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Abstract
The Seven Years’ War represented a new chapter in American military history, introducing European cultures of warfare to the North American continent for the first time in generations. This led to significant intermixture, dialogue, and debate between Indian, colonial, and metropolitan military men, especially within the context of New France. While some historians have located the debate between Canadian and metropolitan French military cultures as an attempt by the metropolitans to impose their own ways forcibly onto the existing landscape, this paper contends that both sides were remarkably willing to alter their manners of fighting and adapt in a syncretic manner to create a uniquely American way of war. Locating its argument in the correspondences and journals of French officers and soldiers, as well as a firm basis in the existing secondary literature, this paper seeks to revise conventional narratives surrounding the nature of the French and Canadian experience of the Seven Years’ War.

Keywords
Military cultures, New France, Seven Years' War

Disciplines
Canadian History | European History | Military History

Comments
Written for HIST 314: Early Modern Europe 1555-1750

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“The Same Service as Our Soldiers”:
Metropolitan-Colonial Military Discourse in New France, 1754-60

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Abstract: The Seven Years’ War represented a new chapter in American military history, introducing European cultures of warfare to the North American continent for the first time in generations. This led to significant intermixture, dialogue, and debate between Indian, colonial, and metropolitan military men, especially within the context of New France. While some historians have located the debate between Canadian and metropolitan French military cultures as an attempt by the metropolitans to impose their own ways forcibly onto the existing landscape, this paper contends that both sides were remarkably willing to alter their manners of fighting and adapt in a syncretic manner to create a uniquely American way of war. Locating its argument in the correspondences and journals of French officers and soldiers, as well as a firm basis in the existing secondary literature, this paper seeks to revise conventional narratives surrounding the nature of the French and Canadian experience of the Seven Years’ War.

Captain Louis-Antoine de Bougainville awoke at dawn on July 8, 1758, to the sound of drums. The French army at Fort Carillon was beating to arms at daybreak, "so that all the soldiers could know their posts for the defense of the works,"[1] as he later recorded in his journal. Before them was a British army of twenty thousand men, decisively outnumbering the 3500 Frenchmen, prepared to fight for control of the pivotally-located fort. They attacked at half past noon. Bougainville, as chief of staff, would be in the center of the fighting, and keenly observed the see-sawing progress of assault and sortie which raged with a special intensity; "[f]or us," he wrote, "there is no retreat, no quarter, only conquer or perish."[2] The junior officer's comments on the day of the battle, left to us in a journal of his time in North America, reflect the unique nature of the fighting between French and British on the colonial frontier; we must look somewhat deeper to see the nature of the fight, at times waged with an equal fierceness, between metropolitan and colonial Frenchmen of overlapping and intersecting military cultures.

The French experience of the Seven Years' War has generally been overshadowed in English-language historiography by studies of British or American subjects, with the majority of Anglosphere books on topics relating to French and Canadian soldiers and civilians coming, understandably, from Canadian authors. Therefore a considerable amount of ink has been spilled over the differences and debates between metropolitan and Canadian Frenchmen, with many authors taking an explicitly political tack by attempting to proclaim one side or the other "right." This bears even more controversial overtones given the role accounts of the war play in nationalist narratives; Greer described many "French Canadian historians," Frégault mentioned by name as one of them, as tending "to view the French regime from a nationalist perspective,"

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[1] Louis-Antoine de Bougainville and Edward P. Hamilton, *Adventure in the Wilderness: The American Journals of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760*, (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 231).
[2] Ibid., 237.

seeing "in its history the birth of a nation."[3] The sensitivity of the topic, therefore, calls for some care in deciphering the historiographic narratives at play.

Guy Frégault, writing *Canada: the War of the Conquest* in 1955, made no attempt to conceal his viewpoint, regarding Montcalm as a "backward-looking imperialist" and Vaudreuil as "working to reinforce the social structure and the political armature of Canada," taking evident and unrepentant pride in his pro-Canadian viewpoint as Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs for Québec.[4] His account, therefore, was primarily rooted in historical score-settling. *Losing a Continent*, written by Frank Brecher in 1998, was largely a diplomatic history of the war from the French perspective, and predictably placed the blame for France's defeat on a fundamentally disinterested metropolitan régime, rooted in "Bourbon ineptness, limited French interest in colonizing that difficult land, and pressure from its locally more powerful Anglo-Saxon neighbors."[5] This does not necessarily fall into the nationalistic blame-allocating tradition, focusing more on questions of *why* Canada fell than *who* allowed it to do so; Brecher had equal criticism for New France's "administrative lethargy, venality, and hubris."[6] William Nester's 2014 book *The French and Indian War and the Conquest of New France* follows much the same format, leveling criticism at practically every aspect of France's military and diplomatic policy before declaring that "[b]ehind these reasons for defeat lurked a failed political system, both in France and New France."[7]

As more and more academics take up the issue, many have attempted to move away from nation-building narratives in order to devote attention to questions of the transmission of

[3] Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 7.
[4] Guy Frégault, *Canada: the War of the Conquest* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969), 123-4.
[5] Frank W. Brecher, *Losing a Continent: France's North American Policy, 1753-1763* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 188.
[6] Ibid., 7.
[7] William R. Nester, *The French and Indian War and the Conquest of New France* (Norman, OK:University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 410.

knowledge, and how metropolitans, colonials, and other groups worked together. Martin Nicolai, in an article published in 1989, sought to dispel the myth of "the French officer corps, including their commander, as contemptuous of Canadians and irregular warfare."[8] He drew explicit inspiration from Ian Steele, who had written in *Warpaths* in 1994 that the Seven Years' War represented "the meshing of intercolonial war with the third type of invasion: the coming of European regular warfare to North America."[9] Steele's recognition of the importance of Indian warriors and ways of war was a leading influence behind another recent trend: the introduction of Indian perspectives to the equation. Timothy Shannon's 2010 article "The Native American Way of War in the Age of Revolutions" noted that "change in the colonists' military culture was an inescapable by-product of their encounter with Indians."[10] Christian Crouch, writing *Nobility Lost* in 2014, pointed out that "[c]olonial and metropolitan interactions with Native Americans also show the tremendous influence of New France's Indian alliances in shaping the physical and cultural boundaries of the French empire."[11]

Such an extensive historical conversation begs the question: what was the real state of affairs in New France during the Seven Years' War? How did metropolitan and colonial French soldiers really interact and connect, and how did Indians fit into this equation? Each group came to the table with strongly-formed preconceived notions, but the fortunes of war forced dialogue, compromise, and change. This paper charts the shifting nature of relations between colonial and metropolitan military cultures in New France during the Seven Years' War. It analyzes letters and journals written by French soldiers from the highest to lowest ranks of the armies defending

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[8] Martin L. Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage: The French Military and the Canadian Irregular Soldier during the Seven Years' War," *The Canadian Historical Review* 70, no. 1 (1989): 53.
[9] Ian Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 175.
[10] Timothy Shannon, "The Native American Way of War in the Age of Revolutions, 1754-1814," in *War in an Age of Revolution, 1775-1815*, edited by Roger Chickering and Stig Förster, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 138.
[11] Christian Ayne Crouch, *Nobility Lost: French and Canadian Martial Cultures, Indians and the End of New France* (Ithaca, CT: Cornell University Press, 2014), 9.

Canada to analyze what they said about themselves and their allies, as well as firmly grounding itself in the relevant secondary literature. The sources reveal that, while metropolitan Frenchmen indeed attempted to impose their own ways of war on their colonial countrymen, military expediency forced them to engage in a process of exchange which resulted, however belatedly, in a synthesis of metropolitan and colonial military cultures.

"Under a screen of trees"

"In the woods, behind trees, no troops are comparable to the natives of this country,"[12] Bougainville recorded in a letter to his patroness, Madame Herault. Indeed, French Canadians were universally acknowledged by metropolitan counterparts to be gifted skirmishers, having learned well from their Indian allies on campaign. French officers noted that "[t]he long wars against the Iroquois in the seventeenth century, which forced all Canadian males to take up arms and learn Indian methods of irregular warfare, engendered a military ethos among Canadians which was fostered by intermittent campaigns against the English in company with Canada's Indian allies,"[13] producing a highly skilled force capable of extended operations in the woods. New France's army was drawn from two sources. One was the militia, of which every able-bodied man aged 18 to 50 was obliged to be a member, and the other were the *compagnies franches de la marine* (also known as the *troupes de la marine*); infantry units controlled by the Ministry of the Navy, recruited from among Frenchmen but officered mainly by Canadian *seigneurs*. Both forces were repositories of significant combat experience: while the militia theoretically took all men into service, in practice it tended to take "the poorest *habitants*," those

[12] Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, 333.
[13] Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage," 57.

with "a greater inclination toward hunting, long-term work as *coureurs du bois*, or related activities which provided the military skills useful for irregular warfare."[14] The *troupes de la marine*, while manned from "largely unemployed tradesmen from French cities and towns,"[15] still "rendered excellent service to New France in its various wars"[16] due in large part to its leadership.

Both arms benefited greatly from the "incomparably superior Canadian officer corps," drawn from the colony's landholding élites and schooled in the unforgiving classroom of the North American woodlands.[17] While many junior commissions in the *compagnies franches* were specifically reserved for the "sons and grandsons of serving officers," making service a family affair, advancement was based on merit; cadets entering the marines "had to demonstrate familiarity with and expertise in enticing and trading with Indian allies, as well as undertaking raids against Indian or English settlements."[18] A marine officer was equal parts infantry leader and frontier diplomat, possessing "great familiarity with their Indian allies, by virtue of joint military actions, diplomatic experience, or garrison duty in the distant outposts of New France."[19] It can easily be seen, therefore, how much New France's soldiers relied on their Indian allies, who lent their way of war to the militia and *compagnies franches* readily. Canadian soldiers learned well, and demonstrated mastery in the way they "exposed themselves little, organized ambushes, and fought in the woods under a screen of trees,"[20] using these tactics to rout conventionally-organized enemy armies like that of General Braddock at the Monongahela in 1755.

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[14] Ibid., 59.
[15] David L. Preston, *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 151.
[16] Ibid., 151.
[17] Ibid., 155.
[18] Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, 28.
[19] Preston, *Braddock's Defeat*, 155.
[20] Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage," 58.

“The bellicosity of the age”

While French Canadian ways of war were strongly influenced by long service alongside New France’s Indian allies, metropolitan French officers were just as strongly influenced by the ideals of European society. Military leadership was the traditional preserve of the nobility, which jealously guarded its right to all officer commissions due to war’s importance in making the aristocratic self; “[*G*]*loire*, achieved through bravery and daring on the field of battle, was the quality on which French noblemen’s reputation rested: it was an essential part of aristocratic masculinity.”[21] The ability to acquire *gloire* became a way for the nobility to define itself in opposition to all those below its social stature; no matter how rich an up-jumped commoner was, he could never imitate the true cream of society, which protected its status through the imposition of ever-more elaborate, “rarified and contorted forms of martial honor”[22] as shibboleths that effectively sealed out the lower classes. Elaborate frameworks of military etiquette, in addition to helping form a monopoly on class status, played a more practical role; they “set, and ideally enforced, the rules of engagement by constraining and outlining the actions of the entire army from foot soldiers to generals,”[23] the objective being to limit violence to a narrowly-prescribed degree after the horrors of the previous century, especially during the Thirty Years’ War. The definition of acceptable violence shrank due to codes of military honor which governed “everything from life in camp to surrenders and prisoner exchange, all the way down to the etiquette of firing first on the field.”[24] This system was advertised as reducing the brutality of

[21] Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, 21.
[22] Ibid., 23.
[23] Ibid., 20.
[24] Ibid.

modern warfare via the elimination of pillage and other atrocities, though a willingness to accept high casualties remained "crucial to the bellicosity of the age,"[25] and led to European leaders being willing to stomach significantly greater bloodshed on the field of battle than an Iroquois war chief, for example, might accept.

This mattered because European warfare in the eighteenth century was a remarkably bloody affair; "[e]xperience showed that an eighteenth-century army could consider itself lucky to survive a day of battle with less than 25 per cent casualties,"[26] and individual units within that army could suffer casualties up to 70% "within a matter of minutes."[27] To withstand such devastation required iron discipline among officers and men, and unhesitating obedience to orders; "[e]ngrained battle drills enabled officers to rally troops who seemed to have been broken beyond recall,"[28] keeping them on the firing line and in the fight. Line tactics, the dominant military feature of the era, were a way of both maximizing the "weight of infantry fire which [a unit] could bring to bear,"[29] and also the officers' control over their men. Control and subordination were the dominant concerns, to which everything else was subordinated.

"Each behind a tree"

The Seven Years' War began for North America on May 28, 1754, when a force of Virginia Provincials and Mingo warriors led by Major George Washington ambushed an armed Canadian diplomatic party led by Ensign Joseph Coulon de Jumonville of the *troupes de la marine*. Jumonville was killed, and Washington retreated from the battlefield in the Ohio

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[25] Jeremy Black, *War in the Eighteenth-Century World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9.
[26] Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (New York: Atheneum, 1988), 245.
[27] Ibid., 249.
[28] Ibid., 98.
[29] Ibid., 200.

Country toward the safety of Virginia. He was pursued, and eventually brought to a fight, by Jumonville's vengeful brother, Captain Louis Coulon de Villiers, who had assembled a mixed force of marines and Indians to besiege Washington's hastily-built Fort Necessity and bring his brother's killer to justice. The battle for Fort Necessity ideally illustrates the Canadian military tradition and its deep Indian roots. Villiers had gathered Indian allies by appealing to their obligation to cover the death of Jumonville via ritual, fulfilling "the solemn right of the brother to decide to pursue, capture, kill, or spare those responsible for his sibling's murder."[30] Villiers therefore made use of shared cultural concepts, here the obligation to avenge or cover a brother's death, to achieve both French military objectives and his own personal desires. The battle was also fought along Canadian lines; as marine "Jolicoeur" Charles Bonin recorded, Villiers's troops fought "in the woods, each behind a tree,"[31] conducting a spirited firefight that lasted for several hours until the British surrendered. The effective performance turned in by the Canadian-Indian team was repeated the next year at the Battle of the Monongahela, when a coalition of French Canadians and Indians from a number of nations comprehensively defeated a British force led by Major General Edward Braddock, consisting in large part of troops trained along conventional European lines. Historian David Preston described it as "a distinctly Canadian victory," which "should have been the model for French operational success,"[32] especially in the wake of a French defeat just a few months later, in September 1755, at the Battle of Lake George. The Baron de Dieskau, a metropolitan officer who had arrived in New France with the first *troupes de terre* to be seen in that colony for generations, had blundered into a major defeat on the shores Lake George, supposedly betrayed by his Canadian and Indian auxiliaries for their refusal to

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[30] Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, 49.
[31] Charles Bonin and Andrew Gallup, *Memoir of a French and Indian War Soldier* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1993), 101.
[32] Preston, *Braddock's Defeat*, 292-3.

assault a fortified enemy position. Their supposed intransigence resulted in heavy casualties and his own capture. An "unfortunate adventure,"[33] as the army in Canada's operational journal referred to it.

A new force of *troupes de terre* was quickly dispatched, Major General the Marquis de Montcalm arriving in May 1756 with 1,200 infantrymen of the Royal-Roussillon and La Sarre regiments, and orders to assume command of the Army's forces in New France "under the authority of our Governor-General in Canada."[34] Out of a desire to avoid command friction, Montcalm was placed in a firmly subordinate position to the Marquis de Vaudreuil-Cavagnal, Governor of New France, and an official of the Ministry of the Navy. While Montcalm and Vaudreuil cooperated well at first, Montcalm writing that "[t]he Governor-General overwhelms me with politeness,"[35] relations between the two quickly broke down over issues of wartime strategy. An additional dimension to consider, and an avenue of conflict, was that Montcalm and Vaudreuil represented two different services; Montcalm was a *maréchal de camp* of the French Army, and Vaudreuil, as governor of a colony, ranked as a captain in the French Navy. Both brought the prejudices of their backgrounds to the table. Vaudreuil complained to his superiors at the Ministry of the Navy that "M. de Montcalm has made it appear that the troops of the line wish only to preserve their reputation and return to France without having experienced a single check; they think more seriously of their private interest than of the safety of Canada."[36] Montcalm returned the animosity in equal measure when he complained to the Marshal of Belle Isle that "M. de Vaudreuil is incapable of preparing a plan of operations," and that he "would confide a vast operation to his brother, or any other Colonial officer, the same as to Chevalier de

[33] "Journal of the Operations of the Army from July 22 to September 30, 1755," in *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 10:340.
[34] "Commission for the Marquis de Montcalm," March 1, 1756, in *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 10:395.
[35] Marquis de Montcalm to Marquis de Machault, June 12, 1756, in *Documents*, 10:418.
[36] M. de Vaudreuil to M. de Massiac, November 1, 1758, in *Documents*, 10:868.

Lévis [Montcalm's second-in-command]."[37] Vaudreuil's complaints about Army reluctance to fight, and Montcalm's exasperation with the Navy-associated governor's refusal to put Army officers in command of missions, reflected a parochialism which would only grow more apparent as the war deepened.

"Very brave behind a tree and very timid when not covered"

Montcalm was not the only metropolitan to be frustrated with his Canadian counterparts; many of his subordinates wrote frankly to express their fury at what they saw as Canadians being unwilling or unable to live up to metropolitan standards of behavior on and off the battlefield. Pierre-André Gohin, comte de Montreuil, chief of staff to Dieskau and commander of Army troops in Canada following his capture, wrote back to France barely after Montcalm had arrived to complain about New France's government and soldiers. "The Canadian is independent, wicked, lying, braggart, well adapted for skirmishing, very brave behind a tree and very timid when not covered."[38] While Montreuil implicitly acknowledged the militia and marines' skill at irregular warfare, he still sharply deprecated their comparatively poor performance when pressed into the line of battle. This theme was picked up by many of his contemporaries; Bougainville complained after the battle for Fort Carillon in 1758 that "[a]t the start of the affair it was necessary for Sieur de T[récesson] (*added by the original editor*) to fire from the ramparts of Carillon on a large number of Canadians, who were fleeing toward the boats," adding rather half-heartedly in their defense that "[i]t is true that these were not Canadians of the good sort."[39] Montcalm, for his part, was quoted by his commissary general André Doreil as having said that

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[37] M. de Montcalm to Marshal de Belle Isle, 12 April, 1759, in *Documents*, 10:960.
[38] M. de Montreuil to —, June 12, 1756, in *Documents*, 10:419.
[39] Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, 238.

"the Colonial troops and the Canadians have behaved very indifferently,"[40] repeating Bougainville's accusations of cowardice by Canadian militia requiring a volley from the *troupes de terre* to return them to their posts. The metropolitan Frenchmen's deprecations stemmed from the Canadians' unwillingness to commit to the sort of casualty-intensive tactics European combat demanded, demonstrating the clash of military cultures at play. Even when they could be forced to behave like metropolitan Frenchmen, Canadians did not always excel, furthering metropolitan complaints. By 1759, Montcalm's regiments had dwindled from attrition sufficiently that he felt forced to draft Canadian militiamen to fill his ranks, hoping that they would "imbibe the military spirit and perform the same service as our soldiers,"[41] thereby being initiated into metropolitan military discipline. At the decisive Battle of the Plains of Abraham, however, "[o]ur troops, composed almost entirely of Canadians impetuously rushed on the enemy, but their ill-formed ranks soon broke either in consequence of the precipitancy with which they had been made to march, or by the inequality of the ground."[42] The Canadian militia's failure to adapt to European tactics was made the point of failure for the French army at Quebec, casting the problem as one of colonial intransigence in not adhering to the metropolitan army's precise standards of drill and obedience. It was but one of the final expressions of a largely consistent pattern of statements by metropolitan officers.

[40] M. Doreil to Marshal de Belle Isle, July 28, 1758, in *Documents*, 10:754.
[41] "General Reflections on the measures to be adopted for the Defence of this Colony, by M. de Montcalm," quoted in M. de Vaudreuil to M. de Massiac, November 1, 1758, in *Documents*, 10:874.
[42] "Operations of the Army under M. de Montcalm before Quebec," (no date, presumably October 9 or 10, 1759), in *Documents*, 10:1039.

"Of conquering or being conquered"

The argument between metropolitan and colonial officers was not just about the best way to fight a battle; it also extended to the highest reaches of grand strategy and imperial policy. The stakes were high, with the fate of France's control over Canada in the balance, and such a contentious debate quickly became an opportunity for interservice rivalries to come to the fore. The basic conflict was between Vaudreuil's support for an Indian-inspired strategy of raids, and Montcalm's European-style campaigns intended to reduce the chain of British forts along the frontier and seize territory. These arguments came to a head after the battle for Fort Carillon, which was, as Montcalm crowed, "a great battle, and perhaps the first that has been fought in Canada without Indians."[43] Doreil quoted him in a letter to François-Marie Peyrenc de Moras, Minister of the Navy at the time, adding that "the glory of the General and of the French troops is indeed much greater in consequence," while also noting that "the enemy's force would, at the same time, have been entirely defeated in its precipitate retreat, had M. de Montcalm had 200 Indians to guide a strong detachment which he would have sent in pursuit, under the orders of Chevalier de Levis."[44] This reflects the metropolitans' determination to think along their own lines of warfare, trying to use Indians as battlefield scouts and pursuit forces rather than in the way they and the Canadians were accustomed to fighting. Indeed, the very "idea of guerrilla fighting affronted the noblemen of the French army" while the Canadians were perfectly comfortable with it, to the point that Vaudreuil could happily "[encourage] raids against the English to destabilize the enemy, gather intelligence from captives, maintain military

[43] "Copy of the Letter written by M. de Montcalm to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, July 9, 1758," quoted in M. Doreil to M. de Moras, July 28, 1758, in *Documents*, 10:750.
[44] M. Doreil to M. de Moras, July 28, 1758, in *Documents*, 10:746.

preparedness, and occupy regulars, colonial militias, and marines"[45] between the major campaigns. Vaudreuil complained to Claude-Louis d'Espinchal, Marquis de Massiac (incoming Minister of the Navy) that Montcalm "does not possess those [qualities] which are required for war in this country; 'tis necessary to have a great deal of suavity and patience to command the Canadians and Indians,"[46] and asking for the general's recall, which the Frenchman himself had also requested. Vaudreuil thereby intimated that fighting in Canada was qualitatively different from fighting in Europe, and qualification for the latter did not translate to the former; Montcalm specifically had failed to measure up in his eyes. Bougainville, for his part, predictably took his commander's side, rejoicing in his journal that "now war established here on the European basis. Projects for the campaign, for armies, for artillery, for sieges, for battles. It no longer is a matter of making a raid, but of conquering or being conquered. What a revolution! What a change!"[47] Indeed, by 1758 it would seem that the war had shifted decisively in character, becoming more Europeanized by the influx of metropolitan soldiers and the concurrent change in military culture.

"Fight in their manner"

The conclusion that metropolitan officers forcibly transposed their own military culture wholesale onto the existing landscape should not be exaggerated. Indeed, many Frenchmen took evident pride in their ability and that of the *troupes de terre* as a whole to adapt to Canadian warfare, Bougainville among them; "a fact worth noting and one which does us honor," he

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[45] Crouch, *Nobility Lost*, 83.
[46] M. de Vaudreuil to M. de Massiac, August 4, 1758, in *Documents*, 10:783.
[47] Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, 252.

wrote, "is that in this detachment, a captain and seven lieutenants of our regulars march"[48] on a raiding mission with Canadians and Indians. Evidently guerrilla warfare was not *entirely* lacking in prestige. Montcalm, for his own part, "believed that successful raids maintained the offensive spirit in his troops and encouraged the Canadian civilian population,"[49] and noted with pride early in his time in Canada that "I [have] acquired to the highest degree the confidence of the Canadians and Indians."[50] Many French officers demonstrated an ability to incorporate Canadian styles of fighting into their own conception of honorable combat inasmuch as they could be fit into the framework of the pitched battle; this was best emphasized at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The army's operational journal, which had reproached the Canadian soldiers conscripted as regulars for their unsteady advance, gave them plaudits for their fighting retreat; "the rout was total only among the Regulars; the Canadians accustomed to fall back Indian fashion [...] and to turn afterwards on the enemy with more confidence than before, rallied in some places, and under cover of the brushwood, by which they were surrounded, forced divers corps to give way, but at last were obliged to yield to the superiority of numbers."[51] While neither line infantry nor raiders, the Canadians had become light infantry, performing commendably in a role which fit into a French conception of military utility as located primarily on the battlefield. The Chevalier de Lévis, commander of French forces in Canada after Montcalm's death in action, enthusiastically encouraged this development. As early as 1756, he had urged that "'the '*troupes de la marine* and those of the colony will fight in their manner on the flanks of the *troupes de terre*'," which was "relatively orthodox" in both colonial and European practice by the French.[52] By the time he assumed command of the whole army, Lévis was issuing orders that

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[48] Bougainville, *Adventure in the Wilderness*, 214.
[49] Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage," 62.
[50] M. de Montcalm to M. de Paulmy, September 18, 1757, in *Documents*, 10:638.
[51] "Operations of the Army under M. de Montcalm before Quebec," (no date, presumably October 9 or 10, 1759), in *Documents*, 10:1039.
[52] Nicolai, "A Different Kind of Courage," 70.

Canadian militiamen who were integrated into regular regiments, instead of fighting in the line, would be organized to "spread out to form a skirmishing line in front of the regular troops."[53] In historian Martin Nicolai's words, "[c]onventional discipline and irregular tactics were combined [...] increas[ing] the co-operation between conventional and light troops until the latter, instead of being employed in a completely auxiliary role as scouts and raiders, became an effective tool on the classic, eighteenth-century battlefield."[54] Metropolitan officers, therefore, demonstrated respect for what they considered to be Canadian soldiers' "natural" abilities, and attempted to find a way to fit those talents into a conventional script, far from merely imposing their own customs like a smothering blanket on top of an existing and vibrant military tradition.

Conclusion

The French war effort ultimately, and perhaps inevitably, ended in defeat. The metropolitans went home, followed by a large number of marine officers, several of whom were placed on trial for offenses related to the corruption that was supposedly endemic in the colony's administration, a scandal known to history as the *affaire du Canada*. The military conclusions of the war were largely left behind, a pity considering the vitality and vibrancy of the debate over strategy and tactics which developed. Through the bitter struggle over the best way to defend New France, French and Canadian officers and soldiers eventually synthesized a new, hybrid military culture taking the most successful elements of both their styles of fighting, which resulted in battlefield success toward the end of the war just as much as it represented a key step

[53] Ibid., 72.
[54] Ibid., 75.

toward military cultural fusion. Irregular warfare was increasingly subordinated to the actions of conventional armies, made to function in the context of a pitched battle in order to productively (in the minds of metropolitan officers) help the line infantry bring about the decisive victories the French had searched and fought for so earnestly. While this was a turn away from the Canadians' traditional way of war, it still reflected an attempt by the metropolitans to integrate the Canadians on a more even footing and to acknowledge the limitations and uses of their particular training. Only through this mental process of readjustment, as Frenchmen reconsidered their attitudes towards Canadians and vice versa, could each group be said by the other to perform "the same service as our own soldiers."

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