



BATTLE OF GRAND PRÉ BY C.W. JEFFERYS

# *King George's War Commentary*

## Commentary for King George's War

With the declaration of war on Britain by France, fighting in North America became inevitable. There were a few reasons why, some more influential than others. At the upper end of the spectrum was the fear, on both sides, that the enemy would actually succeed in conquering territory. Though in practice this would require more manpower and resources than could be spared, the fact that by 1713 the British had succeeded in gaining loose control over Acadia — that is, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and northern Maine, hinted that it might be possible. (And, of course, the British would indeed conquer Canada only a decade later.) More immediately important was the question of Trade, including both the fur trade which involved the various tribal confederacies who not only lived on the periphery of the European settlements but in some cases were integrated with them, but the Grand Banks fisheries, and, general shipping to and from Europe. Both sides employed large numbers of privateers during the war and engaged in actual piracy beforehand. Both sides disputed the rights to various fishing bases in Newfoundland and Acadia. Both sides sought to gain influence over the powerful indigenous nations who controlled access to furs and tried to persuade them to 'take the warpath' against the other. It could be said that the British colonials also sought new lands to feed their population boom, but that was a later trend.

In North America the British held the lands that would come to be known as the Thirteen Colonies. From south to north these were Georgia — newly founded on debatable territory also claimed by Spanish Florida — the Carolinas (only separated into North and South in 1729), the Commonwealth of Virginia, Maryland Colony, Pennsylvania Colony (including Delaware), the Province of New York, the Province of New Jersey (recently liberated from the overlordship of New York), Connecticut Colony, the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, the Province of New Hampshire (split from Massachusetts in 1739 and including Vermont), and the Province of Massachusetts Bay, which extended as far as the Northeast border of Maine.

Inland, working back south, the Bay Province bordered the French possession of New France more or less along the modern boundary, except that northern Maine belonged to New France. New Hampshire likewise matched its modern border, while the future states of Vermont and New York officially stopped a little north of Albany. Beyond, however, was the land of the Six Nations, not the French, and English settlements were already well established there, mainly on the Hudson and other rivers. This the tribes found annoying, though they were willing to do business in times of peace. The borders of Virginia and the Carolinas ran along, or even short of, the mountain chain, leaving the Ohio Valley to the French fur traders and the indigenous population. The latter were more likely to trade with the British colonists than the French, for many of the ancient trade routes ran east-west.

*[Maryland and Pennsylvania were at odds for many decades over who possessed what part of the hinterland. On occasion this led to clashes between the colonial militias, the latest incident ending only in 1738. The dispute was not finally settled until 1760. Delaware*

*was technically a separate colony, but it was governed by Pennsylvania under a long term lease.]*

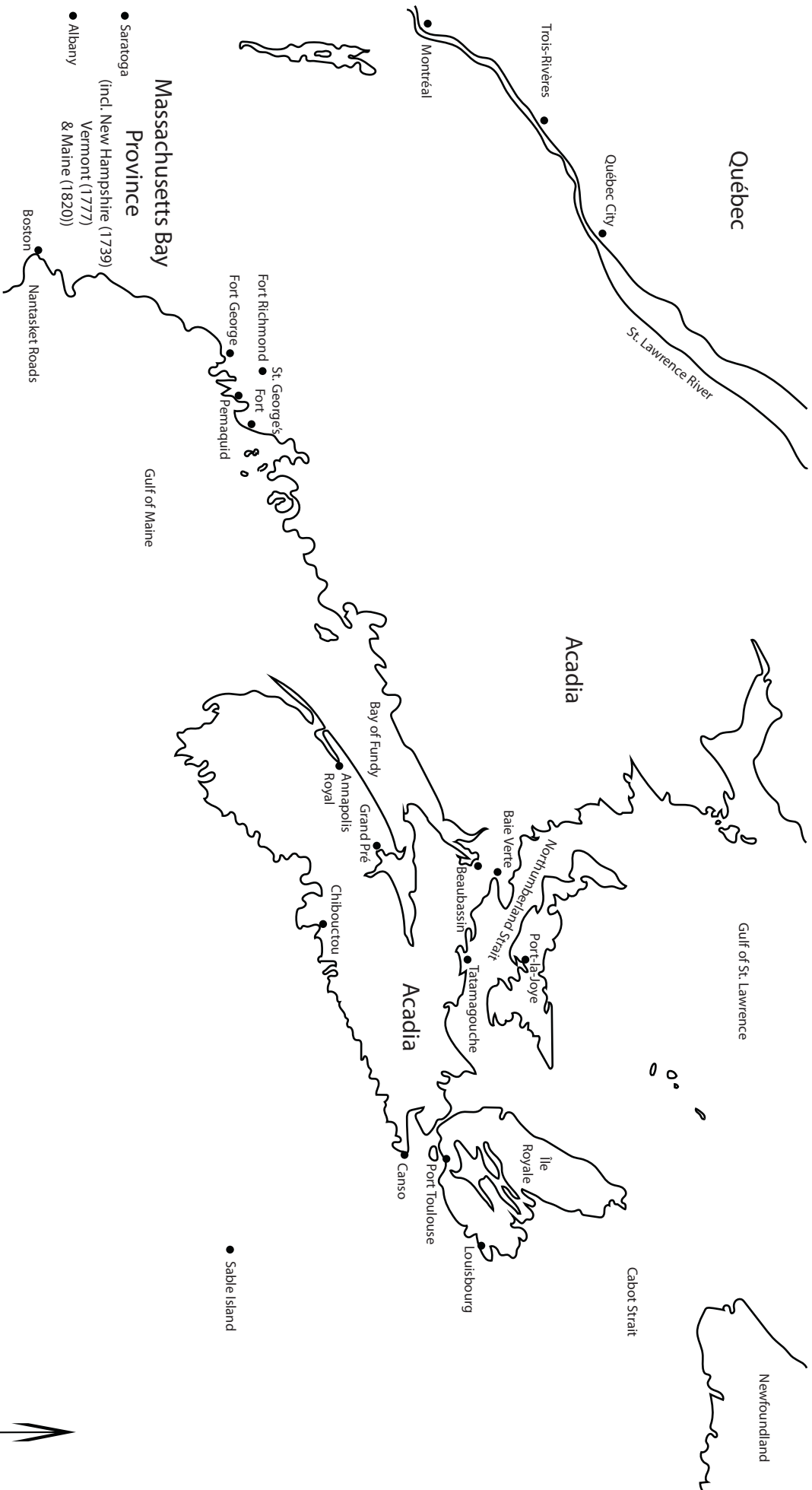
The territories of New France were divided into Louisiana (from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes), Canada or Québec (along the St. Lawrence River), and Acadia in northern Maine, Gaspé, and what are now the Maritime Provinces. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) gave Newfoundland to England. Acadia was nominally under British control from that date, except for Cape Breton Island (Île Royale) on the southern side of the St. Lawrence estuary, where the fortress of Louisbourg was constructed. In Acadia the British established posts at Annapolis Royal in the Bay of Fundy, and at Canso, across the water from Cape Breton. Both Acadia and Newfoundland retained their French populations, with Acadia having a large enough population to cause trouble.

Overlapping the Europeans' claims were the lands of the indigenous peoples. Some of these, like the Mi'kmaq, were migratory, and others were settled. Some, like the Iroquois, were warlike and others peaceful. Some lived by the hunt and others by agriculture. None, however, could be considered 'primitive hunter gatherers'. They all had complex social structures and most operated within a handful of political confederacies with elaborate legal checks and balances (some of which were incorporated into the US Constitution). The Six Nations of the Ohio and Great Lakes are probably the most famous, but there were others. The tribes farther south belonged to the culture known as the Mound Builders, and furthermore were classified by the Europeans as Civilized Tribes — that is they practiced many European customs, including dress, religion, education, and land ownership. The Six Nations did not fall into that classification, but they also acquired European habits, many abandoning their iconic longhouses for regular homes or seeking service in the colonial military as a way of gaining personal glory — think of Joseph Brant. Though these groups fought each other and the Europeans off and on, they did so in very much the same manner as European nations (and despite the scalping motif, often in a more civilized manner). The



Iroquois (pictured at left) who were a member of the Six Nations, may be considered an exception. Their name is a pejorative given them by their neighbours — it means 'the Killers'. The Killers could be considered in some respects French mercenaries, much as the Cossacks were to the Russians, but a distinction has to be made. The Iroquois who fought for the French were primarily a subgroup who had migrated to the St. Lawrence Valley, driving out their Algonquin cousins, and they had adopted Catholicism. Other tribes, including other Iroquois, remained in a state of

# New England & Acadia



watchful neutrality, while the Mohawk sided with the British, even going so far as to sign up with the various ranger units that did most of the frontier fighting against the St. Lawrence Iroquois.

The group most concerned with this narrative, however, is the Wabanaki Confederacy. Formed from the remnants of the Abenaki of the New England region, who fought the early English colonists in King Phillip's War, the Wabanaki were spread over most of Acadia — indeed, the Acadian French applied for membership in the confederation and were accepted. The other chief members were the Abenaki themselves and the Mi'kmaq, the former having migrated north and west of their old homeland and the latter mainly divided between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, though they were accustomed to travelling widely. The Wabanaki had been in a state of armed hostility with the English colonists for two generations now, and would be for another generation to come.

### The Raid on Canso

With the news of the declaration of war came instructions from du Maurepas, the French Minister of Marine. French colonies were always administered by the Navy, even when they consisted of thousands of square kilometres of dirt. The Governor of Louisbourg, Jean-Baptiste-Louis Le Prévost Duquesnel, was ordered to preemptively remove the British presence in Acadia before they could strengthen their position. As both Maurepas and the Governor knew, Louisbourg was short on provisions and could not afford to have its supply lines cut. Maurepas also knew that more supplies would be a long time coming, though that news was not contained in his letters. Attacking Canso would relieve the danger by removing the nearest British base. Also, because Canso was an important refitting station for the Grand Banks fishing fleet, it would strike a blow at New England's economy. The attack could be justified on the grounds that the location of the British settlement lay on Grassy Island, which was disputed territory.

The expedition would be launched from Louisbourg, but it counted on aid from the Acadians and Wabanaki; the latter especially because during May a chief of the Île de Royale Mi'kmaq, Jacques Pandanuques, along with his whole family, was kidnapped by a Colonial sea captain named Donahue, taken to Boston, and (reputedly) executed. The Colonials also held a number of hostages belonging to the Île Royale Mi'kmaq. The reason for the arrests is unclear. Because New England learned of the outbreak of war a little later than Louisbourg it is unlikely to have been a preemptive attempt to remove a key French ally. Besides, the act only made the Mi'kmaq angrier than usual. Possibly there were 'criminal charges' pending against the chief for some raid or 'theft' by his people. It seems very like the action taken against the MacDonalds of Glencoe, painted as 'incorrigibles' and made the target of a Government extermination campaign by their personal enemies, who manipulated the facts to suit themselves. In that case also, it was the clan chief who was targeted. Donahue's action did not go unpunished.

The French flotilla departed on 23 May and arrived during the night of 24 May. The force, composed of Compagnies

Frances de la Marine and Mi'kmaq militiamen, under Captain François Dupont Du Vivier, landed without incident. Canso was protected by Fort William Augustus, a typical star fort made of timber, garrisoned by four companies of the 40th Regiment of Foot under Captain Patrick Heron. The 40th was the only regular regiment stationed in the region; the rest of it was at Annapolis Royal. Out in the harbour was an armed sloop. The defenders, numbering a little over 100 men, were caught by surprise. The fort surrendered quickly. The sloop engaged the French flotilla but was heavily outgunned and struck by mid morning. Under the terms of surrender the garrison was to be transferred to Louisbourg as prisoners of war while the women and children were sent to Boston. The French packed up everything moveable and burned the village and fort. The troops were paroled in September in order to ease the burden of having to maintain them. This may have been a necessary move, but it allowed the New England authorities to gain valuable intelligence about Louisbourg's condition. The repatriated British troops were also used to augment the garrison of Annapolis Royal against later enemy attacks (there seems to be no mention of their being 'paroled' and forced to remain neutral).



[Mi'kmaq chief]

## The First and Second Sieges of Annapolis Royal

Annapolis Royal was the old French capital of Acadia, Port Royal. It and Canso were the only two British settlements in Acadia. Once Canso had been reduced, Governor Duquesnel proceeded with plans to take Annapolis, but in order to capitalise on the element of surprise ordered local forces to do the job. Whether he intended to support them with his flotilla or not is unclear, but it seems his allies expected such aid and were disheartened when it did not arrive.

The man entrusted to lead the first attack was a 'notorious' militant priest named Jean-Louis Le Loutre. A missionary from France, Le Loutre had been allowed to pursue his calling by the British authorities, and did not seem much of a threat. But, he would lead the Acadians and their Wabanaki allies whenever they went on the warpath. On this occasion, which was his first experience, he may have jumped the gun. On 12 July, 300 Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, motivated by the murder of their chief, attacked Fort Anne, the chief defensive work of the settlement, and managed to kill two soldiers, but could make no impression on the fort, which was garrisoned by elements of the 40th Foot under their colonel, British Acadia's Lieutenant Governor, Paul Mascarene. Four days later the British shipped in a reinforcement of 70 soldiers and Le Loutre called off the siege, withdrawing to Grand Pré, about 100 Km up the coast.

(Much of Nova Scotia was wilderness, but there was a string of settlements following the western shore from Annapolis to Minas Basin at the head of the Bay of Fundy. Whenever there was fighting in Nova Scotia, it either occurred here or at the head of the bay.)

Du Vivier showed up on 6 September, disembarking an additional 200 men, and it was decided to renew the siege. While waiting for Le Loutre to return he probed the defences, and on 7 September asked for the fort's surrender. Mascarene in turn suggested he surrender. Du Vivier told the defenders he would attack the next day, but the siege did not begin until 9 September, lasting until 15 September. The besiegers probed and raided but lacking artillery could not make any progress. Du Vivier sent a second time for the garrison's surrender on 15 September and was refused. Again, the French were waiting for naval support, but it was the British who sailed into the roads, depositing 50 men of Gorham's Rangers, a volunteer force of mainly Wampanoag, Nauset, and Pigwacket tribesmen from New England, enemies of the Mi'kmaq. These launched a brutal raid on the Mi'kmaq camp that caused them to leave the vicinity. This forced Du Vivier to retreat to Grand Pré on 5 October.

*[Gorham's Rangers set up shop on an island off the coast and conducted a number of raids from there throughout the war, though on at least one occasion they were themselves raided in revenge for the atrocities they had perpetrated on their arrival. Toward the end of the war their numbers were heavily augmented by Europeans and they became more of a garrison force.]*

In response to the sieges, Massachusetts formally declared war (20 October) on the Mi'kmaq, offering bounties on the heads of all members of the tribe. War on France had already been declared on 2 June.

## The Descent on Louisbourg

These initial attacks, and rumours of an overland expedition being prepared in Québec against the Hudson Valley settlements, spurred the New Englanders to action. Louisbourg was a natural target. It was the most significant symbol of French authority in the region, and served multiple roles as a base for privateers, protection for the French fisheries, and as the gateway to Canada. It had been the launchpad for the Canso raid. Also, thanks to the returned POWs of the 40th of Foot, Boston had fresh intelligence about its condition.

In some respects Louisbourg was a powerful fortress. It had been under construction for the past 25 years (and was only newly completed); the cost was estimated at 30 million livres. But it had three weaknesses. First, it was vulnerable to attack from the land, being dominated by low hills within artillery range. Second, it was short on supplies — one of the reasons the prisoners had been paroled. Supplies were so short, in fact that the fishermen based there were unwilling to put to sea this year. Third, morale was low. Their Wabanaki allies, bound up in blood feud with the New Englanders, were motivated, but they did not serve in the garrison. The European soldiers, a collection of *Compagnies Frances de la Marine*, were ill trained and had not been paid in months. The raid on Canso had only made things worse. The booty from the raid all went to the officers, resulting in a mutiny in December of 1744. The new Governor, Louis du Pont du Chambon, managed to quiet things down by handing out back pay and opening the stores (which suggests the French authorities were being stingy rather than actually being short). The mutiny was stopped but mutual distrust remained. However, Chambon was so afraid of word of the situation getting out (which it did anyway) that he refused to send to France for reinforcements.

(Chambon had been *lieutenant du roi* of Île Royale since April of 1744. When Duquesnel died suddenly in October of that year, Chambon got his job. Chambon was not a stellar officer. He was not unusually bad at his job, either, but he did owe his appointment chiefly to his political connections. He was the younger brother of Du Vivier. After the siege, Chambon avoided censure through the efforts of François Bigot, the Governor of New France. Incidentally, the post of *lieutenant du roi* was not the same as that of lieutenant general. Though such a man would indeed be a King's military representative, and often a political representative, too, the post was mainly a sinecure. The governor of a fortress held an independent command, and might consider himself the equal of a lieutenant general, but a *lieutenant du roi* was definitely a junior post. The office was one that could be purchased, and thus be used to generate revenue for the Crown. If the holder happened to be a man of ability it could also mean the King had someone who could act as a check on an ambitious governor, or someone who could

organise an emergency response. But typically, all one needed for the post was enough money.)

Reinforcement was being planned back at Versailles, which was another reason the British Colonials wanted no delay. The Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Province, William Shirley, somehow knew of these preparations before London — possibly from an intercepted packet. He even knew the rough date the reinforcement was to sail: February 1745. This information would lead to London sending out Vice Admiral William Martin to patrol off the French coast and pursue any convoys he might encounter; Martin had some success and Louisbourg was not reinforced to any great degree before the siege.

On 25 January 1745 the General Assembly of the Massachusetts Bay Province voted in favour of attacking Louisbourg, by a narrow margin. Shirley then contacted the Governor of the Province of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth, who agreed to help. The other colonies were also approached and some agreed to send men or supplies. The bulk of the 4,000-man force was raised in Massachusetts. 500 were sent by Connecticut, 450 by New Hampshire. New York supplied 10 cannon, while Pennsylvania and New Jersey sent money. The men were organised into nine regiments under the command of a pillar of the merchant community, William Pepperrell of Kittery (i.e., Maine):

Pepperill's 1st Massachusetts Regiment  
Waldo's 2nd Massachusetts Regiment  
Moulton's 3rd Massachusetts Regiment  
Willard's 4th Massachusetts Regiment  
Hale's 5th Massachusetts Regiment  
Richmond's 6th Massachusetts Regiment  
Gorham's 7th Massachusetts Regiment  
Moore's New Hampshire Regiment  
Burr's Connecticut Regiment

There was also a Rhode Island and Providence Regiment which arrived later than the others. To guard against the rumoured inclusion from Québec, which would probably consist of Iroquois backed by some Compagnies Frances de la Marine or Canadian volunteers, additional ranger units were raised: Burke's Rangers and the New Hampshire Rangers. Many of the Rangers were Mohawk warriors or other tribesmen opposed to the French allies.

Most of the flotilla, led by Captain Edward Tyng, came from Massachusetts, a motley collection of privateer schooners and armed merchantmen; Rhode Island hired a 20-gunner and Connecticut supplied a pair of sloops. These would escort a convoy of 90 transports. The warships were:

*Caesar (20), Massachusetts (24), Newport (20), Rye #2 (24), Shirley (20), Bedford sloop (16), Windward sloop (8), Boston sloop (16), Hartford sloop (16), Mermaid sloop (10), Prince of Orange sloop (16), Queen Anne sloop (10), Rous snow (16), Terror sloop (12), Wallace sloop (14), Bien Aimé storeship (18).*



#### **William Shirley, 1694-1771**

Born and educated in England, and trained in the law, Shirley spent most of his life as a colonial administrator (mainly because his extravagant lifestyle and large family ran him into debt). He had a family connection to the Duke of Newcastle, and to the Speaker of the English House of Commons. This explains the high degree of coordination between London and Boston during the Louisbourg operation.

His colonial career got off to a slow start, the governor of the day blocking appointments, until money connections and political intrigue managed the governor's removal. Shirley replaced him in 1741.

After the war he began to lose support, falling out with several prominent American allies. He also had a pro-British outlook at a time when many of the Colonials were beginning to think of separating from the mother country. But, after spending some time on diplomatic work in London and Paris, his position became stable again and he remained Governor of Massachusetts until the years Seven Years War. Participating in the early campaigns of that war he made a number of enemies; also, his patron, the Duke of Newcastle, was ousted. This led to his dismissal in 1756, after which he returned to England.

Shirley then became Governor of the Bahamas. When he became too ill to work effectively his son took over the position and Shirley retired to his Boston home, where he eventually died.

# Map of Louisbourg

Original drawn by T. Jeffreys 1757  
showing the 1745 campaign

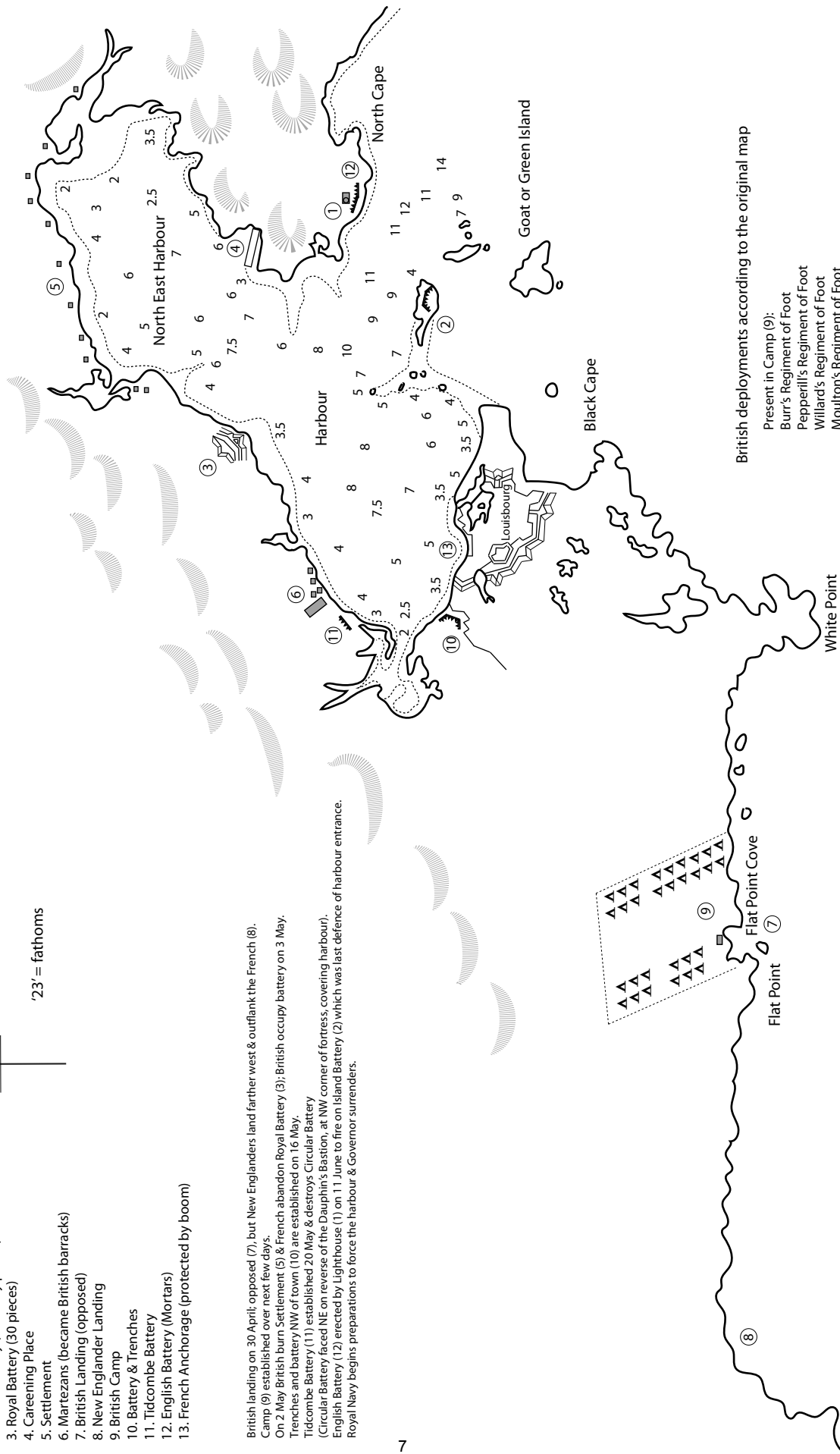
1. Lighthouse
2. Island Battery (30 heavy pieces)
3. Royal Battery (30 pieces)
4. Careening Place
5. Settlement
6. Martezans (became British barracks)
7. British Landing (opposed)
8. New Englander Landing
9. British Camp
10. Battery & Trenches
11. Tidcombe Battery
12. English Battery (Mortars)
13. French Anchorage (protected by boom)

British landing on 30 April; opposed (7), but New Englanders land farther west & outflank the French (8).  
Camp (9) established over next few days.  
On 2 May British burn Settlement (5) & French abandon Royal Battery (3); British occupy battery on 3 May.  
Trenches and battery NW of town (10) are established on 16 May.  
Tidcombe Battery (11) established 20 May & destroys Circular Battery (Circular Battery faced NE on reverse of the Dauphin's Bastion, at NW corner of fortress, covering harbour).  
English Battery (12) erected by Lighthouse (1) on 11 June to fire on Island Battery (2) which was last defence of harbour entrance.  
Royal Navy begins preparations to force the harbour & Governor surrenders.

7

1 Mile

'23' = fathoms



British deployments according to the original map

- Present in Camp (9):  
 Burr's Regiment of Foot  
 Pepperill's Regiment of Foot  
 Willard's Regiment of Foot  
 Moulton's Regiment of Foot  
 Moore's Regiment of Foot
- Waldo's Regiment of Foot occupied Royal Battery (3)  
 Hale's Regiment of Foot occupied the Martezans (6)  
 Richmond's Regiment of Foot occupied the trench line (10)  
 (will have rotated with other regiments)  
 Gorham's Regiment of Foot occupied the Lighthouse (1)

Gabarus Bay

Given that the French were expected to send reinforcements, help was requested from the Jamaica Station. The key man was Commodore Peter Warren. Though a Royal Navy officer he was a prominent Colonial who owned land in New York and was married into Bostonian Society. He was not technically, however, the man who should have made the decisions. Warren only commanded the Leewards Station. He also had a peer in Commodore Charles Knowles, who was commanding Warren's old station in South Carolina. The senior commander was Admiral of the Blue Sir Chaloner Ogle, but he was due to be superseded by Vice Admiral of the Red Thomas Davers in March.

However, between the time that Ogle was packing up and Davers' arrival, Governor Shirley wrote direct to Warren, then at Antigua (22 February). Though in favour of the idea, Warren replied he would be unable to assist, but encouraged the Colonials to proceed. Despite his refusal he also made ready three ships: *Launceston* (40) and *Mermaid* (40) frigates, and *Weymouth* (60). Meanwhile he wrote to London asking for permission. His dispatch crossed one from the Admiralty authorising him to go ahead (8 March). Ostensibly Warren's role was the minor one of protecting the Grand Banks fishing grounds, but everyone knew he was really going to facilitate the capture of the fortress. In addition to the ships he had already picked out he was given the *Hastings* (40). Because *Weymouth* went and wrecked herself, Warren commandeered *Superbe* (60). She was Knowles' flagship and Knowles was not best pleased, but Warren had seniority. Knowles, and some of Warren's other captains, submitted a written protest at reducing the strength of the West Indies forces. There was a general fear, not unfounded, that the French at Martinique were about to start something. Warren sailed anyway, on 13 March. Two days later Shirley received a note from him saying he was proceeding direct to Louisbourg to save time, barring a watering stop at Canso. Instructions were sent to the *Eltham* (44) at Piscataway — then an important New England port — and a prize, the *Bien Aimé*, currently at Boston, to rendezvous at Louisbourg.

Shirley's expedition set out from Nantasket Road on 24 March. Canso was reached and retaken in early April. A new 8-gun fort was erected there. Louisbourg was a different matter because the St. Lawrence was still icebound — the pack extended well outside Cabot Strait — so the troops remained drilling at Canso. However, cruisers were sent to keep a watch on the state of the ice. On 18 April the French frigate *Rénomée* (36) appeared at Canso but was chased off by the New Englanders. *Eltham* arrived on 22 April, and the next day Warren and his squadron appeared. By the end of April, though there was still drift ice, it was deemed safe enough to proceed. Warren's ships converged on Louisbourg to blockade it; Pepperill set out on 29 April. (As it turned out the French in the West Indies had indeed started something; Warren was informed of this on 23 April. He decided 'one job at a time' and stayed. There is more than a hint that Shirley delayed passing on the news until it was too late to turn back.)

[According to Richmond, though not French sources, Macnémara's West Indies convoy included *Rénomée*, but Macnémara sailed

for the New World in July. It is entirely possible the *Rénomée* went out on more than one run, though.]

The flotilla proceeded at a stately pace, though apparently in no good order. On 2 May they stopped to sack Port Toulouse (2 May), only 35 Km across the water from Canso. Like Canso, Port Toulouse was a fishing village. More raids were conducted on other villages as they proceeded north. These efforts continued during the siege, with a half dozen attacks recorded throughout May and June. Usually there were casualties, and sometimes the landing parties had the worst of it. For example, at an unnamed village 100 French and Mi'kmaq ambushed 20 Colonials and killed all but two. The landing parties risked being scalped, and if captured, they would be tortured. The worst damage was done at Ingonish, where 80 houses were burned down. Ships were also destroyed. It is unclear just how much effect these raids had. In the short term they discouraged or frightened away the fishermen, but they did not ensure a monopoly of the Grand Banks for the English for all time. Moreover, they encouraged reprisals against English settlements in Newfoundland, where the Wabanaki burned, looted, and took slaves back to the mainland.

As might be expected, someone had drafted the 'perfect plan' to take Louisbourg, which naturally proved to be unworkable on the spot. The place was supposed to be surprised by a night landing at Gabarus Bay to the west of the fortress. The men were supposed to row up to the town wall where it approached the shore at a small cove called Flat Point and use scaling ladders. But, the expedition only arrived at 8am on 30 April. Instead, the landing was made in broad daylight at Freshwater Cove, about four Km west of the fortress.

An alternate version (which puts the landing on 11 May — but that is just a question of Old Style versus New Style dating) has the landing at Flat Point Cove proceed as planned, with some of Gorham's regiment and their colonel in the lead. Given fire support by the Colonial vessels *Boston, Massachusetts*, and an otherwise unreported vessel called the *Lord Montague* (possibly an armed whaler-transport) they were driven back to their ships by the cove's 20-man garrison. After this the second landing was made at Kennington Cove, which is the spot given in the standard account.

[Some accounts call the initial landing party 'Gorham's Rangers', but Gorham also raised a militia regiment, the 7th Massachusetts, while the Rangers are known to have also been fighting at Annapolis Royal during the siege. Although it is quite likely parties of Rangers served in both locations it is hard to know which unit is meant. The Rangers had grown in size since the previous year, and there are accounts of native warriors, who comprised the original cadre, fighting at Louisbourg.]

The garrison sortied with 100 men (200 in the alternate version) and skirmished with the landing party until the ships came in close and drove them off with grape shot. Half the attackers got ashore that day and the rest the following day. Interestingly, while one of the sally's leaders surrendered, the other fled. The latter was the Port Commander, but also a notorious French privateer, named Pierre Morpain. The British marched to Flat Point Cove and



set up camp. Wooden rafts were used to bring the stores ashore.

The French, following the sieges-for-dummies playbook, burned all the houses outside the fortress and sank what ships there were across the harbour entrance. Instead of drawing up siege lines between their camp and the fortress the New Englanders marched north and northeast around the bay that constituted the Main Harbour, all the way to the 'inner' North East Harbour, a distance of three or four miles. Here they made a ferocious raid on the chief fishing settlement, then marched back down along the shore to the Grand or Royal (or King's) Battery. This battery, located midway along the Main Harbour, was sited to fire out to sea on either side of the clump of islands that lay in the middle of the harbour entrance. But, the guns could also be directed to fire on Louisbourg from the rear. Due to the fear inspired by the raid the battery's crews abandoned their substantially fortified post and the Colonials took the place without a fight. The French had spiked the guns, but the attackers drilled the spikes out and positioned the cannon to fire on the town. The following day a mixed French and Indian attack was beaten off.

Now the siege commenced. Additional guns were set up along the shore of the Main Harbour and on the low hills behind. This was a difficult job. The besiegers had to pull their guns through two miles of bog, but managed it by using wooden sledges sixteen feet long, pulled by teams of 100 men. All preparations were complete by 7 May, at which the Governor was summoned to surrender, and — not following the playbook — refused to do so, believing help was on the way.

By this time more ships were arriving from England (by way of Boston): *Princess Mary* (60) on 4 May, and *Hector* (40) on 19 May. French ships also began to appear, but they were all small blockade runners. Ten were taken and two got through (thanks to a thick fog). Still the British were unable to bring their ships close in to bombard the town, thanks to a battery of 30 heavy guns located on one of the islands in the harbour entrance. This Island Battery (or Harbour Battery) was proving impossible to silence, even when the equally heavy guns of the Grand Battery were employed. It was also defended by a garrison of 160 men, which made an assault with small boats, such as was done at Cartagena des Indias, problematic. On 11 May, though the cannonade continued, it was decided not to conduct a formal siege, but to try and starve the defenders out. This seemed certain of success... until camp fever broke out and the besiegers began losing men at a faster rate than the garrison.

On 19 May the Navy captured the French 64-gunner *Vigilant*, in the following manner. *Mermaid* sighted a large sail to the Southeast, the wind being ENE. She was at that time detached from her squadron, which was operating south of the town, but not that far away. Seeming to be alone, she was pursued by the French ship and fled toward the squadron, concealed in a fog bank. The chase lasted until 2pm, when the Frenchman suddenly saw the British squadron emerging from the fog close by. Now it was *Mermaid's* turn to give chase. A faster vessel, she was able



#### Sir Peter Warren (1703-1752)

Born in Ireland, Warren was a prime example of the sort of man who in the next generation would be forced to make a hard decision over where his loyalties lay. Enlisting as an ordinary seaman at age 13, he was not friendless. To begin with, he and his brother served together. Then too, he was patronized by his uncle, Baron Alymer, who had been an admiral. Thus, by 1727 Warren was a captain. Most of his career, but especially in his early years of command, was spent in American waters, where he became heavily involved in local politics and the acquisition of land, marrying into the Delancey family of New York (his wife was also connected to the Schuylers and Van Cortlandts). So, by the time of the War of Jenkin's Ear, Warren was a wealthy and well-connected American landowner, with vast estates (his property at Greenwich Village alone covered 300 acres). There are many places in the Atlantic states that commemorate Warren in some way or other. And yet, in 1747 he moved his family to England, where he was both serving as commander of the Western Squadron and an MP. Men such as these lived a transatlantic existence. Warren's rise beyond captain came during the war, when he was made Commodore in 1744 and essentially given command of the Eastern Seaboard. He operated in the Caribbean and, as has been seen, became Governor of Louisbourg. The capture of that place earned him a knighthood and promotion to Rear Admiral of the Blue. After being given command of the Western Squadron he was promoted to Vice Admiral of the Red after the Second Battle of Finisterre in October of 1747. An excellent leader of men, he might have risen higher but he died of fever in Dublin in 1752.

to manoeuvre and give a broadside every so often. By 6pm a privateer snow had joined in the fun, firing her bow chaser. By 8pm *Eltham* and *Superbe* had closed the distance. At 9pm the Frenchman struck. *Vigilant* was loaded with six months' of provisions and replacements for the garrison. The *Vigilant's* capture did not end the siege but it probably would have ended in the French favour if she had got through.

[*Vigilant would end the war on the opposite side of the globe, at the siege of Pondichery.*]

By 28 May the besiegers were down to 2,100 men, including all the spare personnel Warren could loan Pepperill. Two attempts to speed the siege by an attack on the Island Battery were made at the end of May. In the first the Colonials used 400 men and lost 60 killed and 116 prisoners. Two days later an attack by 650 men suffered 189 killed. Two days after that the French counterattacked. This seems to have been a raid by forces based in the hinterland (though they may have come from the town), numbering 100 Europeans and 80 braves. This time the New Englanders had the better of the encounter. Though they suffered 6 killed and many wounded they themselves killed 40 and took 17 prisoners. Despite the failure to carry the Island Battery these attacks gleaned two important benefits. First, on the day of the French raid Gorham's men, operating on the headland opposite the fortress, discovered a store of 30 French cannon at the Careening Wharf. And second, from their explorations and intelligence gained during the amphibious assaults it was realized that the Battery was vulnerable to fire from the opposite shore, at Lighthouse Point, where a mortar battery was duly set up (11 June). The French sent a small sally of 100 men from the town the next day but they were ambushed and repulsed. Chambon now had too few men to make any more counterattacks.

This was around the time l'Etandière sailed from France with a largish convoy. He was mistakenly believed to be sailing for Cape Breton instead of Cape François in Hispaniola. In response, London sent four more ships to Canso: *Sunderland* (60), *Canterbury* (60), *Chester*, (50), and *Lark* (44). *Chester* arrived on 10 June and the others on 13 June. The British had a lot of firepower, but unless they could silence the batteries at the harbour entrance it could not be employed very effectively.

Alas, the mortars at Lighthouse Point proved decisive. After a five-day bombardment the Island Battery was reduced. Warren called a council of war and urged that they bring their ships into the harbour. Either the fortress would surrender or they would flatten it. A simultaneous assault by land would also take place. Knowing that the latest French relief effort had just been intercepted and destroyed, his captains concurred.

(The guns of Louisbourg itself do not seem to have factored into the equation. There are references in some accounts to their having been silenced by the guns of the Grand Battery. Presumably, any spare cannon had either been distributed among the other batteries — the cache at the Careening Wharf suggests a third battery had been planned — or the surviving pieces were undermanned, or lacked ammunition

and powder, which could not be brought in from the other, now isolated, positions.)

There was no need to storm the harbour. The Governor knew what would happen once the Island Battery was silenced, and beat the *chamade*. After a siege of 47 days Louisbourg surrendered on 17 June. It would be handed back at the peace, so General Wolfe could have something to practice on before he took Québec.

### **The Battle of Tatamagouche, 15 June 1745**

The Battle of Tatamagouche, or Famme Goose Bay, was almost as significant to the fall of Louisbourg as the reduction of the Island Battery. During the month of May the French again laid siege to Annapolis Royal. The effort was led by Paul Marin de la Malague, a Montréal-born regular officer, famous for his explorations of the Ohio Valley. His object seems to have been to secure the port while the New Englanders were all busy elsewhere, and his small force of 200 soldiers was assisted by hundreds of Wabanaki. Marin came from Québec by sea, landing on the North shore of Nova Scotia, where the Northumberland Strait separates it from Prince Edward Island, then marched southwest for about 200 Km to Annapolis Royal. As noted elsewhere the western coast of Nova Scotia was already well settled, and the march through friendly country would have been an easy one. He recruited as he went.

However, Annapolis Royal proved too well garrisoned, and once again the French appear to have had no siege guns. After three weeks of fruitless activity, word was received that Louisbourg needed Marin's help — Chambon was that short of men — and the siege was broken off. Marin returned north, to Tatamagouche Bay, where four ships lay waiting for him. Mention is also made of Huron braves from the St. Lawrence Valley, who had arrived by canoe in significant numbers. It is not clear if they joined forces with the Wabanaki or whether the latter chose to remain behind. But the account of the battle seems to imply that it was primarily the Huron who fought, and that when they went home the relief expedition was cancelled.

The battle came about this way. On the morning of 15 June, Captain Donahue (the same) had command of a squadron of three ships: *Resolution* (12), *Tatar* (14), and *Bonetta* (6). They were cruising Northumberland Strait when smoke was spotted on shore. It was believed (correctly) to come from a large encampment, and *Tatar* and *Bonetta* were sent to investigate. This left the *Resolution* off Tatamagouche Bay when Marin and four French ships appeared, surrounded by a host of war canoes. Donahue hastily raised the French flag to confuse them, planning to retreat. But the wind fell away completely and he was becalmed.

Now surrounded by the enemy, at 10am Donahue raised the British flag and opened fire. The battle raged for two hours. According to his log, Donahue fired 200 rounds from his 4-pounders and 53 from his 3-pounders; this excludes his swivels and muskets. The canoes could not take this punishment and seem to have withdrawn to shore, where the warriors concealed themselves behind a seawall. The French ships remained in the fight and were just about to board when *Tatar* and *Bonetta* reappeared. The French,

plus the remaining canoes, withdrew to Bayhead, at the western end of Tatamagouche (where there is a handy 'inner harbour' on the northern side). Two of them proceeded farther, up the Dewar River which flows into the bay at Bayhead.

Expecting a renewed attack — the arrival of a fourth New England ship made this seem likely — Marin ordered defensive works built. He and his party remained encamped at Bayhead for about a week, by which time, of course, Louisbourg had surrendered. This may not have been known to Marin, but the Huron war party nevertheless packed it in, returning to their lands in Québec and leaving Marin with only a fraction of his expedition.

This was Donahue's penultimate action. A few weeks later, he ran into Marin again, near Canso. There are no details about the action, but the Colonials appear to have had the upper hand. After, the captain landed with a watering party of 11 men, only to be jumped by a band of 300 Mi'kmaq. Five of his men were killed and six captured. Donahue was also killed, and it was said that the warriors cut open his chest to suck his blood, then eaten portions of him and the other dead. Whether true or not the tale had the effect of scaring British civilians away from Canso and the eastern coast of Acadia for a long time.

### **The Northeast Coast Campaign of 1745**

The last encounter with Marin heralded a series of raids on New England by the Wabanaki. Formal war had already been declared on the Wabanaki by Boston — in 1744 specifically on the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, and now, after the fall of Louisbourg, on the remainder of the Confederacy, including the Acadians. The few forts in this region were not arranged in a chain across the land. Instead they secured the settlements along the coastlines. French posts skirted the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Northumberland Strait. The New England posts ran along the coast of Maine: Fort George (Brunswick), St. George's Fort (Thomaston), Fort Richmond (Richmond), and Pemaquid (Bristol). The two sides' defences were a good 350-400 Km apart, with trackless wilderness lying between. In fact, it was easier for the French to attack from the direction of Québec than New Brunswick, though they could also come out of Nova Scotia, as on this occasion they did.

The manpower assigned to New England's garrison was not great. Initially 450 men, it was raised to 625 in 1745. This does not include the manpower of the frontier communities, but they were a scattered bunch. However, the raiding was also executed by small parties, typically 30 in number. About ten Wabanaki raids were launched between July and September of 1745. A severe raid would see the burning of a few buildings, the slaughtering of some livestock, and the killing of two or three people, plus one or two more taken prisoner — usually women. Other raids saw only one or two men scalped, or a woman kidnapped; often prisoners escaped. All these raids were made against coastal settlements, including those protected by the forts. In response, Governor Shirley sent reinforcements and stockpiled munitions for the coming year. He also ordered a chain of posts built inland, as far as the border with New York.

This was a wise move. In late November the French and their allies sacked Saratoga, New York (then a mere village) and killed or captured 100 people. In response, the whole of the province north of Albany was abandoned and New Hampshire was forced to deploy rangers to cover its western approaches.

### **1746**

The capture of Louisbourg did not end the war, though it was the last significant action of 1745. The French factory of Port-la-Joye, now Charlottetown, PEI (actually on the other side of the harbour), was occupied by the British, but in 1746 the French took it back after a brief fight. A total of nine Wabanaki raids are recorded for the Northeast Coast Campaign of 1746, on the same scale as last year, and against the same targets. In July the Iroquois, supported by French militia, congregated in upper New York, expecting an invasion. When the invasion failed to materialize the Iroquois decided to raid along the Hoosac River. Some skirmishes culminated in a revenge attack on Fort Massachusetts (North Adams), just east of Albany.

The British very much expected the French would try to retake Cape Breton. Their control of Canada depended on it. There had been rumours in the immediate aftermath of its fall, especially of a squadron being sent from Toulon. But, so far, there had been no activity. Even local reports of strange ships turned out to be will-o-the-wisps. Still, the Admiralty predicted an attempt would be made in the spring of 1746. The First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Bedford, suggested the British should get a jump on the French and seize Québec City, rendering the recapture of Louisbourg pointless. The Committee met on 10 April and this item came up for discussion on 14 April. They determined they would need 5,000 men to augment Warren's garrison (he was now the official Governor of Louisbourg and a newly-minted Rear Admiral). About 1,500 were already enroute from Gibraltar and England. The colonies would be asked to raise another garrison regiment (this was the 66th of Foot — not exactly 'raised', but 'reformed' from existing personnel). About twenty ships, mostly lighter vessels, would also be needed in addition to the handful already present. Apart from direct fire support they could land cannon to form siege batteries. At the meeting it was decided to inform all the colonial governors and have plans drawn up — quite similar to those used when Canada was conquered in the next war. That is, a naval descent on Québec and a land invasion from Albany against Montréal. Dispatches were sent off in early April and arrived in North America in early June.

Shirley and the other governors found the invasion project almost unworkable. 5,000 men was regarded as a ludicrously low number — the French were erroneously believed to have 40,000, plus their allies. New England lacked the resources and found that men were unwilling to come out on yet another campaign. Louisbourg absorbed much of the existing manpower and news from there was not good, with disease and desertion rife. Ultimately, London was forced to create two Provincial regiments — Shirley's 1st Massachusetts becoming the 65th of Foot and a mixed bag of volunteers from Annapolis Royal and

Louisbourg becoming Pepperrill's 66th of Foot. As Provincials rather than provincial (i.e., 'state') militia they were subject to regular army discipline and rules of conduct. But, they were also entitled to regular army pay, which stuck in London's craw.

And so, the project to take Canada fizzled. However, rumours of the plan had an effect on the French. Not only did their local allies congregate on the upper Hudson, they decided to dispatch a massive expedition to retake Louisbourg, capture Annapolis Royal, and ultimately, take Boston. Or, at the very least, reinforce Québec.

### D'Anville's Expedition

As originally conceived, the expedition was to involve twenty ships of the line, twenty-one frigates, and thirty-two transports. The numbers vary with the source, and indeed varied from moment to moment. The number 54 is sometimes cited, and certainly a different mix of ships eventually took part. The land component would consist of 800 cannon (dismounted from the warships for the most part), 3,000 infantry, and 10,000 marines. Again, the numbers were significantly lower in reality.

British estimates of what eventually left France seem to be correct — that is, nine ships of the line, two heavy frigates, and three ordinary frigates. There is no special reason why the numbers are so variable, just the usual discrepancy between the pipe dreams of the bureaucrats in Paris and the reality of the waterfront. *La Royale* had great difficulty obtaining stores, replacement parts, sailors, and money, even for an expedition of so great a magnitude that it had to be commanded by the most senior admiral.

The most accurate list seems to be the following:

Ships of the Line:

*Férme (74), Alcide (64), Ardent (64), Borée (64), Mars (64), Trident (64), Diamante (54), Carillon (60), Caubon (60)*

Heavy frigates:

*Aurore (44), Tigre (56)*

There were two other ships of this class present, but they had been modified: *Argonaut (26)*, a 44 converted to a troopship, and the hospital ship *Mercure (14)*, a cut-down 56.

Frigates:

*Mégare (26), Sirène (30)*

*Argonaute (36)*, an East Indiaman, may constitute the third frigate.

Two other frigates participated in the operation but appear to have been sent later, probably with dispatches: *Mutine (24)* and *Rénomée (32)*.

The following 'specialty' ships are also listed: *La Judith* sloop, *Louisbourg* bomb, *Prince d'Orange* store-ship, *Saint Pierre* and *Vainqueur* fireships. *Louisbourg* appears to have been constructed on the St. Lawrence.

At Québec were a couple of 5th Rates, built there, and possibly the *Caribou (52)*, which is listed in those waters for

1746. These ships do not seem to have participated in any way, unless *Caribou* sailed from France instead.

Since the British counted 60 or 70 transports but the troops were estimated at 3,500, it may either be that the transports were smaller than anticipated so that more were required, or that a number of merchantmen bound for the West Indies attached themselves to the expedition for safety. It is hard to know how many marines were really available; both French and Spanish vessels carried larger complements than the British, but the number of 10,000 would have been based on having forty-one warships, not fourteen. It is also possible the troops did amount to something near 10,000 since their numbers were cut severely during the voyage.

Despite the time absorbed in preparation, the expedition left in a rush. Badly fitted out and poorly provisioned, with inexperienced crews and an inexperienced admiral — though he was seconded by two able *chef d'escadres*, *La Jonquière* and *d'Estourmel* — it sailed on 22 June. Blithely sallying through the 'open door' unwittingly provided by Admiral Martin, who had temporarily drawn off from his watch on France's coastline, d'Anville took 86 days to reach the New World. An average crossing time was perhaps 50 days. Low on provisions, the French lost 1,200 men or more to scurvy, and, after they reached the West Indies, Yellow Fever. Trailing dead men in its wake the expedition reached Acadia without incident, sighting the Nova Scotia coastline on 10 September.

On 13 September they were caught in a terrible storm off Sable Island and completely scattered. Because Sable Island (then a French possession) is 300 Km off the coast, it would appear d'Anville intended to sail directly for Louisbourg. But, the storm put paid to that idea. The *Ardent* was blown clear back to France, severely battered (only to be captured by the British at Quiberon Bay). *Mars* suffered a similar fate, as did two of the frigates. Other damaged ships made the choice to return as well. The remnant put into Chibouctou (Chebucto) Bay — modern day Halifax — on or about 27 September. There was a small post here, still controlled by the Acadians.

[*Beatson says 15 September and Richmond says 17 September. Both are obviously using OS. 27 September would be the 16th in OS. The ships will not all have come in at the same time, either.*]

Rear Admiral Warren sailed down for a look at the end of the month. He was aware of d'Anville's predicament from intercepted letters. The British counted forty transports and ten men-o-war. A head count made by the French gave them 7,006 men, of all ranks: sailors, soldiers, and marines. Supposedly, Conflans, who had taken the spring convoy to Martinique, was to have joined d'Anville. Conflans led the *Terrible (74)*, *Neptune (74)*, *Alcion (54)*, and *Gloire (46)*. But the only vessel known to have sailed north from the Caribbean for the purpose was the ex-British *Northumberland (70)*, which had been stationed there since the previous year in the service of the Governor of Martinique, du Caylus. That would have given the French eleven warships, so perhaps *Northumberland* was still enroute.

D'Anville was already dead. He died of apoplexy (the more romantic said of a broken heart) two days before his squadron made landfall, while pacing his fore-castle at 3am. His successor was d'Estourmel, but he tried to commit suicide on 30 September and was badly wounded. La Jonquière assumed command. Experienced, and probably more psychologically stable than the previous two commanders, Jonquière knew the situation was dire, but tried for a time to carry on. 150 Km away (450 Km by sea) Annapolis Royal was under siege again by an Acadian force under Jean-Baptiste Nicholas Roch de Ramezay. Like Marin, Ramezay was a Montréalais, serving in the marines and as a colonial administrator, who had previous combat experience fighting the Meskwaki in Illinois.

The grand plan had been for d'Anville to descend on Louisbourg, Ramezay to seize Annapolis Royal, and for the two to then combine against Boston. The assemblage of Iroquois along the upper Hudson may have loosely tied into the plan as well. However unlikely this plan would succeed, Ramezay proceeded to execute his part in early July. Sailing down the St. Lawrence he landed at Baie Verte, New Brunswick, with 700 men on 10 July. From here he marched overland by way of Beaubassin (near modern Sackville), an important settlement which guarded the portage from Northumberland Strait to the Bay of Fundy. From there he travelled to Grand Pré, and then to Annapolis. Enroute he collected some 1,100 Wabanaki allies. Learning that the siege was ongoing, Jonquière decided to send aid and began a training regimen with those of his men who were still fit. Ramezay was forced to withdraw, however, before anything could be done. After marching back to Beaubassin Ramezay led an amphibious attack on Port-la-Joye on PEI, retaking it after a fight which saw 34 British killed and the rest of the garrison captured.

In mid October the British offered Jonquière a prisoner exchange (mainly so they could count masts). This was refused, but the French were now in despair. Probably as a result of the offer, another head count had been made. Since landing, 587 men had died and 2,274 were sick. The number of remaining fit was also lower because four of the transports had sailed for Canada on 10 October. They required an escort, too, the *Renommée*.

After three weeks spent waiting for local reinforcements, Jonquière decided to return to France, departing on 24 October. In some accounts he still intended to head for Annapolis Royal and only changed his mind two days later. It might have been politic to publicly announce they were continuing the mission and abandon it once everyone was aboard ship, but that is very unlikely in this case. No one wanted to remain. Or, the account may be true and he was persuaded to change his mind by his captains — eight of the ships were floating hospitals. Or, for the benefit of eyes at Versailles, he may have already decided to sail for home but in his reports made it look like he had to be forced to change his orders.

Sailing for home would not be that easy. They still had to run the gauntlet of the Western Squadron and whatever Nature could throw at them.



**Jean-Baptiste Louis Frédéric de La Rochefoucauld de Roye, duc d'Anville (1709-1746)**

D'Anville (he was created duke in 1732) was a distant cousin of the Rochefoucauld dukes, and held the reversion to that title too, which his son eventually inherited. His father was Lieutenant-General of the Galleys, one of the hereditary naval offices. Although d'Anville is often named his father's successor, he only held reversion of the office (from 1720), and since his father outlived him, he never occupied the post. However, he did serve as a galley officer, until 1734. At that time the Galley officer corps was abolished (though some galleys remained in service for harbour defence) so he transferred to the Marines. Technically speaking, the Galleys were not part of *La Royale*, but the Marines were, so this involved a transfer of service, which was not uncommon, but placed him in a new cultural environment. Officers of marines could serve aboard ship or ashore (there was a dedicated regiment for the latter role); d'Anville served aboard ship. In January of 1745 he was suddenly elevated to *vice-amiral de Ponant*. Doubtless this was due to his family connections and the need to find a commander of suitably high social rank to lead the high profile expedition to recapture Louisbourg. Occasionally such appointments worked out, usually they did not, and this was a typical case. D'Anville had little experience of fleet operations and no experience in leading them. His career ended abruptly on 27 September, 1746 when he died during the mission.

## 1747 & 1748

No major actions took place in the final two years of the war. In 1747 the British intended to make the invasion of Canada work, but fear of what they might face, lack of funds, and the continued scarcity of recruits — who preferred, if they had to take up arms, to do so in defence of their own homes — killed any enthusiasm for the project in North America. An expedition was dispatched, under Admiral Lestock and General St. Clair, but thanks to bad news from Flanders it was quickly redirected into a diversionary 'descent' on the French port of l'Orient. The fate of that expedition does not bode well for its chances if it had sailed for Canada instead.

The Northeast Coast Campaign of 1747 featured twelve raids against the usual targets along the coast of Maine. Not much is said about fighting on the Hudson. The two largest raids made during the last years of the war were the 1747 raid on Grand Pré and a 1748 raid on Schenectady.

As noted elsewhere, Grand Pré is located at the northern end of the cultivated valley running from Annapolis Royal to the Minas Basin at the head of the Bay of Fundy. After Ramezay's siege significant reinforcements had been dispatched to Annapolis Royal, including British regulars (part of the contingent from Gibraltar). This allowed them to secure the whole valley. It was Colonel Gorham who insisted on garrisoning Grand Pré. 100 men were installed in December of 1746 and a further 100 in January of 1747. More arrived later, resulting in a garrison of no less than 500 men. Initially the troops were spread among several villages, but the senior commander, a Colonel Noble, ordered almost everyone concentrated into just 24 houses at Grand Pré. That, actually, was not much of a 'concentration' as the village stretched in a thin strip, Acadian fashion, for a distance of two and a half miles.

Ramezay was wintering at Beaubassin. His situation was not good. Many, including himself, were sick and the winter was proving a harsh one. Nevertheless, on 21 January 1747 he ordered a column of 250 French and 50 Mi'kmaq out against Grand Pré. Command was given to Colonel Nicholas Antoine II Coulon de Villiers. Villiers was a Québécois, who had spent the prewar years commanding a fort in Michigan. The journey took 21 days by snowshoe and sled, through deep snow and along rivers choked with ice. The route was by Baie Verte to Tatamagouche, over the Cobequid Mountains to the bay of the same name, across the Schubenacadie River (which was impossible to use as a road), overland to the Kennetcook River, and then to Pisiguit, close to Grand Pré. The journey was not made entirely through trackless wilderness. There were many small settlements where sympathetic locals supplied them with food and drink, and a warm barn to spend the night in. Numbers of Wabanaki joined them. However, not everyone was a friend. Some among the Acadians had a greater hatred for the authorities at Québec City, who sent outsiders to try and impose the old seigniorial system of France, with all its imposts, dues, and unwanted obligations. They tried to warn the New Englanders of the danger, but Noble discounted the threat, believing no-one would be foolish enough to take a walk through a Canadian winter. The final

march, on 10 February, was made in a blizzard, by Horton Mountain to Melanson, 4 Km southwest of Grand Pré. Local guides then led the party directly to the houses where the enemy were billeted.

Villiers had about the same number of men as Noble — 500 — but he had the element of surprise and was able to deploy his men to the greatest advantage without being detected, before signalling the attack. Most of the Colonials were asleep. Some sentries may have raised the alarm, but with the force spread out as it was, a warning at one home might not carry to the next. The houses were stormed, but not, it appears, simultaneously. Instead, the French tried to roll up the New Englanders' positions one by one. Colonel Noble and several of his officers were killed in the initial rush, but Villiers had his arm shattered by a musket ball and had to delegate command to his second, the Chevalier de la Corne.

*[Corne would win the Cross of Saint Louis for this action, as would Villiers, but the latter died of his wound before he could receive it. Corne, a native of Kingston (then Fort Frontenac), was a combination fur trader and regular officer.]*

The fighting went on and on. The British managed to hole up in a few of the houses, particularly a stone one in the center of the village where they were able to mount some small artillery pieces. About 60 men had been killed in the first onrush but the stone house held 350. Unfortunately, their isolated situation allowed the French to go down to the shore and, after capturing a small redoubt at Hortonville, secure two supply ships in Minas Basin. This forced the British to try a sally to rescue their ships, but it was turned back thanks to deep snow.

The French laid siege to the stone house all night. In the morning, the surviving senior officer, a Captain Charles Morris, secured honourable terms. He had to give up his small cannon but his men were allowed to retain their arms and march back to Annapolis Royal with drums beating and colours flying. It took them six days; they had no snowshoes. In all, the New Englanders lost 67 dead in the action, 40 prisoners, and 40 sick or wounded. They lost another 150 more thanks to the return march. The French lost 53 dead. The wounded of both sides were either taken back to Beaubassin or left in the care of the locals. The prisoners mostly returned to Boston by way of Québec.

Though the action was chalked up as a French victory, in March the Annapolis garrison returned to Grand Pré, secured the stone house as a fortlet, and secured the dubious loyalty of the locals with an oath. Shortly after, they attacked Pisiguit, mainly to destroy a French transport ship that had been left there. Nothing of further note occurred during the year, though there were probably random killings here and there. The final action that merited inclusion in the histories was the raid on Schenectady in 1748, by a combined French and Iroquois force which killed 70 townsmen.

The war settled nothing. It is estimated that Massachusetts alone lost 8% of its population. Louisbourg was exchanged for Madras, India. The Acadians remained restive and the various native confederacies nursed new grudges. Less

than a decade later it would start all over again, with greater intensity.

### **The Chickasaw War, 1739-1740**

The Chickasaw were one of the so-called Civilized Tribes. Coming originally from the Great Plains, they had migrated east before the Europeans arrived and their mound-building culture was spread across Mississippi, Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky. In the 1830s they were forcibly relocated to Oklahoma, but in the 1730s and 1740s they were still at the height of their power. Because their trade networks ran east-west they became strong allies of the British. But, the French had allies too, the Choctaw, who were cousins to the Chickasaw, and the Illinois Confederacy. The former were also mound-builders, and another one of the Civilized Tribes. They were concentrated in Alabama and Mississippi and chose to deal with the French down in New Orleans. The Confederacy was a group of a dozen or so small tribes living in the Mississippi Valley, mainly in Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas. Though not a powerful empire, it is estimated that before European contact they numbered at least 10,000. They belonged to the more northerly Algonquin culture that included the Six Nations.

Conflict between the Chickasaw and the French had been going on intermittently for some time. The trouble seems to have started when the first French Governor of New Orleans, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, who in other respects is credited with being a humane man, was ordered to put a stop to the trade with the British in South Carolina, along what was known as the Trader's Path. He incited the Choctaw to raid their neighbours and attack British traders. The Chickasaw put themselves on a war footing, fortified their villages, and bought guns from the British. They also interdicted trade on the Mississippi by occupying Chicksaw Bluff in Tennessee. The Choctaw soon made peace with their cousins. Bienville was recalled in 1724, but this did not stop the conflict from flaring up periodically, and 1734 he returned. Sometimes, the French even brought down the Iroquois out of the North. The troubles would continue into the 1750s.

A formal campaign in 1736, the first of its kind, ended in disaster for the French when a two-pronged advance from Mobile and Fort de Chartres (now a reconstructed historical sight on the southwestern border of Illinois) failed to coordinate. The northern pincer, a mixed Franco-Illinois force under a Pierre d'Artaguiette, attacked one of the Chickasaw's fortified villages just northwest of Tupelo, Mississippi, on 25 March, and were slaughtered. D'Artaguiette was killed. Beinville led the southern pincer but met a similar fate on 26 May at a similar village just south of Tupelo; he was unaware of d'Artaguiette's fate. Beinville was not killed but his reputation took a hit.

The expedition of 1739 was better prepared and supplied, with French from Louisiana, Canadian militia, 200 Illinois, contingents of Choctaw, and an unspecified number of northern warriors. In all there were 1,200 Europeans and 2,400 native auxiliaries, double what had been available in 1736. The force included engineers, miners, and even siege guns. The French, coming from both south and north,

assembled near Memphis, Tennessee, where they constructed Fort de l'Assumption. Since the nearest Chickasaw villages were 120 miles away and Beinville had a siege train, the outcome can be imagined. Wasted by disease, his allies deserting from boredom, and unable to push the siege train through the wilderness — the route his engineers had laid out was too low and became flooded so that a different route had to be mapped out — Beinville, after several months, had to sue for peace.

Most of the army never left the camp, except to work on trail blazing, but in March of 1740 a band consisting of some Canadian cadets, 100 regulars, and 4-500 auxiliaries, set out. Unencumbered, they reached the villages and there was some skirmishing, but the Chickasaw had been impressed by the construction of Fort de l'Assumption and the mighty army assembled there, so were willing to talk. The skirmishing was primarily to satisfy the French allies; there was no chance of taking any of the fortified villages without cannon. A deal was struck on 20 March, after the Chickasaw agreed to surrender the Natchez among them and return the few prisoners they had taken. Fort de l'Assumption was abandoned on 31 March.

(The mention of the Natchez needs some explanation. The tribe, who used to live near Natchez, Mississippi, are an 'isolated' group, linguistically, though they may be related to the Creek. They too had fallen afoul of the French, but by 1731 their nation was effectively destroyed, the people either killed or sold into slavery on the West Indies plantations. The tribe still exists because a number were able to claim refuge with other tribes, like the Chickasaw. On this occasion the latter were able to avoid selling them out entirely by claiming most were off hunting or already dead, but they did have to give up a few.)

The cost of Beinville's expedition was more than three times the annual expenses of the entire colony of Louisiana, plus 500 European dead; natives were not counted.

### **Sources**

The chief source used in this account are:

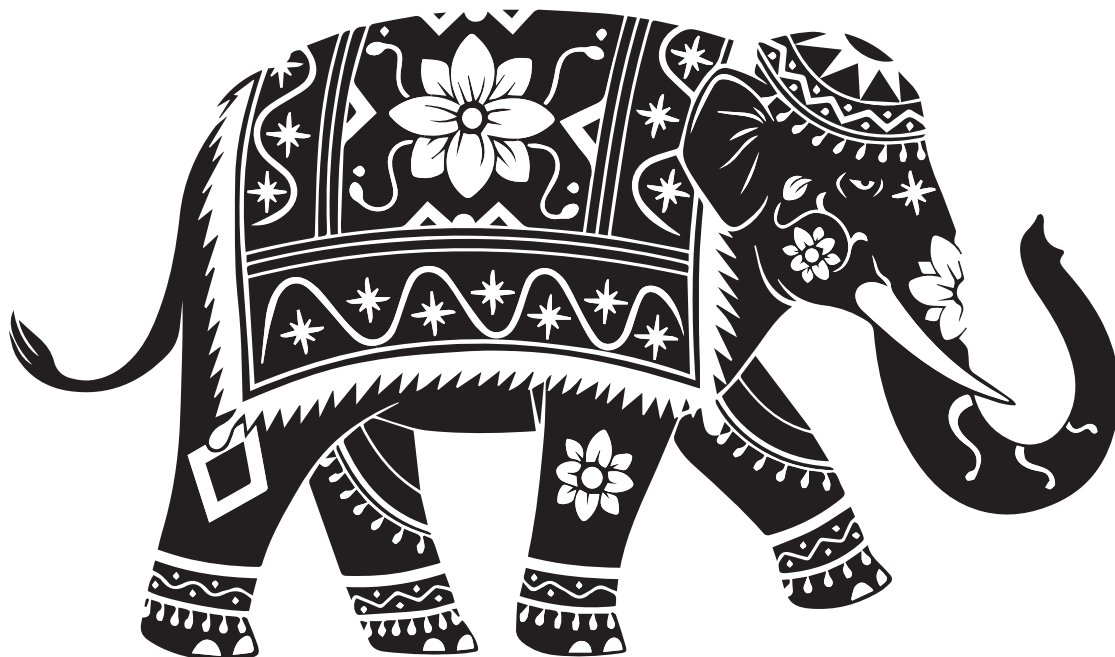
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# *First Carnatic War Commentary*



## Commentary for The Carnatic War

The First Carnatic War is billed as the first clash in India between the British and the French but in one sense it was just part of a much larger struggle for dominance between the major local players in Southern India, most especially the various *nizams*, or Moghul viceroys, and the Maharatta (Maharatha) Confederacy. The most powerful *nizam* was that of Hyderabad. A one-time prime minister at Delhi, in the early 1740s he was faced with rebellion by the Maharattas — most of whom were nominally his subordinates — on several fronts, thanks to the recent invasion of India and sacking of Delhi by the Persian conqueror Nadr Shah, which crippled the Moghuls' ability to bang recalcitrant heads together. For their part the Maharattas, claiming descent from the original dynasties of southern India, were motivated partly by a desire to throw off the 'foreign yoke' and partly by the usual dynamics of political infighting — which meant the Nizam was sometimes able to play divide-and-rule.

To give an idea of the scale of these conflicts, the Nizam's 1743 siege of Trichinopoly involved a besieging army of 200,000 infantry, 80,000 cavalry, 150 war elephants, and 200 pieces of artillery. The garrison consisted of 4,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and a significant number of cannon and mortars. The siege lasted six months. In other words, an affair comparable to one of the larger French offensives in Flanders. The Battle of Dettingen, fought between the French and an Anglo-German army the same year, involved a total of 80,000 men and 154 cannon.

The Nizam's problems lay mainly in south-central India, in the region known as the Deccan. But, the unrest there had a knock-on effect farther south where a number of small Tamil kingdoms, not yet swallowed up by either Moghul or Maharatta, vied for power. The most recognizable name is that of Mysore, although their moment of glory came in the next decade. These conflicts, however, were chiefly confined to the western Malabar Coast. The southern tip of India is divided by a range of mountains on either coast, the Eastern and Western Ghats, effectively creating separate countries on each of the coastal plains and in the interior.

While the Europeans had a presence on both coasts, their factories in Malabar managed to survive by dealing freely with whomever happened to be on top at the moment — except for the Dutch, who were unlucky enough to be the major European presence there and were thus a) a lucrative target for kinglets with delusions of grandeur, and b) unable to quickly switch trading partners and cut new deals to save themselves.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to dominate the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, but the Dutch had made it their business to squeeze them out, aided serendipitously by the expansion of the Arabian Omani Empire down the East coast of Africa. Now it was the turn of the Dutch, who would be squeezed out by the French and British once they had been sufficiently weakened from fighting off the Tamil kingdoms.

On the eastern side, on what was known as the Coromandel Coast, however, the political dynamic was

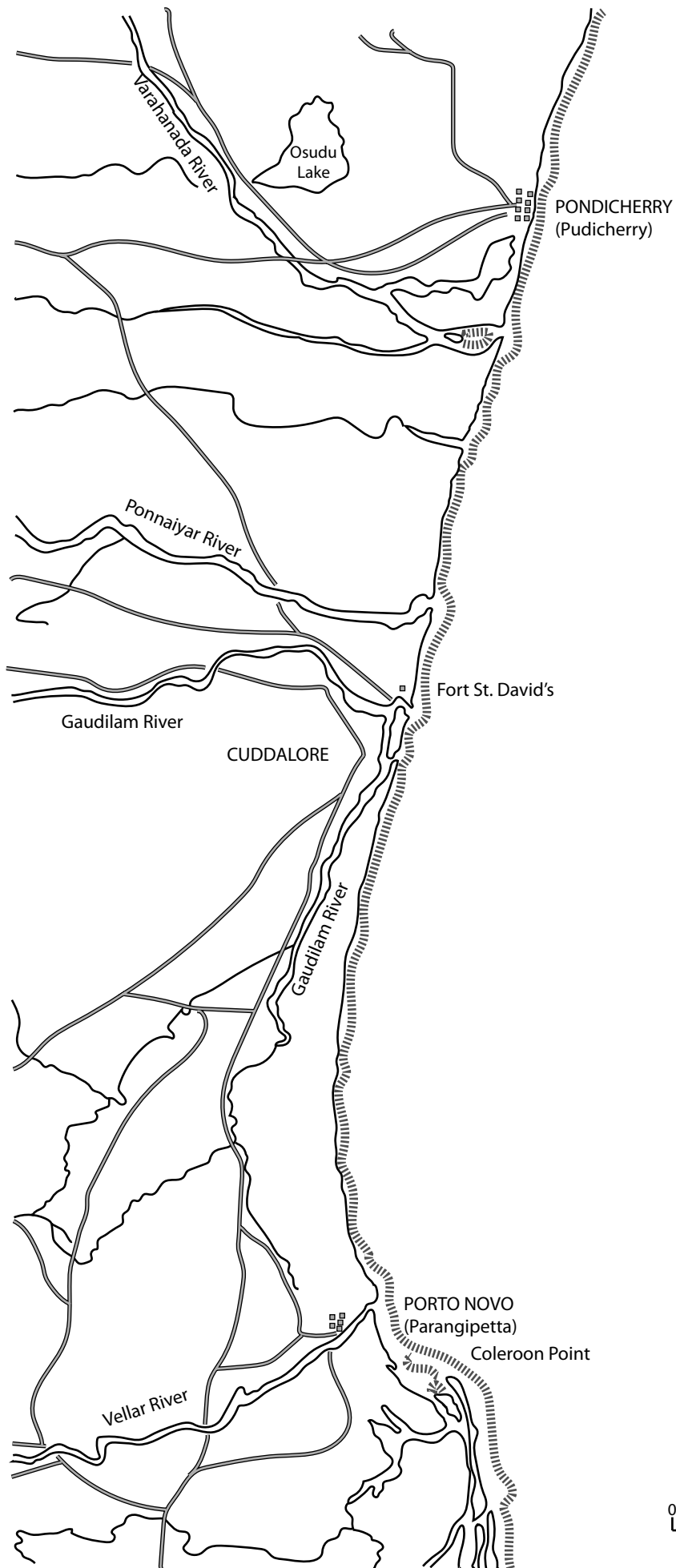
somewhat different. Here the Nizam of Hyderabad had an appointee, the Nawab of the Carnatic, who ruled the Carnatic Sultanate with a fairly high degree of autonomy. The Sultanate ran all the way up the coast from the southern tip of India, and far inland, with its capital at Arcot. Relationships with the Europeans were governed by the mandates of the Grand Moghul at Delhi.

Unfortunately, just at the time the British and French were gearing up to fight one another, the Maharattas invaded the Sultanate. When the dust settled the Sultanate was more or less intact but the new ruler was a five-year-old boy, who soon died. His Regent was swiftly appointed as actual Nawab in July of 1744, just as a British squadron under Commodore Barnett made its first bid to thwart French ambitions.

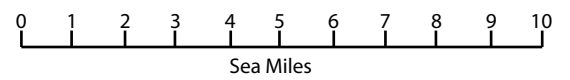
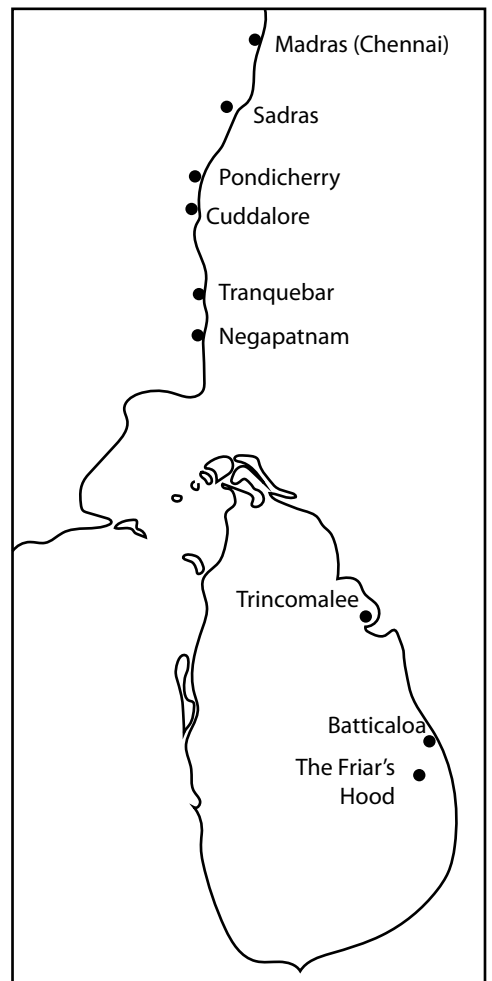
The new Nawab, Anwaruddin Khan, took a balanced approach to the Europeans, though initially the French had greater leverage and seemed the more powerful party. The French Governor General had enough influence to cause the Nawab to warn the British not to make any attacks on French possessions. But, at the same time, the Nawab told the French to leave the British alone. As the war dragged on, despite British setbacks, it became clear to the Nawab that the British had the greater energy and staying power.



Anwarudin Khan



### Coromandel Coast



The first two years of Anglo-French conflict was waged exclusively at sea but in 1746 the French Governor General, Joseph François Dupleix, mounted a campaign to take the British post at Madras. Until then, the Nawab had managed to keep the peace within his realm — apart from the pesky Maharattas — but allowed himself to be bought off by the French. Dupleix, however, reneged on the deal, and when the Nawab sent an army of 10,000 men to chastise him, defeated them easily with a fraction of the number.

This was about the extent of affairs on land. Thanks partly to the Nawab's growing opposition, Dupleix was unable to take the other chief British post at Cuddalore and was forced to hand back Madras in exchange for Louisbourg in Canada. The British made one of their Great Expeditions against Pondicherry, the French HQ, but it failed, like all their other Great Expeditions (Louisbourg was captured by American Provincials.) For their part, the Maharattas made inroads, weakening the Nawab's position. This set the stage for the Second Carnatic War, coming hard on the heels of the first, where the British backed the Nawab and his successors and the French backed the Maharattas under Chanda Sahib, the two European powers being drawn ever further into local politics.

### A Tale of Two Governors

By the 1740s the French were securely established in India, mainly on the Coromandel Coast, though they shared factory sites with other powers on the Malabar Coast and in Bengal. Their *Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes orientales*, or *CIO*, had been established in 1604. Pondicherry (modern Puducherry) was the *CIO*'s local HQ. Trade with China was the principal concern, with local trade networks being used to fund operations — this was the way the other companies worked, too.

Though the Europeans often had factories at the same ports — for instance, the French, Dutch, and British, all had concerns at Calicut on the Malabar Coast, and at Calcutta in the Ganges delta — during the war, though shipping was attacked all over the place, the French and British only fought over their factories on the Coromandel Coast, possibly because this was the best launchpad for sending ships to China. But, it must also be noted that the fighting on land was very much the product of one man's dream — Dupleix — and not the longterm plans of the *CIO*.

Actually, French Power in the Indian Ocean was divided among two men. Dupleix was one, and he had authority over mainland India. The other man, also a Governor, was Mahé de la Bourdonnais. His purview was the Sea and his base lay far to the south, at Mauritius. The two could not have been more different. Dupleix had lived in the East since the age of 18 and loved it; he dreamed of establishing a powerful empire; Bourdonnais was a practical sailor, a product of St. Malo. The men did not get along. Perhaps this would not have mattered greatly, because both were keen to improve France's position in the East, if Versailles had thought to provide them with more than minimal support and waffling guidance.



Mahé de la Bourdonnais



Joseph François Dupleix

Bourdonnais was given his governorship in 1735. By that time he was already well respected, and also very rich. (He would gain notoriety in future ages for his development of a slave economy on Mauritius, where he owned large plantations.) In favour with the French Minister of Marine, the energetic but quirky de Maurepas, Bourdonnais returned to France in 1741 and held conference with him. Maurepas agreed to his proposal to wage an aggressive maritime campaign against the British in the Orient — there was a war scare at the time. Since Bourdonnais was not actually a naval officer, this entailed giving him a special Admiral's commission, and on March 25, 1741 he led a squadron of seven ships out of l'Orient, arriving at Mauritius on 14 August.

Though five of those ships belonged to the *CIO*, the latter's Directors were not enthused, foreseeing all sorts of complications that would affect their profits. The captains hated naval service, but were required to obey on pain of suffering huge fines. The Directors had more independence and in November 1742 Bourdonnais was ordered to send his squadron home. It was the Company's hope that the Orient could be kept in a state of neutrality, provided the British were not provoked in any way. Bourdonnais tendered his resignation but it was not accepted. As a further sign of the difficulty both he and Dupleix faced, when news of war did finally come in September of 1744, Bourdonnais opened the sealed orders he had been issued back in 1741, only to find they forbade him from attacking the British. Bourdonnais fumed at the stupidity, but Dupleix, who received similar instructions, was apoplectic. He was told to make arrangements with the British East India Company to keep the peace, which was worse than simply being ordered not to attack.

### **Barnett's Squadron**

Needless to say, the British were looking forward to thumping the French. The Royal Navy made its Indian Ocean debut in the fall of 1744. This was the small squadron of Commodore Curtis Barnett, one of the 'new' school of practical officers, a disciple of Anson and an aggressive commander. Because the Admiralty could not spare many ships, they also issued a great number of letters of marque to captains of the East India Company, which were snapped up greedily.

Barnett's squadron, a pair of 60-gunners, a 50', and a 20-gun frigate, sailed from England on 30 April, arriving at St. Augustine's Bay in Madagascar on 26 August. Madagascar at this time had a number of French trading posts but it was not a French possession. The hinterland was home to a number of powerful native kingdoms grown rich off trade with the Europeans. St. Augustine's Bay at the southwestern end of the island was where the British generally made for when they needed to refit and water their ships. Most of the French factories were at the other end.

Barnett did not proceed to India immediately. In December, new orders would be dispatched for him to patrol the Coromandel Coast, but for now, operating under the instructions of the Secret Committee of the EIC, he intended to harass the French China trade. Thus, he made

for île Saint-Paul, a lonely rock in the middle of the Southern Indian Ocean (8 October) and then turned his ships north to Indonesia. The 60-gunner *Medway* and the 20-gun *Dolphin* were instructed to cruise the Strait of Malacca, while Barnett in the 60-gun *Deptford*, accompanied by the 50-gunner *Preston*, patrolled the Bangka Strait disguised as Dutchmen.

*[Beatson says Medway's companion was the frigate Diamond.]*

(Off the East coast of Sumatra, roughly where the coastline turns south toward the Sunda Strait and Java, there is a large island, known as Bangka. The strait of the same name, quite narrow, lies between. Apparently this was a favoured merchant route.)

Here Barnett acquired his first prizes when he encountered three French merchantmen, each of 30 guns. This was on the evening of 24 or 25 January, 1745. The British hoisted their true colours and the French immediately attacked, coming within musket range. Barnett tried to board, but both his ships had their tiller ropes shot away. A duel of broadsides followed for the next hour and a half until the French struck. All three were captured. Losses for the British were 10 killed and 17 wounded. The prizes were fully loaded with tea, china, and silk. Barnett sold them at Batavia (Java) for a mere £92,000.

A month later reinforcements reached him, along with his new orders. The new ships were *York* (60), *Stafford* (50), and *Lively* (20). *Medway* and *Dolphin* also returned. They had captured a privateer by Aceh, at the northern tip of Sumatra. This ship, *ex-Favori* (38), was renamed *Medway's Prize* and subbed in for *Dolphin*, now barely seaworthy; she was made a hospital ship. Aceh, often called Achin in the sources, was a common rendezvous, but it was also home to the ferocious Malacca Strait pirates.



*Commodore Barnett*

As so often happened, Barnett's new orders presented him with a choice. On the one hand he had authorization to proceed to the Philippines and attack the Manila Galleon. This was prompted by the return of Anson to England in June of 1744, loaded down with the contents of the last galleon. But, the EIC governorship at Madras, under a man named Morse, was pleading for help. Bourdonnais had at last formed a squadron and the French were threatening to disrupt Trade. Unaware of Versailles' instructions to restrict himself to defensive activities, Madras feared also that the enemy would raid their factories.

Barnett left Batavia on 28 April, 1745, making landfall off Sri Lanka on 1 June, watering and repairing at the Dutch port of Batticaloa, midway up the east coast of the island, by 5 June. His first job was going to be the security of the regular convoy of inbound EIC ships, with whom he was supposed to rendezvous. Richmond gives the location as 'the Friar's Hood'. This is actually a high mountain far in the interior of the island, visible far out to sea; see the accompanying map for its location.

The ships were already late, and, apparently, three weeks earlier a squadron of four French ships had passed by, headed north. This worried Barnett. Deciding the French had too much of a lead, he cruised off the Friar's Hood, exercising his ships until 19 July. Bothered by the lack of news, he then made for the Dutch factory at Negapatnam, just north of Palk Strait, which divides Sri Lanka from India. Here he received a letter from Madras suggesting he cruise between his current location and Pondicherry, which he proceeded to do. On 11 August he reported in at Madras, to find the place woefully ill prepared against the attack everyone feared. The garrison amounted to 350 poorly motivated soldiers.

All this time there had been no word of either the French or the EIC convoy. The Governor at Madras had heeded the warning of the Nawab not to interfere with French activities on land. Concerned that the French might combine with him, he ordered Barnett to confine himself to purely naval activities. Barnett obeyed, sending a patrol up to the Ganges while the rest of his vessels patrolled off Porto Novo (Parangipettai) just south of Cuddalore.

With the onset of the monsoon in September, Barnett crossed the Bay of Bengal to a rendezvous off the coast of Myanmar, at Mergui (27 September). Here he learned his Ganges patrol (*Preston* and *Lively*) had succeeded in rounding up all the inbound French ships (amounting to three heavily-armed Indiamen). He sent *Preston* back there and dispatched *Medway* to the Strait of Malacca.

(There are two Monsoons in the Indian Ocean and they reverse both the airflow and some of the currents. The Summer, or Southwest, Monsoon, blowing from April to September, was used to bring ships to India and the Northeast, or Winter Monsoon, starting in September or October and lasting until March, and was used to send them back south. The Southwest Monsoon brings the heavy rains while the Northeast Monsoon brings dry and relatively cold air, but it can also bring cyclones across the Bay of Bengal. March and October, being the months when everything changes, bring extremely unpredictable weather.

Once they had passed it was usually safe enough to put to sea since the winds remained constant from then on.)

Barnett himself and the rest of the squadron returned to Madras, arriving there on 17 December. As he had surmised, the EIC convoy had at last made an appearance — five vessels with an escort of two Royal Navy ships, *Harwich* and *Winchester*. These had already finished their most of their business and were making ready to return home.

(Goods from the Orient did not normally travel all the way from China to Europe in the same bottoms. They would not have been efficient. Instead, the merchandise was stockpiled at places like Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay by a network of local shipping, to be picked up by the convoys from Europe. This particular convoy had left England on 15 April 1745 and would arrive home on 25 August 1746.)

The next three weeks were spent in some anxiety, as rumours circulated of a projected French attack on Cuddalore. Bourdonnais still lacked enough ships for that, but three or four of the *CIO* vessels in the China seas were reported bound for Pondicherry. Barnett moved his pennant to the *Harwich*, another 60-gunner, sent *Winchester* (50) to assist *Medway* in the Malacca Strait, and posted *Deptford* off Cuddalore. With his remaining ships he monitored Pondicherry.

The French made their move at the turn of the year. Arriving in strength off Cuddalore on 28 January, Barnett found the place under attack by 1,000 soldiers, including 400 Europeans, who had marched down from Pondicherry. Cuddalore was not a large town, but it was protected by Fort St. David, and 1,000 men seemed insufficient to carry the place. Barnett suspected the whole thing was a ruse to draw him off from Pondicherry so the China ships — which his command had failed to find — could sneak in. He left *Dolphin* to provide some fire support and raise the alarm if anything bad should happen while he took the rest of his squadron on a pretended descent of Pondicherry. The French hastily retreated in a panic.

As a matter of fact the China ships never did arrive. The sources do not explain why, but it is worth nothing that the Qing Empire began making drastic changes to their trade policies at this time, which would result in the famous Canton System coming into force in 1757. The French may have had to remain in port, or perhaps were unable to offload or take on cargo, while the Authorities tried to figure out what the Son of Heaven had in mind.

On 5 February the EIC ships went home, accompanied by *Deptford* and *Dolphin*. *Winchester*, *Medway*, and *Lively* returned but the first sailed for Bombay, where she refitted. By the end of the month Barnett was satisfied that, given the season, no French merchantmen would be coming from either direction and decided to follow the next part of his instructions, which were to cruise off Sri Lanka. But, the EIC, worried about a rumoured squadron coming from l'Orient (it sailed in April of 1745) asked him to stay. A council of war was held and the Company's interests were deemed paramount.

Throughout March and April the British cruised off the Coromandel Coast, the only actions being the beaching and burning of a couple of French vessels at different locations — the first had opened fire while in a neutral anchorage. Not only were Barnett's ships in a bad way, he himself was sick; he died on 29 April, and was replaced by his second, Captain Edward Peyton. It would be the latter's misfortune to go up against Bourdonnais.

## Act Two

It was January 1746 before Bourdonnais could muster enough strength to challenge the British. Informed of the state of war in September 1744, thanks to deliberate interference from the *CIO*, who still sought 'peaceful coexistence', he could acquire no ships until the following spring, and only then by commandeering Company vessels as they came from Europe, against the protests of their captains and his instructions from Versailles. He had a squadron of sorts ready by July 1745, but it was still too weak. By then, also, reinforcements had been promised. To save wear and tear the squadron based itself in Madagascar, but by the time the Northeast Monsoon started no new ships had arrived and it was recalled to Mauritius.

In January of 1746 the *Achille* (70) at last arrived, followed in February by *St. Louis* (36), *Lys* (36), *Phénix* (38), and *Duc d'Orléans* (36). Even now Bourdonnais could not act. These Company ships had to be unloaded, rearmed, and refit after a gruelling ten-months voyage. A lack of victuals in the islands at least gave him the justification to sail for India. He could only scrape together enough supplies for 72 days, so there would be no aggressive cruising, but he could at least place his ships in-theatre and see what could be done to help Duplex.

Bourdonnais left Mauritius on 24 March, sailing first for Madagascar (4 April). As inevitably happened with French squadrons, his ships were severally bruised and scattered by a violent storm and he had to use up most of his provisions repairing them at Antongil Bay. Most of his carpenters died in the process. He sailed on 15 May for his namesake town of Mahé, on the Malabar Coast.

Peyton, meanwhile, had troubles of his own. Lacking Barnett's authority, and being of a less dynamic character, he found it hard to resist the EIC's demands when they conflicted with operational necessities. His squadron was also badly in need of refit. *Winchester's* departure for Bombay had given him no leeway to repair any other of his ships; his flagship, the *Medway*, was drawing 30 inches of water every half hour of every day by the time *Winchester* returned.

A council of war on 4 June 1746 gave Peyton the authorisation he need to 'abandon' the Company and sail down to Trincomalee for a refit. Enroute he tangled with a storm that damaged his ships further. On 9 June he arrived at Negapatnam, where he managed to effect some repairs by 24 June. That night he intended to continue the journey, but the following morning the French were sighted, ten sail bearing up from the Southeast.

Peyton immediately made sail and formed line of battle as he bore down on the enemy. He had only six ships to the

enemy's ten, but his were Navy ships, better manned and better armed. Only the enemy's flagship, the *Achille*, might prove dangerous.

The reader should here refer to the diagrams on the following pages. The wind was favourable enough, being from the Southwest, but it was very light and the action came on in slow motion, beginning about 1pm.

Bourdonnais came-to somewhat to the southeast of the British and formed his own line of battle, then turned northwest. This was about 2-3pm. His was a bold plan; he intended to close and board. But, the wind continued to favour the enemy. It picked up and by 4pm the French were in line-ahead northeast of the British, who came down upon them in line and cannonaded them, then tacked and made another pass about 5:30pm. Bourdonnais did not manoeuvre, but drifted slowly northwest. Peyton then called off the action, about 6:45pm — after a council of war — and broke contact while the French continued on without even correcting course.

This was an inconclusive affair to say the least, and Peyton was later required to attend a court-martial, though he died before he came to trial, in 1749. Opinion was mixed. The EIC lambasted his 'cowardice', but the Directors badly needed a scapegoat after losing Madras to the French, mainly through their own greed and incompetence. Peyton's captains were not impressed, either, but both they and the Admiralty decided that Peyton had not actually done anything wrong, nor displayed timidity. Though his ships were worn and leaky, he had not hesitated to engage the enemy, and had seemed confident of success (as they all had). The main charge against him boiled down to the fact that he had not engaged closely enough, remaining at long range. This meant the French could not hope to hurt him badly, with their lighter guns, but his own cannon did little damage either, and in fact his ships actually suffered more. This was because of the French habit of firing high, whether as a tactic or through lack of skill, which always resulted in the British suffering hits to their rigging, while the British fired at the enemy's hulls — and at long range it would take a long time to produce results that way. Somebody stated that the ships had been at 'musket range' but this was never confirmed; perhaps the eyewitness' ship had come too close at one point.



Richmond is of the opinion that for close action a stronger wind was required. The British would have risked being boarded, but would likely have crippled several enemy ships before they could react. The light wind, though, gave Bourdonnais a better chance of carrying out his own intentions. Peyton himself gave this as one of his reasons, saying that he had observed the enemy's decks crowded with men. Not expecting such numbers, he had decided to remain out of reach.

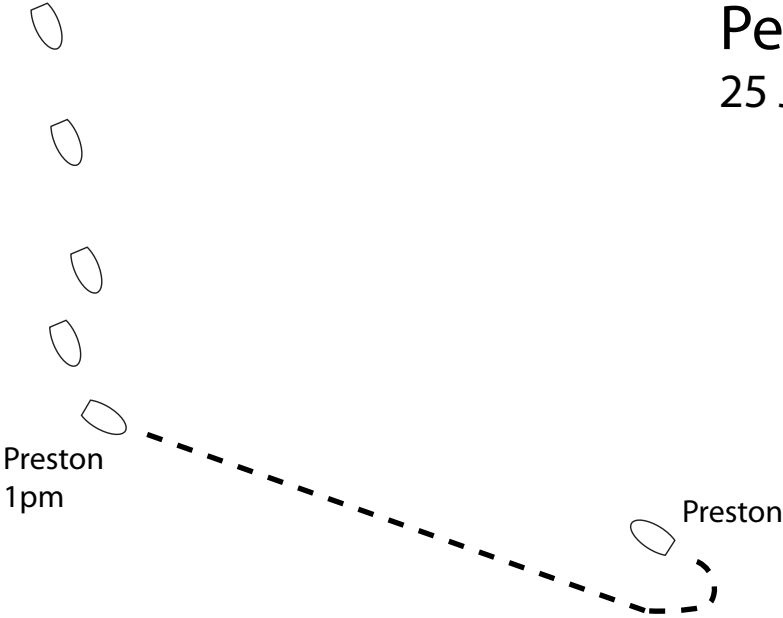
Peyton intended to renew the engagement the next morning, and to keep pace with the French should they attempt to draw off. This they did try, so that by dawn Bourdonnais was about three leagues (12 Km) to the north. By noon the British had closed by a league, before the wind died. Around 5:30pm on the 25th Peyton called a council of war, which unanimously decided there was no hope of

# Peyton v. Bourdonnais


25 June 1746 @1-2pm

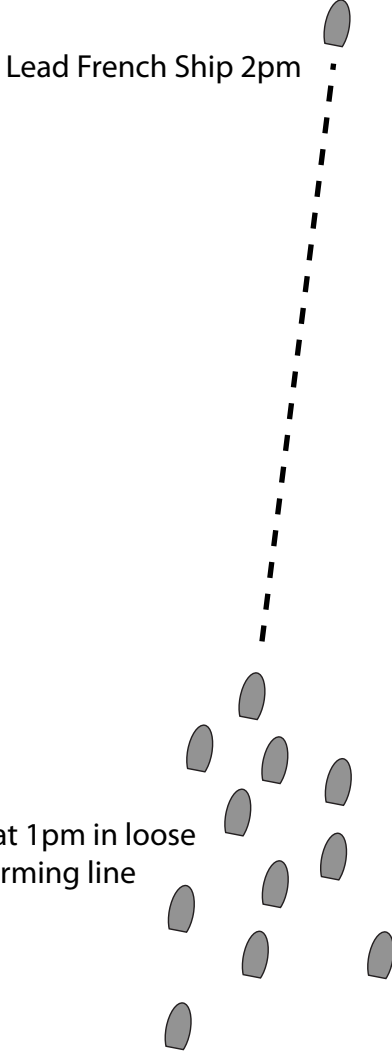
original by Richmond

-  French
-  British (flag)



Preston brought-to at 2pm  
squadron using her as mark to  
form line of battle

  
Wind @SW to SWbyS  
very light to calm

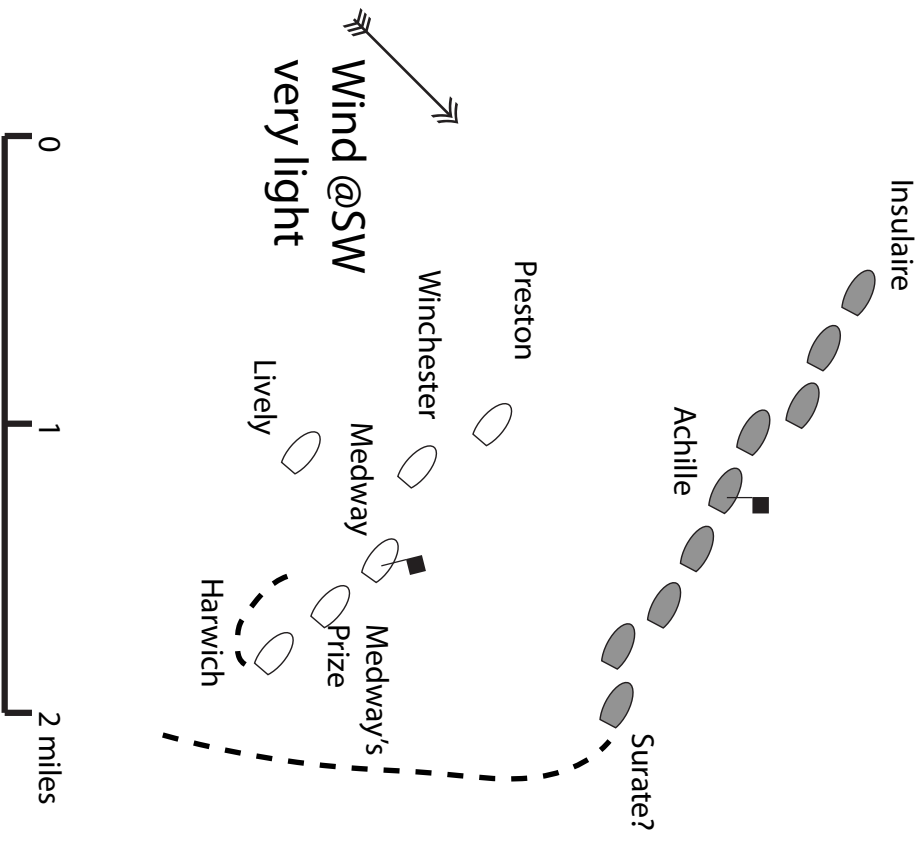


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French  
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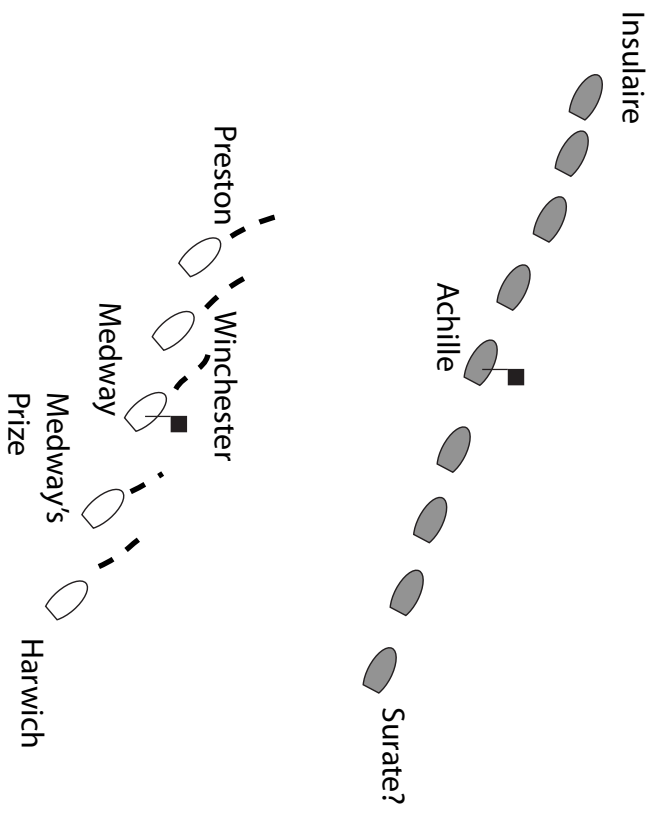
# Peyton v. Bourdonnais 25 June 1746

3pm



0 1 2 miles

4pm



0 1 2 miles

Other French ships present (all CIO):  
Lys, Phénix, Duc d'Orléans, Renommée,  
Elisabeth, Bourbon, Neptune



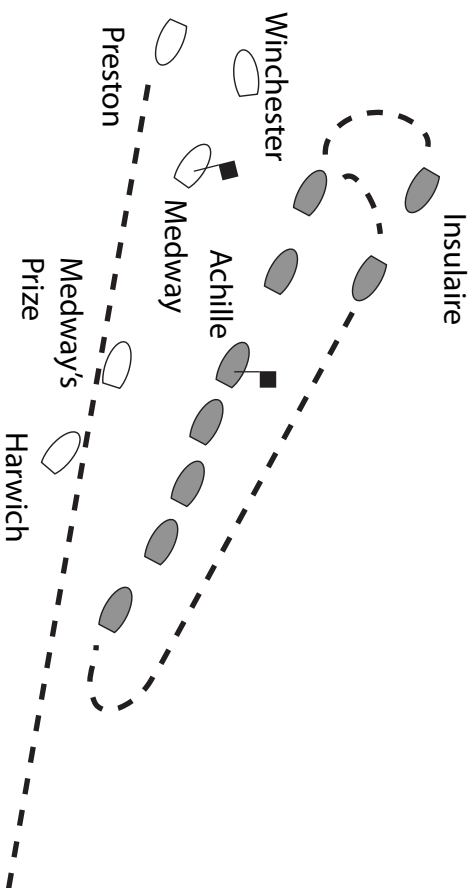
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# Peyton v. Bourdonnais 25 June 1746

French

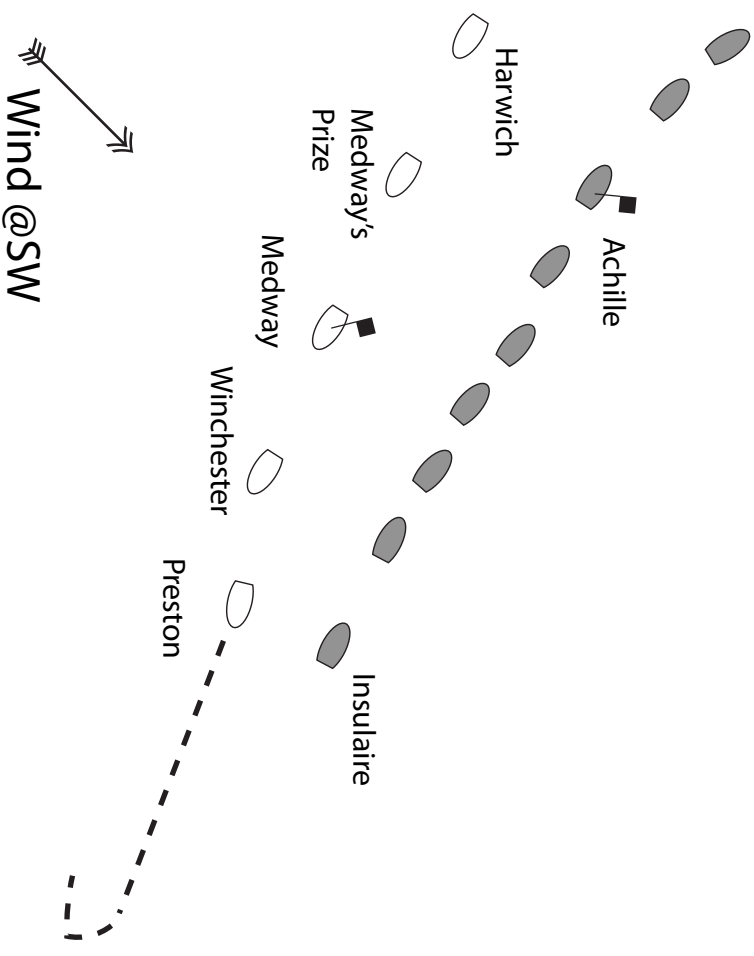
British (flag)

5:30pm



6:30pm

The French have not tacked.  
The two ships which peeled off at 5:30pm  
took up the rear as the squadron edged  
away from the British into the dusk.



catching the French before they reached the safety of Pondicherry. The British turned around and sailed for Trincomalee, where they spent nearly a month conducting repairs (1 July through 27 July). Losses were 14 killed and 53 wounded on the British side and 27 killed and 53 wounded on the French.

Thanks to the efforts of the EIC, Peyton's reputation has been blasted. Beatson, writing in 1804, is scathing but Richmond provides a more nuanced view. Peyton was just a run of the mill captain. He went by the playbook. Given the situation, something more than that was needed, but nothing more should have been expected. And, as a matter of fact, by keeping his squadron intact his mere presence limited Bourdonnais' options. It was only because the French took Madras that this action, and the one that followed, took on such significance.

Bourdonnais had been informed of the British presence when he arrived at Mahé and all along planned to engage them. He claimed a victory, but in fact he was lucky to get away, and knew it. Two of his ships were so damaged they had had to fall out of line and some of his crews were down to only a day's rations. Also, he was carrying a large sum of money, desperately needed by Dupleix. He did not try to turn the tables, or even trail a lure. He made for Pondicherry at best speed — which was maddeningly slow — arriving at his destination on 7 July.

The Admiral and Dupleix were agreed at least on one thing. Madras should be attacked. Actually, that was all they could agree on. Despite his 'victory', Bourdonnais did not feel strong enough either to make raids on the British factories or go in pursuit of their Indiamen. He must first defeat the British squadron. With this in mind he asked Dupleix for the loan of 58 cannon, only to be refused. The Governor's reasoning against 'denuding' his defenses was specious and he ultimately agreed to loan 40 guns, but with as bad a grace as he could muster.

After making an ineffectual raid on some EIC ships at Madras about 24 July, Bourdonnais obtained his guns and headed south in search of Peyton. The latter arrived off Negapatnam on 6 August, where he saw what appeared to be 14 Dutch sail. They soon revealed themselves to be Bourdonnais' squadron. Peyton had arrived in the afternoon, and though the French had the weather gauge with the Southwest wind and were at the same time to the north of him, he was able to steer well enough to avoid battle until dark.

In the night the wind shifted, placing the French to windward. They attacked on the morning of 7 August, but before they could close the wind first dropped then shifted again. The British, now advantaged, attempted to close in their turn. Bourdonnais drew off northward, his ships having become scattered as they drove down on the enemy, and tried to reform. By 1pm Peyton was set to attack, then decided he was outgunned. Instead, he chose to shadow the French and interfere with whatever designs they might have in mind. This the British did handily, showing up Bourdonnais as a mere landsman. But, they did not bring him to battle. At a council of war they decided on retreat and made for the Friar's Hood.

This seems inexplicable. Bourdonnais could not understand it, and neither could the Admiralty. The reason Peyton gave was the expected arrival of a northbound EIC convoy. This seems to be another case of what many of the British commanders had to deal with: conflicting instructions and insufficient resources. To protect the EIC factories, all Peyton had to do was maintain a presence. If the French wanted to get rid of them they would have to sink him, and he had just given a demonstration of how hard that might be. As Richmond quotes, Bourdonnais opined 'they hold us in check'. But, to protect the EIC convoys Peyton would have to draw off and reduce the size of his squadron to provide escorts. Might as well toss a coin. Perhaps he hoped that by his demonstration the French would adopt a cautious approach and not do anything significant until he returned.

Unfortunately, Dupleix was not a naval man. Madras fell to the French on 10 September. And, Peyton became the EIC's scapegoat.

His squadron cruised off Sri Lanka until 18 August, at which point a Dutch ship reported the EIC convoy had already passed by on 29 July. Peyton decided the best thing to do was head back north and sweep the sea lanes of any French raiders. It was only on 23 August, when he reached Pulicat fort, some distance north of Madras, that he learned the French squadron had raided the town. Apparently, Bourdonnais did not lead this expedition, being sick ashore from 18 to 24 August, and an attempt to cut-out an EIC ship, the *Princess Mary*, was botched.

*[The date of the raid is given as either 15 or 19 August but the source state Bourdonnais was sick from 28 August to 4 September. This suggests a transposition of Old Style and New Style dates, the difference being 10 days. Bourdonnais was well enough to lead the later siege expedition, which commenced on 3 September. Therefore, the dates have been shifted to conform with the rest of the narrative.]*

For a second time Peyton did not attack the French squadron. From his council of war it is clear he, and his captains, believed Madras was in no danger. They appear to have heard that Bourdonnais was ill, or at least that his squadron was at anchor at Pondicherry. Peyton decided to pursue his plan of shepherding the convoy. It would also give him a chance for extensive repairs in the Ganges; *Medway's* leak had returned. This was a definite error of judgement, though he may have been considering the onset of the monsoon. His ships would not fare well if they remained, but the French would be unlikely to commence a major operation so late in the season.

The attack on Madras was a simple affair, and took far less time than anyone could have expected. On 3 September Bourdonnais laid on a blockade, anchoring about 4 leagues (16 Km) away and disembarking some troops before closing the range. The troops deployed within range of the town's guns the next day, covering the disembarkation of the rest of the expedition. In all there were 1,100 Europeans, 400 Sepoys, and 400 negro troops. Madras had perhaps 350 'reliable' troops. A battery of 9 mortars was unmasked on 7 September and the same evening three of the ships were able to come in close enough to bombard.

At this point the siege was very nearly lifted when Dupleix sent word that a reinforcement of British ships was near, but he turned out to be wrong, as the next letter confirmed. On 9 September the French saps were close enough that Governor Morse decided to surrender. His envoys being sent back once, the Governor agreed to Bourdonnais' terms the next day. The terms were not that bad. The British were to become prisoners of war, but Bourdonnais promised the town could be ransomed.

This swift outcome was a surprise to everyone. Obviously, the chief reason for the quick capitulation was due to the neglected state of the defences. Mostly this was due to the Company officials choosing to line their own pockets instead, but they may also have been relying on the Nawab, who had laid down the law about foreigners fighting on his turf. In fact, on hearing of the siege, he sent to Dupleix to ask why his permission had not been asked — that is, why Dupleix had not bribed him to look the other way. The Governor managed to fob the messenger off, then instructed his rep at the Nawab's Court to promise that the town would be handed over, suggesting also that the British would pay handsomely for its return, as indeed they were already arranging to do with Bourdonnais.

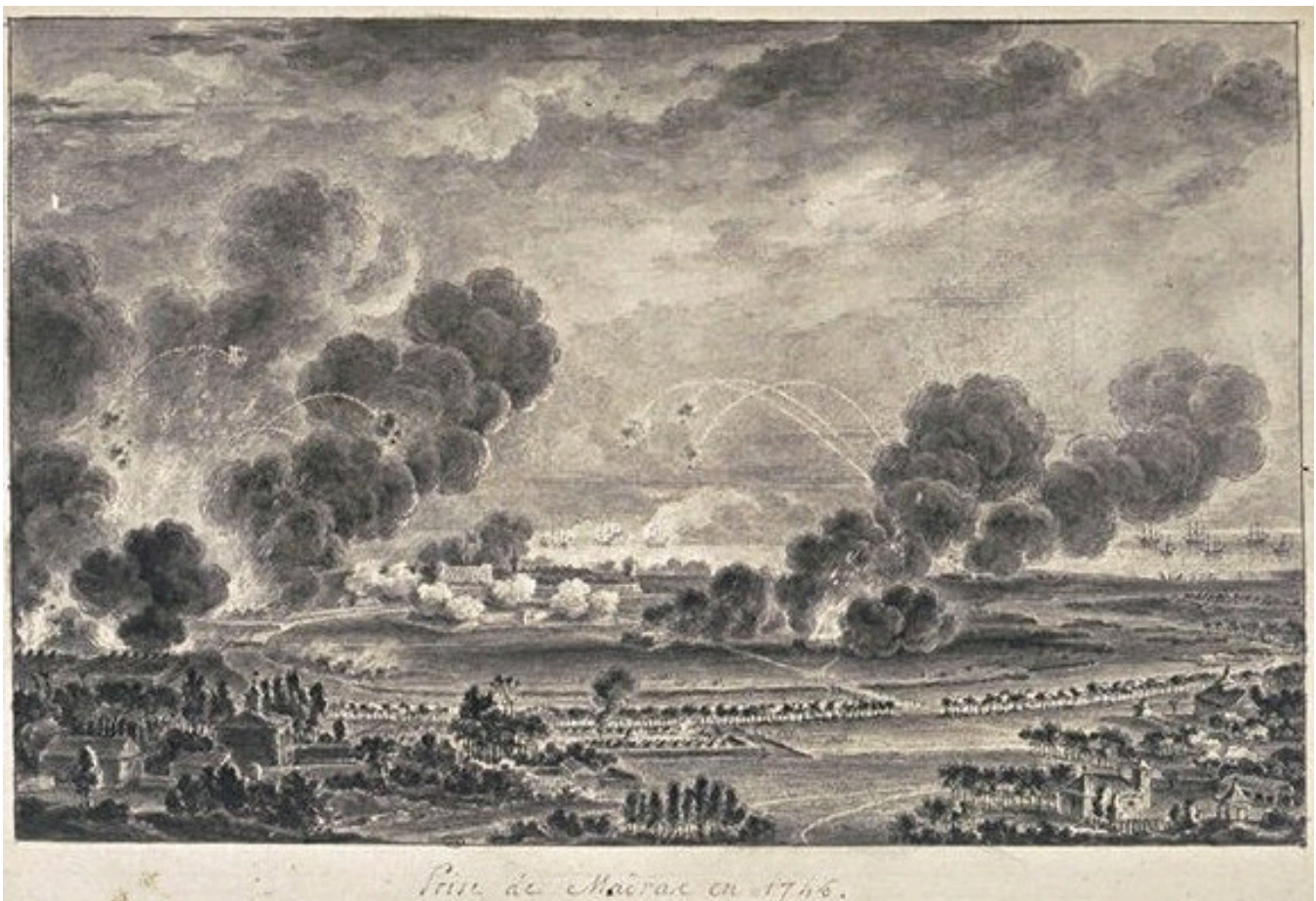
Dupleix now appeared to have a slight problem. Whom should the British pay? Actually, there was no problem at all. The CIO council had already decided to raze the town. If they could bamboozle the British into paying the ransom

beforehand, so much the better. Then, if they had to, they could buy off the Nawab. This plan was not communicated to the Nawab, nor was it communicated to Bourdonnais, who continued to negotiate in good faith. At some point he heard of the promise to the Nawab, but that only made him more determined to get the money himself. So, when Dupleix's soldiers began collecting the EIC's stores, which was not part of Bourdonnais' arrangements, the Admiral sent his sailors to rough them up, ignoring Dupleix's sputtering protests.

Ultimately, the British agreed to evacuate on the understanding they could return in January if they paid the sum of £440,000. Half the cannon of the town would be left in place when the French evacuated in turn. The French did expropriate the stores and warehoused goods, but Bourdonnais made sure of returning as much as he could to the owners. He was not happy with Dupleix.

The Nawab, too, was most unhappy. Not long before, the French had pressed him to renew his decree that the British should make no land attacks, but had neglected to provide the customary bribe, and then Dupleix had a) disobeyed his instructions about fighting, and b) failed to honour his agreement to give what amounted to satisfaction for this affront by handing the town over.

*[Below: the Siege of Madras]*



After achieving what he thought was a satisfactory outcome, Bourdonnais prepared to leave, only to discover he had delayed too long. On 3 October a cyclone took his squadron. Richmond says the French suffered two dismastings, one wreck, and one complete foundering. Beatson says five ships, including some small prizes, foundered, and three were dismasted, including the *Achille*, with losses in men amounting to 1,200. There were twenty other ships in the Roads and all of these were either wrecked or scattered.

Dupleix, very angry with Bourdonnais, refused all supplies, including replacement cannon. On 30 October his man in Madras decreed that the treaty with Bourdonnais was void and ordered the all British to leave, in a state of parole. The EIC's stores and goods were once again expropriated. The Governor and chief men of the town were paraded in a Roman-style triumph through Pondicherry. However, although the native quarter was razed, the French did not destroy the whole town, because, according to Beatson (who has nothing but contempt for Dupleix), the British threatened to do the same to Louisbourg in Canada. (Presumably Governor Morse threatened to inform London; Louisbourg had been captured the previous year so its condition would have been known.)

Peyton, hearing of the fall of Madras, became obsessed with preventing the same thing happening to Calcutta, retaining six ships for its defence throughout the winter. Admittedly there was no point going back to the Coromandel Coast during the monsoon.

This would be the high point of French achievements during the war in India. Bourdonnais received reinforcements, but... The French ships arrived from Europe under the command of a Captain d'Ordelin. But, rather than placing himself under the Admiral's orders he applied to Dupleix. The *CIO* wanted their Governor to have his own navy. Bourdonnais considering he had full authority over anything not resting on land, was incensed. Worse, some of his captains regarded the new orders as definitive. (Back in France, Maurepas' fortunes were at a low ebb; he was unable to provide even the minimal backing Bourdonnais had enjoyed in earlier years.)

Thus, when the Admiral — somehow — completed his refit at the end of October, he was unable to sail to the Malabar Coast and attack the British factories there as he had intended. He sailed for Mauritius with only three ships — *Achille*, *Lys*, and the sloop *Sumatre*. D'Ordelin was dispatched by Dupleix to Malabar with the vessels *Centaure* (74), *Mars* (56), *Brillant* (50), and *St. Louis* (36). But, when he reached the Dutch port of Cochin he found he had just missed an inferior British squadron — newly arrived reinforcements for the deceased Barnett. They were the ships of Commodore Thomas Griffin.

Griffin did not bring much beyond a thick stack of orders that had lost all relevance. His squadron consisted of five EIC ships and the *Princess Mary* (60), augmented by *Pearl* (40) which he had picked up at Madeira. Leaving England on 8 April 1746 he had been told to water at Madeira and St. Augustine's Bay (Madagascar) but otherwise not to stop until he reached the southern tip of Sri Lanka. Once there

he was to look out for Barnett and put himself under the other's command. Failing a rendezvous he was to cruise alone until 1 August, then make for Cuddalore to obtain news. Griffin also had sealed orders for Barnett, which were much the same as regards movements. If any French ships were found at Pondicherry they were to be destroyed at anchor, if possible. Otherwise the British were to be at the EIC's disposal for escort duties.

*[Richmond discusses the routine for the EIC convoys. Escorts were to consist of two ships which would make a hand-off in the South Atlantic, usually at St. Helena. To be sure the convoy was met at the right time and place a dispatch was sent overland to Europe as soon as the convoy departed India. Considering there was no telegraph or railroad this was a remarkable achievement in itself. Of course the Company had agents all up the Persian Gulf and into the Levant, but it would still have been a dangerous relay, passing through at four empires that were hostile to one another — Moghul, Persian, Ottoman, and Habsburg.]*

Griffin found he could not carry out even the first part of his instructions. He only arrived off Madagascar on 28 July and did not reach Cochin until 23 October. At Cochin he learned Barnett was dead. Given the season — the Northeast Monsoon had kicked in — there was nothing to do but make a zig-zag course for the Ganges, where ships would be preparing for the journey south. Arriving on 14 November without encountering d'Ordelin, Griffin located Peyton on 23 December and took command. The latter he sent home in disgrace (Richmond is of the opinion this was solely to curry favour with the EIC Directors).

The British squadron now consisted of the following: *Princess Mary* (60), *Medway* (60), *Harwich* (60), *Preston* (50), *Winchester* (50), *Pearl* (40), *Medway's Prize* (38), and *Lively* (20). There were also the fireship *Fogo* and the sloop *Calcutta*.

*[Beatson, as is his usual habit, records the prizes taken by the British. This year they took 11, including ships of the China trade and a privateer.]*

Shortly before, on 7 December, the French made an attempt against Cuddalore. No ships were involved. The expedition, of 1,700 men, marched overland from Pondicherry. It was beaten off handily. Meanwhile, d'Ordelin, having learned of Griffin's arrival, raced back to Pondicherry, arriving there on 7 January 1747. His arrival threw the Madras Governorship, now working out of Fort St. David's at Cuddalore, into a panic. They imagined a renewed combined attack. Alas, the French were more divided than ever. Bourdonnais had ordered d'Ordelin to rejoin him at Mauritius; the squadron was to be reconstituted and set out against Griffin. But, Dupleix insisted on retaining an iron grip on whatever ships came his way. D'Ordelin compromised by sailing for Goa on the other side of India. The French settlements there had asked for protection. Bourdonnais would soon yield full control to Dupleix by the simple expedient of returning to France in a huff. He would paint the Governor in the blackest light, but ultimately wind up disgraced, incarcerated in a dungeon for 'financial irregularities'.

The French did make another attempt on Cuddalore, marching out with the entire Pondicherry garrison on 28 February. This time they were able to establish siege lines, but hastily abandoned them only a day later, and force marched back to Pondicherry when sails, which could only be British, were reported. Griffin landed some men at Cuddalore, who joined with the garrison in pursuing the French. This was a strategic reversal. The British were now in a position to blockade Pondicherry, though they were too weak to take it.

The new state of affairs led the Nawab to commit fully to the British cause. In 1746 he had been busy fending off another attack by the Maharattas against the northwestern part of his dominions, with mixed results. This was part of the reason he acquiesced in the French attack on Madras. Nevertheless, angered by Dupleix's refusal to hand Madras over to him, in October of 1746 he had sent his son, Mahfuz Khan, and 10,000 men, against the town. On 24 October Dupleix met and roundly defeated them at the Battle of Adyar. Adyar is the name of the river along which the troops of the Sultanate deployed; in English the battle is known as San Thomé, which is a district of the town right by the seashore featuring a large and very famous Christian church and tomb — the place where Saint 'Doubting' Thomas the Apostle is buried.

### **The Battle of San Thomé**

Mahfuz Khan approached Madras from the North, but a French delaying action forced him to skirt around to the southern side, where on 22 October he drew up along the Adyar, which flows from west to east into the sea about 7 Km south of the town. The Church of San Thomé lies about a kilometre north of the river, only about 2250 meters from the modern beach. Mahfuz Khan's plan was to prevent Dupleix from sending reinforcements up from Pondicherry while a portion of his army assaulted the citadel, Fort St. George, located on the Southeast side of the town. The assault would be complicated by the fact that the South side of the town was protected by a small river, the Cooum.

French gunnery from the fort was sufficient to drive off this initial enemy attack. Before a new assault could be mounted reinforcements from Pondicherry arrived, 350 Europeans and 700 sepoy, under a Swiss engineer named Major Louis Paradis, who was also the commandant of Madras. Rather than cross the river upstream, Paradis chose to cross at the river's mouth, and occupy a large island called Quibble. At the time of writing this island still exists, though a portion of the surrounding loop of the river has been filled in. Ignoring the presence of other small islands the main channel of the Adyar is about 400 meters across at this point. Because of the other islands the whole seems to have been fordable. The loop north of Quibble Island is about 150 meters across and was also fordable.

Mahfuz Khan, now pinned between two French forces, bombarded Paradis' position ineffectually.

On 24 October the French garrison sallied from the fort with a force similar in size to Paradis'. When Mahfuz Khan turned to deal with this new threat Paradis decided to risk an attack, and ordered his men to ford the northern channel

right in front of the church. The garrison's own assault was delayed, but Paradis managed to form up and blast the Indians with volley fire before leading a bayonet charge which broke them. The French chased Mahfuz Khan's army into and through the town. Disheartened, the enemy retreated to their capital at Arcot.

This was claimed as a great victory, and it certainly gave the Nawab pause for thought. But, the French had definitively severed ties with the local Authority; henceforth they would have to seek the aid of the Maharattas.

### **Act Three**

The blockade of Pondicherry lasted from May to September of 1747, with Griffin basing himself at Fort St. David's. Dupleix was forced to play a waiting game. Bourdonnais had gone home but his portion of the French squadron, about four or five vessels, remained at Mauritius. D'Ordelin, with about the same number, lay at Goa and was not disposed to challenge Griffin alone. Only about a third of his — *Centaure*, *Mars*, and *Brillant* — were fit for combat, but they were not in that great shape and their crews were of poor quality. D'Ordelin and his captains decided to sail for Mauritius. He sent a dispatch informing Dupleix of the fact and left before a reply could arrive.

There was some point to concentrating at Mauritius. It was universally known that a large reinforcement had been sent from France; it should have arrived by now. The ships had sailed, but unfortunately they had been defeated by Admiral Anson at the First Battle of Finisterre in May. The only vessels to make it all the way to Mauritius were *Lys* (returning after taking Bourdonnais home), *Apollon* (54), *Anglesea* (40), and a couple of supply vessels. They, captained by a Bouvet de Lozier, arrived on 1 October. D'Ordelin arrived in December to find himself superseded by Lozier, who had connections back in France and was the new Governor of Mauritius. Still the French now had a force of seven effective ships: *Centaure* (74), *Mars* (56), *Brillant* (50), *Cybèle* (20), *Lys* (36), *Apollon* (54), and *Anglesea* (40).

According to Richmond three other potentially useful vessels had by now been lost: *St. Louis* and a captured EIC ship, confusingly called *Princess Mary*, were wrecked, and *Neptune* (ex-EIC *Princess Amelia*) was burnt. The latter had been lost in the Madras Roads when, on 21 September, Griffin raided that place. The British withdrew from the coast in November, to refit at Trincomalee, but returned in February 1748, effectively blocking the sea lanes until June. An equilibrium had been reached. The French were masters on the land and the British at sea.

At the beginning of May Lozier was forced to make a move. Dupleix was running low on supplies. Lozier was tempted to wait for another reinforcement, supposedly of the ships *Magnanime*, *Alcide*, *Arc-en-Ciel*, and *Cumberland*, but decided against it. Just as well; they met the fate of the first expedition in the Second Battle of Finisterre; only *Arc-en-Ciel* ever arrived.

Lozier made landfall off Sri Lanka on 4 June, with his squadron, the *Cybèle*, serving as scout. He learned pretty quickly that Griffin was anchored at Cuddalore, having six

ships and four frigates. *Cybèle* was dispatched to check on this and the rest of the squadron followed slowly behind.

On 9 June the British learned of the French approach when cannon fire at 11pm alerted them and the *Lively* arrived from her station off Negapatnam with news of nine large French sail. Griffin, sleeping ashore, was notified around 4am but some of his captains were already preparing for combat. His ships were not all fit for service, with two of his frigates (*Pearl* and *Eltham*) having disabled rudders, but he had a reinforcement of Indiamen. Thus his squadron consisted of the following: *Princess Mary* (60) flag, *Exeter* (60), *York* (60), *Preston* (50), *Medway's Prize* (38), *Winchelsea* (32), *Bombay Castle* (32), *Lively* (20), and *Swift* sloop. Only one vessel was now missing, *Harwich* (50), currently monitoring Pondicherry.

Griffin took command at 5am on 10 June, sent for the recall of *Harwich*, and ensured all his captains were ready. Otherwise, he waited. At 2pm six enemy sail were sighted to the South. It was now decided that the crew of the *Eltham* should be divided up and *Pearl* towed into action. While the captains were returning from their council, *Harwich* arrived. Still the British waited and watched. It was later said that everyone expected that so soon as *Eltham's* crew was redistributed they would make sail and engage but this did not happen. Meanwhile the French slowly came up the coast, but standing well out, with the wind to their advantage.

The reader can probably guess the outcome. There was no battle. As mentioned elsewhere the coastal current was very strong and the winds were almost always very light, and changeable. But for some reason the wind was this day quite fresh and remained in the Southeast, which favoured the French and made it hard for the British to depart. To have effectively engaged the enemy they would have needed to be at sea before dawn, be well out from land and much farther south, but at that time of the day all the conditions would serve to push them northward ahead of the French.

In contrast to Peyton, the controversy surrounding Griffin's decision not to engage actually stems from the fact that no record was kept at the council of war. His memory and that of his captains were 'selective'. He later stated that, on the question of either intercepting the French, or of sailing north to block Pondicherry in force, his council agreed that either way it would be better to wait for the wind to drop. But, most of his captains later said they opposed this course of action and were worried that he should be calling a council of war so soon after they had decided to fight. They said Griffin thought that the British would be unable to catch the French if they remained stood-off, whereas they thought they could have at least kept pace, and used *Lively* or *Swift* to maintain contact during the night. They also said Griffin agreed to the idea of sending out a scout for exactly that purpose but did not actually do so.

And so night came on and the French, still to the southward, headed out to sea and were lost to sight. The offshore breeze dropped at about 11:30pm and the British at last made sail at 1am on 11 June with a northwest wind. They sailed about halfway to Pondicherry and anchored for

the night. In the morning there was no sign of the French. Pickets were sent south as far as Negapatnam but there was no news there either. Rather than expose Cuddalore, Griffin decided to remain where he was for the entire day. On 12 June he visited Madras, thinking perhaps the French had gone there. Seeing nothing, he sent a ship farther up the coast, to Vizapatnam and the next EIC factory, with a warning, then returned south. Enroute he met a Danish ship who reported the French had indeed been at Madras, had unloaded their stores, and had gone before the British arrived.

By now it was 14 June. Griffin had all his ships back in service, but no enemy. At 6pm that day he made another survey of Madras. There were no French ships but he received alarming news from Cuddalore. Apparently 2,000 men had come down from Pondicherry and made another assault. They had been repulsed but there was no guarantee they would not be back. Working against wind and current it took the British four days to return to Cuddalore. The sound of cannon fire told them the French were indeed attacking again, but by the time they arrived the enemy had retreated.

What Lozier had done was to feint south on the night of the 10th, then circle around far out to sea, bypassing Pondicherry, and making straight for Madras, where they deposited the long awaited supplies — two of their sail were the store ships. Lozier then made immediately for Mauritius, mission completed. The stores were packed overland to Pondicherry. It is not clear whether he avoided the latter place because it was too near the British, or because he did not want to talk to Dupleix. The attack on Cuddalore had primarily been a diversion, though it was known Griffin had embarked enough soldiers to significantly weaken the place. It would have been a real coup if the French had captured the chief British supply depôt.

Richmond agrees with the findings of the court-martial, that Griffin fumbled the ball; because Pondicherry was resupplied, it was able to withstand the immanent attack being prepared by London. But at the same time he points out that the French completely failed to make use of their advantages and cripple Griffin's squadron while it lay at Cuddalore. They had the advantage of wind, and, though this was not known, the advantage of numbers. At Griffin's subsequent court-martial opinion was divided. His faction argued that a sortie with conditions as they were would have risked them being pinned on a lee shore, while his detractors pointed out that *Harwich* had had no trouble coming south from her station off Pondicherry in time to join fight. Ultimately the court split the difference, finding that Griffin made an error of judgement in not taking advantage of the early land breeze, and in not shadowing the French with one of his light vessels, but that he was not guilty on other counts. In the end, his suspension from service was laid aside thanks to his Parliamentary connections. He had already been promoted to Vice Admiral by the time the 'non' action took place.

## Act Four

The final act of the war in the Orient was the most dramatic. Beginning in the spring of 1747 the EIC's Secret Committee had pushed hard for a much larger commitment of Royal Navy ships in the Indian Ocean. Their arguments were overblown, but effective. Preparations were taken in hand. The Dutch VOC was even roped in, though they struck a hard bargain and (as usual) managed to obtain maximum concessions for as little effort as possible. The initial sailing day was set for 1 September 1747 but that came and went. An actual plan of campaign was not drawn up until October.

Rear Admiral of the White the Honourable Edward Boscawen was given command of the expedition, which consisted of the following:

*Namur (74), Vigilant (64), Deptford (60), Pembroke (60), Ruby (50), Chester (50), Deal Castle (24), Swallow sloop, Basilisk bomb, Apollo hospital ship, and 14 EIC vessels.* He had authorization from the VOC to commandeer any of their ships that might be bound for India at the time.

In summary, his instructions were to make best speed to Cape Town, gain any news, then sail for Mauritius and capture the main island, and if possible Île de Bourbon (Réunion). He could then refit in Madagascar before sailing to Coromandel. At that point he was to release the EIC and VOC ships from service then set about neutralizing the French squadron and assisting the Madras Governorate. Once this was done he was to escort the homebound convoy with the bulk of his fleet, leaving only such ships as he deemed necessary to ensure British superiority in the theatre. Boscawen was to assist the EIC but remain under the Admiralty's authority. He was also given full command over both naval and land forces. At the time of the siege of Pondicherry this would amount to the following:

880 marines  
1,200 soldiers brought from England as detached companies (that is, seconded from several regiments)  
750 men of an EIC battalion  
120 Dutch from Negapatnam  
1,100 seamen would have been drilled to fight as soldiers  
1,100 sepoys  
70 EIC artillerymen

The armada departed England on 4 November 1747, arriving at the Cape on 29 March 1748, where Boscawen acquired six VOC ships and 400 of their soldiers. He departed on 8 May, arriving in Mauritius on 23 June. Here he found himself unable to fulfil his instructions. The French had heavily fortified all potential landing spots and had eight batteries of cannon emplaced. The harbour of Port Louis, where Lozier had hidden his ships, was long and narrow, and flanked by bastions. One of the ships lay across the entrance. Heavy surf and reefs also limited the British options. In the opinion of later analysts some sort of successful landing would have been possible, but it would have been a convoluted affair, prone to disaster. The British had no knowledge of the conditions ashore, or the size of the garrison (which was actually only a third of the British force). An attempt made on 24 June was easily repulsed, which discouraged everyone.

Lozier wisely did not attempt to challenge Boscawen at sea. Probably, most of the shore batteries consisted of guns taken from his ships. The only naval action undertaken by the French between Lozier's arrival at Mauritius and the present was by the latest CIO reinforcements, which had sailed as far as Bombay and taken a prize (which the Governor of Bombay managed to unload in the heat of the action before it was taken).

Boscawen gave up and rendezvoused with Griffin at Cuddalore on 27 July. The latter still had all his ships except *Medway*, which had had to be condemned. This gave the British overwhelming firepower and it was determined that Pondicherry should be captured. The Nawab's aid was solicited by both sides but he eventually decided to loan the British some 2,000 sowars (cavalry). Griffin did not keep his command but sailed for England on 29 July, taking with him the *Princess Mary, Winchester, Pearl, and Medway's Prize*.

(Actually, Griffin did not leave Trincomalee until 1 January 1749, but having resigned his command per London's orders he did not attempt to usurp Boscawen's position.)



Admiral Boscawen

Unlike Madras, Pondicherry was a tough nut. The French had made extensive preparations, having already endured an attack by the Maharattas earlier in the war in addition to the Nawab's effort. The walls, laid out in the modern 'Italian trace', had been strengthened and fields of fire cleared. The South side of the town was protected by the Ariancoupan River and its north by extensive marshes. It had also been resupplied and morale was high.

Operations began on 1-3 August, when the ships *Exeter*, *Chester*, *Pembroke*, and *Swallow* were sent to blockade the port. The troops set out on foot from Fort St. David's on 8 August. Boscawen took command ashore, leaving a Captain Lisle to command the fleet.

On 11 August the French made a demonstration with 300 foot and some horse at a hasty work they had thrown up but soon retreated. This may have given the British a false sense of superiority, for the next day, when they attempted a dawn assault with 700 grenadiers on another fort they suffered heavy casualties from grape shot — about 150, including the chief artilleryman (why he was commanding an infantry assault instead of emplacing batteries of guns is not explained, but it was common for idle officers to seek glory in this manner).

There is some confusion in the sources about this affray. The fort proved to be a stoutly built and well defended redoubt, a key to the approach to the town. Richmond says it lay on the South bank of the river and Beatson says it was on the opposite bank, which would mean the British had to make a river crossing. That seems unlikely. Richmond blames the British engineers for taking a bad 'reading' of the situation while Beatson blames a French deserter, whom he claims was a plant, though he also blames the engineers. Either one of these statements might be true. The French often used fake deserters and British engineers were notoriously bad at their jobs.

*[In this author's opinion, if an engineer says that a position will be easy to attack, he should be invited to lead the assault. French engineers do.]*

Ignoring the possibility of a river crossing (which Beatson does not mention) there were three problems with the assault. First, what the engineers had seen was not the work, but a ruin that lay in front of it. Second, the redoubt was built to European standards, with angled trenches, 'cavaliers' at each angle, a dry moat with pits, and a covered way. There was also a flanking battery of heavy guns some distance away, protected by a squadron of horse. Third, it was fully manned, with 100 European soldiers, 300 sepoys, and 60 European horse, the latter deployed with the heavy battery.

It took until 20 August to capture the fort and cross the river. The British wasted a day mis-sighting their batteries (they found there was an intervening belt of woodland only after they had deployed the guns), several more days in bombardment, suffered a French sally on 17 August that cleared their trenches (according to Beatson simply because the random long range killing of a man on the parapet of the British trenches sparked panic), then finally realized they should capture the flanking battery before

assaulting the fort. A fortuitous event saved them the bother. On 20 August the British guns struck a store of powder in the redoubt and the explosion caused the French commanders to panic and order the fort's destruction by firing the other magazines. Instead of pursuing and perhaps entering the town with the garrison (something a French commander would not have hesitated to attempt), Boscawen chose to consolidate his position. Giving an expedition a sole commander was a step up from the early war years, but Boscawen had apparently not found his land legs.

All the same, Dupleix's situation was not enviable. He was forced to call for reinforcements from Madras and had to contend with a very restless native population in the environs of the town. Madras sent him a company of grenadiers and best wishes.

The British remained cautious. The direct approach, by the Cuddalore Road, was deemed too strongly defended, so on 25 August Boscawen moved around the town to the Northwest, where, of course, there was a swamp blocking the approach. Dupleix did not have enough troops to man every position but he was able to shift his men to keep them in front of the British. Nevertheless, by about 28 August all the outposts, which lined a feature known as the Bound Hedge — a sort of town pale — had been cleared and the French penned in the town. The formal siege could begin.

Thanks again to his engineers laying out the batteries in front of a swamp, Boscawen found he could not bring his guns closer than 800 yards from the walls. In fact, his engineers began the trenches at a distance of 1,500 yards and laid the first two batteries at 1,200 yards. *Basilisk* was able to come inshore and lob mortar shells, but the squadron could not approach close enough for effective fire and *Basilisk* had to retreat each night for safety after the enemy guns got the range. The men dug trenches, which were swiftly filled with muddy water.

On the night of 30 August/1 September Dupleix ordered a sally against the trenches by 1,500 men, led by Paradis and supported by a feint out the southern gate. The main attack was divided into two parties. Unfortunately the first suffered heavy losses, including the Swiss engineer. The second maintained a fire against the besiegers from the cover of some huts but were eventually forced to retreat.

If the circumstances were reversed the French besiegers would have likely used the subsequent rout as cover to storm the town, but the British did not think along those lines and Dupleix's men were allowed to regroup. Richmond says Dupleix made no further attempts during the siege, instead relying on the onset of the monsoon, now only a month away. Beatson says there were a few small sallies, including one in which two British guns were captured and dragged away.

To delay matters Dupleix diverted the waters of the river to flood the British trenches. Fever and exhaustion did the rest. On 26 September the British unmasked their main batteries at 800 yards, one of eight 18/24-pounders and another of four, plus a bomb battery of five large mortars and fifteen 'royals' and another bomb battery of fifteen



coehorns. The French replied with a massive bombardment that made mockery of the British efforts. The fleet made an attempt to assist at about 1,000 yards, with little effect. They were supposed to draw off in the night but the wind obliged them to remain in position, so they gave the town another working over the next day. According to the French the only casualty was an old woman.

The monsoon broke on 20 September. On 30 September a British council of war determined they had better abandon the siege before they all drowned, and a week later, on 6 October, Boscawen withdrew. The stores and cannon were put aboard ship but the men made a mini death-march overland to Cuddalore. British losses amounted to 757 soldiers dead, 43 artilleryists, and 256 sailors. Native troops were not counted, but they did not actually suffer much, since they were relegated to guard duty (apparently they were not used to dig trenches). Officially the French lost 200 Europeans and 50 sepoy out of 1,800 and 300, respectively. Dupleix may have inflated his garrison's size.

Boscawen sent five of his ships to Aceh and the rest to Trincomalee. He remained ashore at Cuddalore. On 13 October he learned France and England had been under an armistice since June (peace was signed in October). Madras was exchanged for Louisbourg in August of 1749, and the local authorities, French, British, Moghul, and Maharatta, began immediately to prepare for the Second Carnatic War. Indeed, Boscawen had already been asked to assist in a little war against the King of Tanjore, whom Dupleix had provoked into attacking the EIC (this in April of 1749). Though sacked in 1761, Pondicherry would not come finally under British control until the Revolutionary Wars.

## Sources

The chief source used in this account are:

Beatson, Robert. **Naval and Military Memoirs of Great Britain, 1727-1783, Vol. 1.** London, 1804. Very much a 'boost Britain' production that often repeats propaganda. However, he provides many additional details, and events seem to be represented fairly accurately even if motives are not.

Lacour-Gayet. **La marine militaire de la France sous la règne de Louis XV.** Paris, 1910. Pro-French but otherwise pretty straightforward factual account.

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