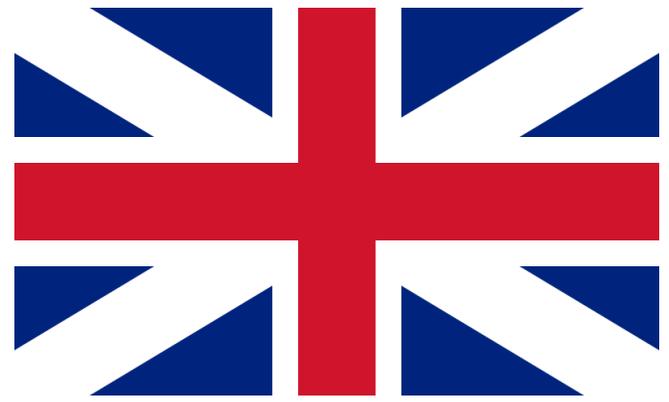


The Death of General Wolfe



"I can remember the Scotch Highlanders flying wildly after us with streaming plaids, bonnets, and large swords - like so many infuriated demons - over the brow of the hill. In their path was a wood in which we had some Indians and sharpshooters who bowled over the Scottish Savages in fine style."

At the head of the 'Scottish Savages' was Major-General James Wolfe. Cool, composed, instantly recognizable, Wolfe's spindly frame towered above the ranks as he pointed his sword, shouted commands and urged the men onward. A premonition Wolfe had prior to the battle warned it would be his last. Now as he recklessly exposed himself to the French fire he was unmindful of his rapidly approaching rendezvous with death.

The effectiveness of an attack varies in direct proportion to the conviction of victory it can instill. *"Don't tell me about physical condition,"* said Wolfe, *"a good spirit will carry a man through anything."* Wolfe had a gift for leadership, a soldierly sense of duty and great moral as well as physical courage. With that spirit he inspired and infused faith in his fighting men.

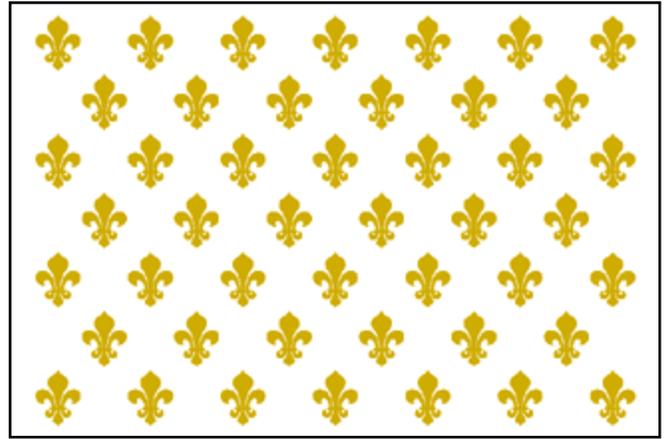
A Canadian sharpshooter hit him first on the right wrist severing a tendon. It was a trifling wound and he wrapped it with his handkerchief, thrust his hand into his pocket, picked up his sword with the other hand and pressed on. He advanced to some rising ground on the right of the line and ordered a soldier named James Henderson to secure it with a few men and *"Maintain it to the last extremity."* A moment later he was hit again, but still kept his feet.

Henderson wrote an account of the scene to a relative in England. His letter survives, heavily creased and stained as a result of many unfoldings. *"And then the Genl came to me and took his Post by me. But Oh! how can I tell, my dear Sir. Tears flow from my eyes as I write. The Great, ever memorable Man whose lose can never by enough regretted was scarce a moment with me till he received his Fatal Wound. When the General received the Shot full in the chest, I caught hold of him and helped him off the field. He walked about a hundred yards and then begged I would let sit down which I did. Then I opened his Breast and found his shirt full of blood at which he smiled and when he seen the distress I was in, My Dear, said he, Don't grieve for me. I shall be happy in a few minutes. Take care of yourself as I see you are Wounded. But tell me how Goes the Battle. Just then came some officers who told him the French had given ground and our troops are pursuing them to the Walls of the Town. He was lying in my arms expiring. At this news he raised himself up and Smiled in my face. Now, said he, I die contented. From that instant the smile never left his Face till he Died."*

The Death of General Montcolm

Montcolm in a vain attempt to rally his men had pressed forward fearlessly into the hail of fire. Brave Canadian snipers covered the retreat as best they could but Montcolm's offensive had petered out in mud and blood.

Hit twice himself in close succession, the second shot passing through his body, Montcolm reeled in his saddle and would have fallen but for two grenadiers who sprang to his side to keep him mounted.



He was led back on his horse to the city through St. Louis Gate to a surgeon's house. Seeing him pass pale and covered with blood anxious onlookers cried out, "***The marquis is killed.***"

Montcolm replied "***It is nothing! It is nothing! Do not distress yourselves for me my good friends.***"

An officer provided this account of Montcolm's death. When his wound was dressed, he asked the doctors what his chances were. Informed that his wounds were mortal and he had only hours to live, Montcolm responded, "***I am happy I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec.***" He dictated the following letter of capitulation to the British commander.

"Sir - Being obliged to surrender Quebec to your arms I have the honour to recommend our sick and wounded to Your Excellency's kindness and ask the execution of the exchange treaty agreed upon by His Most Christian Majesty and His Britannic Majesty. I beg Your Excellency to rest assured of the highest esteem and respectful consideration with which I have the honour to be, Your most humble and obedient servant, Montcolm."

After writing a message to each member of his family and saying his final farewells, he passed the night in prayer. On the 14th of September at five in the morning just as dawn was broke over the battered city of Quebec the great marquis died under the hammer of defeat. He was forty-seven. No coffin-maker could be found so an old servant of the Ursuline nuns nailed together a crude box into which the Marquis's body was laid. The burial took place at 9 that night, the rustic coffin followed by a forlorn procession of garrison officers, despondent women and confused, frightened children. By torch light Montcolm was interred under the floor in the chapel of the Ursuline convent. He lay in his soldier's grave before the humble altar of the Ursulines asleep in peace among his triumphant foe. His grave was excavated by a bursting British shell.