forefront of soldiers' minds when facing a surrendered soldier or a civilian village. The instance in which Captain Montgomery's soldiers killed and scalped the priest along with a number of prisoners can serve as a critical example of this. They had all the justification needed to execute these soldiers. First of these reasons, the long history with the French breaking the rules of war and increasing violence. Second, Wolfe opened up the rules that forbid scalping, which gave them free reign to scalp and execute within the wording of his orders. Last, these soldiers saw

²²⁵ Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 77-79.

constant violence and destruction during their time at Quebec that in many cases probably precipitated this violent response because of underlying trauma.

The nature of the Seven Years' War in North America allowed for much more hand to hand combat than what was seen in 20th century conflicts. Harvey Schwartz states that witnessing constant violence and slaughter of people has a significant impact on the human psyche. Veterans of the Vietnam War displayed these symptoms and often had the urge to perform violent acts.²²⁶ Similarly, British soldiers at Quebec fought in a brutal guerilla conflict where the enemy was often not clearly identified or visible, all the while being exposed to constant enemy attacks. If soldiers who fought in the Vietnam War show symptoms of PTSD from such conditions, it is more than likely soldiers fighting at Quebec would likewise. This in turn would explain the father and son being executed, the extreme violence utilized by Ranger and Highland corps, and the incident with the priest.

Gorham's rangers laying waste to the Quebec countryside and the killing of the priest and can be compared to the devastation and killing of prisoners and noncombatants that happened in the Vietnam War. Wolfe gave his orders allowing for soldiers to lay waste to Quebec as well as allowing them to utilize unruly tactics such as scalping to people who "dressed as Indians."²²⁷ The My Lai massacre, where American soldiers killed Vietnamese innocents and razed the village by the agency of enlisted soldiers. The massacre of the village occurred within the confines of American policies but was set out by the initiative of the soldiers who committed the atrocity. The soldiers were conditioned to "kill everything" and did not question these orders for the people they were killing were no longer considered humans, but dehumanized to a status akin

²²⁶ "Patient A" often had the urge to kill and displayed mistrust manifesting in an "us versus them" attitude. In one instance this patient almost killed a store clerk for selling him a coke for a dollar. Schwartz, *Psychotherapy of the Combat Veteran*, 50-57.

²²⁷ "General Orders in Wolfe's Army during the Expedition up the River St. Lawrence, 1759," 29.

to “gooks.”²²⁸ The parameters set by American officials were the infamous body count or quotas set to ensure a victory in the southeast nation. Villages and innocents were killed by American soldiers on any sort of evidence of being guerilla soldiers or aiding and embedding the enemy.²²⁹ To an extent, My Lai and Saint Joachim both show how the nature of guerilla warfare breeds violence and psychological trauma that gives birth to more violence.

The Siege of Quebec did not witness a gradual increase of violence as time progressed from June to September. The bar for hyper-violence was set with the initial contacts between the defending French forces and the invading British forces. The British were exposed to both native combat tactics and the tactics utilized by European armies to create a unique type of warfare not seen before by many British military personnel.

²²⁸ Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*, 189-190.

²²⁹ Turse, *Kill Anything that Moves*, 50-56.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Wolfe and Montcalm died in the heat of battle and stole the true story of the Siege and Battle for Quebec. Their deaths and the Plains of Abraham overshadowed the events in the three months prior to that fateful confrontation. The Siege of Quebec was a clash between two titans in a war that illustrated a cycle of violence that culminated with the war changing from hyper-violence and guerilla tactics to a classic European style confrontation. This essay focused on the violence in this confrontation and demonstrates that this violence occurred as a process.

Military historians tend to interpret violence in combat as natural, an essential function of warfare, normalizing killing without fully examining its meaning in other than military terms. This essay attempts to demonstrate that the evidence of human destruction in war, including that of the Seven Years' War, completely undermines such a framing. By looking at the Siege of Quebec and the exact events that unfolded over the course of a few months, it can be seen that the guerilla warfare waged inflicted psychological damage on many soldiers. A North American way of war learned from native peoples fused with European models of total war to produce conflict between the French and their indigenous allies on the one hand and the British troops on the other. This led to a brutalization of the conflict and an escalation in the use of hyper-violent tactics with the local Canadian inhabitants being the chief victims.

The historical interpretations written about the Seven Years' War and specifically on the Siege of Quebec often provide fruitful resources on the story of the war and how events unfolded. In a simplistic manner battles were won or lost, people were killed and politics ran throughout all of this. However, the blood and gore synonymous are undervalued and treated in tactical terms rather than as having underlying social or psychological attributes. Historians of

20th century conflicts such as the First World War or the Vietnam War have confronted the role violence plays on the soldier's performance and psyche. This essay demonstrates that the soldiers who fought at Quebec saw horrific events and reacted to them in many of the same ways as did soldiers in modern times, seen particularly in the quick adaptation of North American guerilla tactics by British regular troops. While such tactics fell outside European norms of warfare, they certainly accorded with the armed conflict waged in the colonies for a century. The violence that occurred at the siege of Quebec, however, was amplified due to the number of atrocities that had taken place during the war. For British soldiers, Oswego and William Henry in particular, sparked an urge to exact revenge on their own violent terms. The French staged a guerilla war with their native allies against the British expeditionary force. From the very first landing, where a deceased soldier was found on the beaches with a stake driven through his body, to the night before the battle on the plains British soldiers were often ambushed, killed and scalped.

A revenge narrative is definitely present within some units and individuals who experienced or were privy to what happened at previous battles such as the Fort William Henry massacre. These soldiers exacted their revenge by embracing more violent tactics including scalping and the killing of civilians prisoners. Such was the case with Gorham's rangers laying waste to the countryside and Captain Montgomery's troops denying quarter to prisoners. On the ground this had a profound effect on the psyche and performance of soldiers. British commanders, such as Wolfe during the siege of Quebec, took advantage of this and channeled the group rage to exact revenge for previous losses and to gain ground against the French. This does not mean they were in full control, as the common soldiers set the agenda of violence during the Siege. Commanders like General Wolfe merely reacted whereas the men led.

Although it is impossible to definitively diagnose PTSD or combat trauma in soldiers that have been dead for centuries, evidence from the Siege of Quebec suggest this could possibly be the case for many British soldiers. Educated inferences can be made from applying modern research to the events that transpired from June to August 1759. Nor did the hyper-violence at Quebec stand alone in the Seven Years' War.

Not too long after the fall of Quebec in September 1759, Robert Rogers' Rangers committed a massacre of the Abenaki village of St. Francis. As the Siege of Quebec was commencing in July 1759, Robert Rogers was briefed about his own undertaking against the French. A number of soldiers were on a diplomatic mission to the French allied Natives of St. Francis and were taken prisoner. General Amherst ordered Rogers, ironically on the same day as the Battle on the Plains of Abraham, to go to this village and attack it. Amherst specifically notes:

Remember the barbarities that have been committed by the enemy's Indian scoundrels on every occasion, where they had an opportunity of shewing their infamous cruelties on the King's subjects, which they have done without mercy. Take your revenge, but don't forget tho' those villains have dastardly and promiscuously murdered the women and children of all ages.²³⁰

Although Fort William Henry was not noted specifically, it is implied among other instances that were to be avenged by this attack. These orders are reminiscent of the pamphlet and embody what the British sought to bring to the French to restore balance with violence. As the British turned the tide of war against the French they intended to not heed to usual military courtesies or

²³⁰ Robert Rogers, *Journal of Robert Rogers of the Rangers: The Exploits of Rogers and the Rangers in his own Words during 1755-1761 in the French and Indian War* (Leonaux, 2005), 116.

lawful practices, but inflict pain and loss in the name of vengeance. Furthermore, the British continued to target native villages and people for their atrocities through to the end of the war. This illustrates that the events at Quebec were not unique and illustrate a deeper meaning to the Seven Years' War and violence in war.

Historians too often tend to retell the fall of Quebec, the linchpin in the conquest of Canada, in terms of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. This study has documented that this battle merely capped a months' long struggle characterized by guerilla tactics spurred by a desire for revenge, making for violent conflict that could not but cause psychological trauma to many of those involved. Taking account of such brutality and the bloody harvest it yields strips warfare of its mystery and reveals combat for what it really is: killing.

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VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Nicholas Rinaldo Girard

PLACE OF BIRTH: Windsor, ON

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1992

EDUCATION: Kennedy Collegiate Institute, Windsor, ON, 2005

University of Windsor, B.A., Windsor, ON, 2015