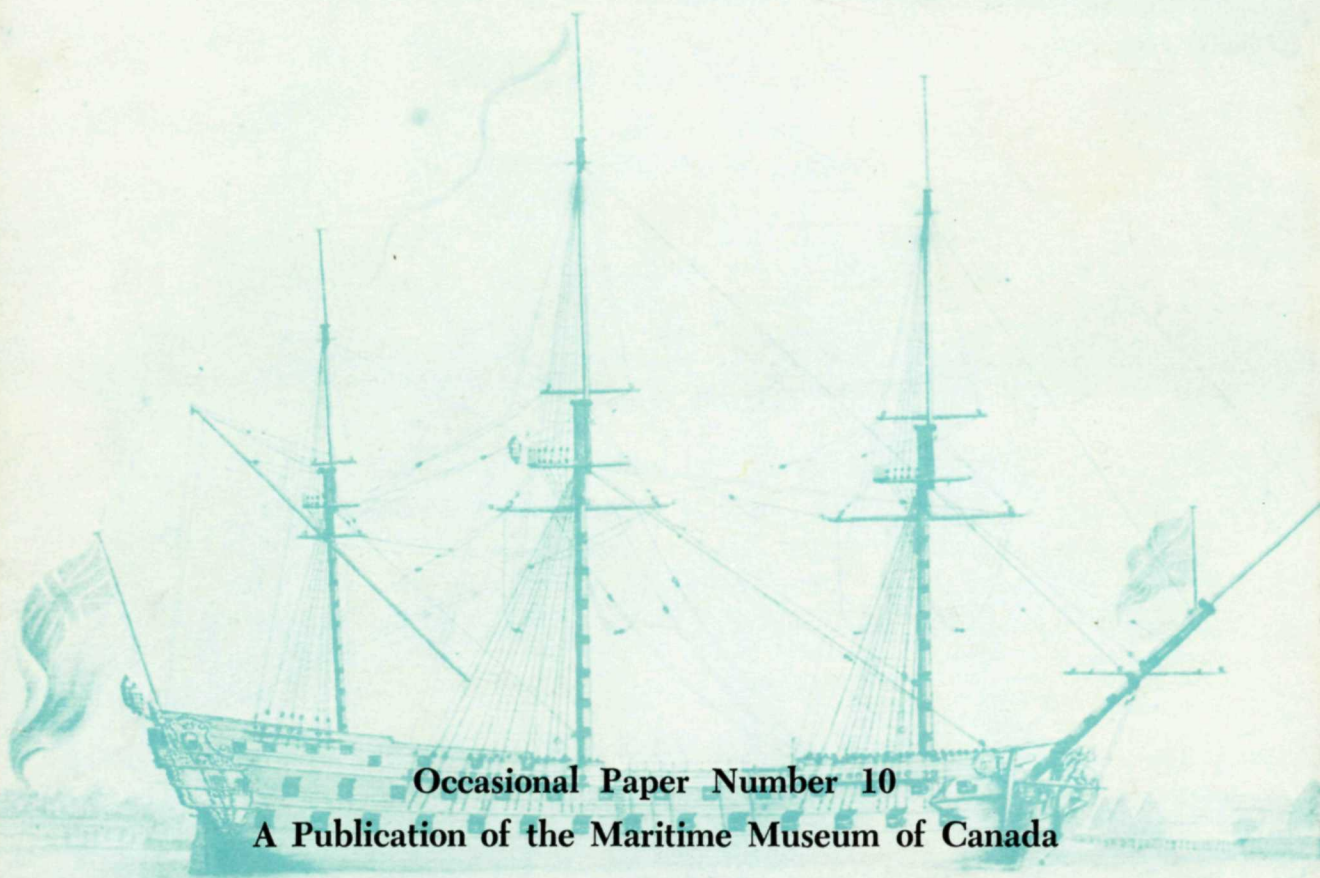


THE BATTLE OF THE RESTIGOUCHE



Occasional Paper Number 10

A Publication of the Maritime Museum of Canada

THE BATTLE OF THE RESTIGOUCHE

The last naval engagement between

FRANCE and BRITAIN

for the possession of Canada

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In Three Parts

Edited by

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HALIFAX

1962

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The last naval engagement between France and Britain for the possession of Canada was fought, not on the broad Atlantic, but in the narrow confines of the Restigouche River. The facts about this unique battle are here presented in three parts: firstly, a study prepared from both French and English sources for the Royal Society of Canada. (The translation is my own); secondly, the official report to the Admiralty of Captain J. Byron, R.N. who commanded the English Squadron. (It is believed that this report, which is much more detailed than Byron's letter to Colville, ⁽¹⁾ has not previously been published in Canada); thirdly, Vaudreuil's instructions to the unhappy settlement at Restigouche which, like the final act of a classical tragedy, brought the engagement to a close. (Again the translated version is my own).

There is an interesting prelude to the Battle of the Restigouche. In the spring of 1759 a French convoy got safely up the St. Lawrence to Quebec and Montreal. ⁽²⁾ After the fall of Quebec and the dispersal of Admiral Saunder's fleet five French ships led by the frigate *Le Machault* (Lieut. de frégate Jacques Kanon) made a dash for freedom. They left Sillery during the dark hours of 25th September, captured a four gun schooner which the English had sent to reconnoitre, passed the citadel at three in the morning and were greeted by some three hundred cannon balls. *Le Machault* survived and reached Brest 23rd September.

On board was the Chevalier Le Mercier with Vaudreuil's despatches. The Governor of New France begged the court to send food, munitions, clothes, arms and at least four thousand troops to rescue Canada in the spring of 1760. The Council in Versailles did resolve to make a great effort on Canada's behalf but Britain's superiority at sea frustrated their attempts. A constant blockade was maintained by the Royal Navy. Looking back we can now see that the fate of British North America was sealed when Hawke defeated the French at Quiberon Bay and thus destroyed or scattered what was to have been the main element of the expedition for the recapture of Quebec. British ability to prevent the enemy from moving men and material by sea reduced the French effort to a small fraction of what the situation required.

France's relief squadron consisted of a frigate and five small supply ships carrying munitions, stores and four hundred troops. Half the squadron was accounted for in the first few days by the British blockade; the remaining half arrived in the Gulf of St. Lawrence shortly after Colville had taken his squadron from Halifax to Quebec, as intelligence from a captured merchantman indicated. It was thus clear that the river was barred. Hence the French ships took refuge in the Restigouche area until further instructions could be obtained from Governor Vaudreuil in Montreal. The news of their arrival reached Louisbourg through Indians and traders. General Whitmore, the British army commander in the captured fortress, informed the naval commander, Captain J. (Foulweather Jack) Byron, R.N., and thus set the stage for the last battle.

My particular thanks are offered to the Admiralty for providing the text of Byron's letter, to the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich for the photographs of 18th century types of ships, to the New Brunswick Museum for the map of the Restigouche area, to Cdr. Peter Chance, R.C.N., for the surveys of the Restigouche River and Chaleur Bay, to the Public Archives of Canada, for several documents and much assistance.

Note 1 Occasional Paper Number Four, pp. 22, 23.

Note 2 This is the convoy which Admiral Philip Durell was supposed to intercept. Occasional Papers Number Three and Number Four.

PART ONE

Editor's Note

The following has been adapted from an article written in French by Mr. Gustave Lanctot and presented by Mr. Marius Barbeau at the May 1918 meeting of the Royal Society of Canada. The original text and all references are to be found in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa. It describes clearly and fairly the voyage of the last French convoy to Canada and its defeat in the Restigouche.

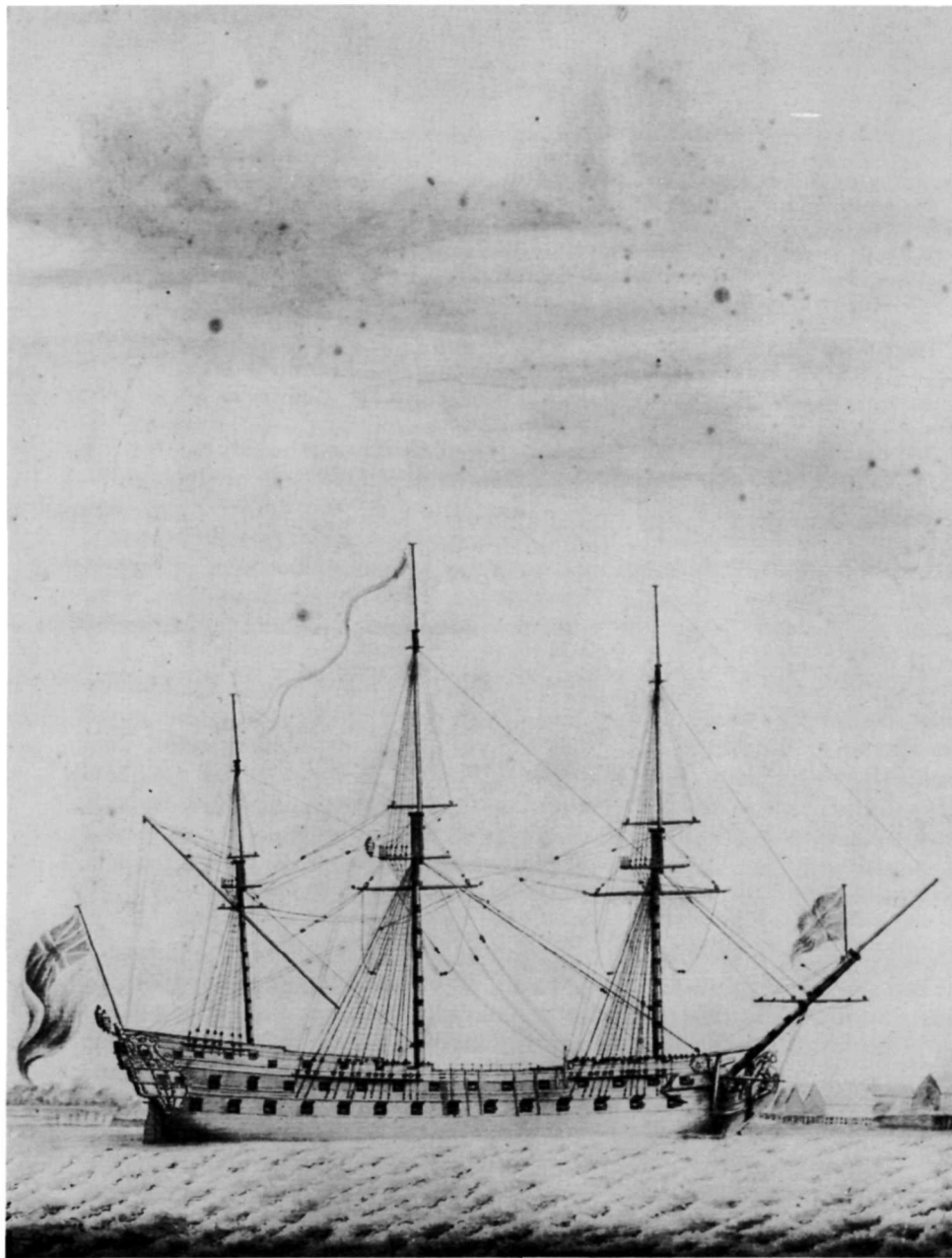
FRANCE'S LAST EFFORT IN CANADA

On April 10th 1760, the wind having shifted to the north-east, the convoy set sail. It consisted of the frigate ⁽¹⁾ **Le Machault**, Lieutenant of Frigate ⁽²⁾ La Giraudais in Command and also senior officer of the convoy, and five merchant ships: **Le Bienfaisant**, (Captain Grammont); **Le Marquis de Malauze**, (Captain Lartigue); **La Fidélité**, (Captain Kanon le Jeune); **Le Soleil**, (Captain Clemenceau); **L'Aurore**, (Captain Desmortiers). Four hundred soldiers were divided among the six ships and the holds were filled with munitions and supplies.

The reinforcements, who had been captured at Louisbourg and Quebec and later repatriated, were divided into 8 companies of fifty, each composed of two sergeants, three corporals, one officer cadet, one soldier cadet, two drummers and forty one soldiers. Each company was commanded by a captain and a lieutenant with an additional ensign for the first four companies. Captain Dangeac, the senior officer, assumed command of the troops when the companies were grouped together. They were supplied with powder, ball, bombs, bullets, and 1,000 rifles with 2,000 extra flints.

Their provisions consisted of 6,000 quintals ⁽³⁾ of flour, 4,000 quintals of salt pork and four hundred quintals of lard. The cargo also contained stockings, waistcoats and shoes for the troops as well as cloth, canvas and other articles for the Indians. All these things were distributed in nearly equal parts among the six ships so that each one had its share of munitions, provisions and merchandise.

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1. The eighteenth century frigate was a warship designed for twenty four to fifty guns arranged on two flush decks. She had three masts ship-rigged. The French were the leading ship designers of the period. Frigates were used as scouts and commerce raiders as well as in fleet actions and as independent sorties such as **Le Machault's**.
 2. Lieutenant de frégate was the intermediate of three grades between lieutenant de corvette and lieutenant de vaisseau.
 3. This was presumably the metric quintal equalling one hundred kilogrammes or 220.5 pounds avoirdupois as opposed to the 100 or 112 pounds of Canadian use.



Byron's ship, the 74 gun FAME, looked like H.M.S. INVINCIBLE. This wash drawing is attributed to Robert Short. Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

Four hundred men with a cargo of supplies and arms: this was the armament and the help with which it was planned to rescue Canada — a country invaded by three British armies! The Minister of War was forced to agree that these envoys were more than modest, having regard to their mission, but he expressed his regrets in the following enlightening manner: "My purpose," he wrote, "is not to expend more than we can afford to pay and to prefer aid which is prompt, even if it is modest, to powerful aid whose preparation would betray the aim of the expedition and would cause delay. I considered this decision preferable to any other". (4)

Before he sailed, Captain LaGiraudais received secret written instructions. They stated that it was most important for his convoy to reach Canada and that "no precaution was too great". (5) As soon as practicable he was to land someone with instructions to inform the governor of his arrival. (6) But if he found it impossible to get into the River St. Lawrence he was also, if at all possible, to report by messenger and then go to Louisiana and St. Dominique (7) to discharge his ships.

To these instructions was added the following significant postscript in the King's handwriting: "Sieur de la Giraudais is to understand that only in the event of absolute and well-founded impossibility does His Majesty permit him to go to Louisiana and then to St. Dominique, the prime object — to achieve which he must make the greatest efforts — being to reach Canada".

The convoy sailed out of the Gironde estuary during the morning of 10th April and the next day met two enemy sails which took up pursuit. La Giraudais hoisted the signal for the ships to disperse and, sailing astern of the convoy out of range of the enemies' guns, endeavoured to attract their pursuit while his charges escaped under full sail.

The following day **Le Marquis de Malauze** joined **Le Machault** and on the 17th **Le Bienfaisant** came up. The three ships continued their voyage in company without further incident. Of the others one was a total loss — only sixteen people escaped the wreck — and the remaining two ships were intercepted by the English before they reached the St. Lawrence.

4. French policy was to retain a fleet in being and to take no chances. The second part of the Minister's statement rings hollow but no doubt it was good enough at the time.

5. Another example of official policy.

6. Whoever wrote the instructions seemed unaware of the forests separating Montreal from wherever the convoy would anchor.

7. The present Dominican Republic and Haiti as well as the area around the lower Mississippi then belonged to France.

On 15th May **Le Machault** and her companions entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Near Bird Rocks, north of the Magdalen Islands, the frigate captured an enemy vessel bound for Quebec. On board *La Giraudais* found letters which told him that five or six English ships of the line, escorted by an equal number of frigates, had preceded him into the St. Lawrence six days previously. ⁽⁸⁾ Immediately a council of war was held on board **Le Machault**. It was decided to anchor in the Baie des Chaleurs well out of the enemy's reach, to send a messenger from there to Vaudreuil and to await his orders. ⁽⁹⁾ Consequently course was set to the south.

On 16th May, while in sight of Bonaventure, **Le Machault** captured four English merchant ships and the following day captured another inside the bay. *La Giraudais* spent the night at anchor off Little Bonaventure, sailed in the morning for the head of the bay and on the 19th went up the Restigouche River to within six leagues of the rapids. Near Battery Point he anchored his little fleet in a very snug anchorage. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Thus *La Giraudais* arrived too late. ⁽¹¹⁾ Before Vice-Admiral Saunders sailed from Quebec in October 1759 he foresaw the possibility of a French relief expedition when the river opened in the spring of 1760. Therefore he left Lord Colville in command of a squadron of 5 ships of the line, 3 frigates and 3 corvettes with orders to winter in Halifax and to sail for Quebec "as soon as possible in the spring". ⁽¹²⁾

As early as 20th March Colville's ships were ready to sail but because it was too early for navigation in the Gulf of St. Lawrence he set 14th April as the departure date. To guard against surprise in the meantime he sent the frigates **Richmond** and **Erebus** to patrol the route into Canada. Contrary winds kept the squadron in Halifax until 22nd April. Thus when the little French convoy was only half way across the Atlantic the English fleet with five ships of the line and three frigates guarding a convoy of merchant ships was at the gates of Canada. Held up by fog and ice Colville anchored before Quebec 18th May. He had been preceded by **Vanguard** and **Diana** whose arrival had forced General Lévis to raise the siege of the fortress the day before. ⁽¹³⁾

8. This was Lord Colville's squadron from Halifax. See Occasional Paper No. Four.

9. Governor Vaudreuil.

10. See map pages 12 - 13.

11. Under the circumstances it was fortunate that he was "too late" !

12. See Occasional Paper No. Three.

13. Without British supremacy in the North Atlantic, Quebec would surely have fallen to General Lévis' superior army.

Just as Colville arrived before Quebec La Giraudais entered the Restigouche River. His first act after anchoring on the 19th was to send Sieur de St. Simon with despatches addressed to the colonial authorities. When that was done he landed the 200 troops and the crews of the ships knowing that they needed recreation and that some time must elapse before Vaudreuil's reply was received. As biscuits were running short some of the men were ordered to build bread ovens while others were put to work constructing a battery on a point which commanded the channel. ⁽¹⁴⁾ At the same time the ships watered and stored in readiness to sail at a moment's notice. One of the schooners they had captured en route was unloaded and sent to keep watch with a French crew commanded by Sieur Savary LeRoy. She left the river 12th June and cruised up and down until the 22nd without meeting any enemy ship.

14. Still known as Battery Point. See also Pointe à la Garde named after Sieur Donat de la Garde, La Giraudais' 1st Lieut., who commanded the battery.

suffering and dying of hunger. During the whole winter they had been forced to live on beaver pelts, hides and even dog skins. Immediately meat and flour were issued to them and further supplies of these necessities were distributed later.

Above the village was a Micmac mission of 150 families who also were dependent upon the post.

The news that a French fleet had arrived in the Restigouche brought to the camp numerous Acadians driven by the hope of aid in the midst of their wretchedness. They came daily in schooners, boats and skiffs of every kind.

Meanwhile the English ⁽¹⁵⁾ remained constantly on the alert for they had to guard against a relief expedition from France. On 9th June while cruising along the Gaspé coast a detachment under Captain Adlam learned from the Indian chief at Richibucto that several French warships were at Restigouche. The next day this report was confirmed by the chief at Miramichi.

The news was immediately sent to Governor Whitmore at Louisbourg. He received it on the 17th and lost no time informing Captain Byron, commander of the naval forces on the station. Forthwith Byron prepared for sea and sailed on the 18th in search of the enemy. He took with him three ships of the line: his own command **Fame**, **Dorsetshire** (Captain Campbell), and **Achilles** (Capt. Sam Barrington); and two frigates: **Repulse** (Captain Allen) and **Scarborough** (Captain Scott).

The first night out bad weather separated the ships and **Fame** went on ahead.

On 21st June an Acadian pirate named Leblanc, who doubtless had observed the English ship, came from Miramichi with nine vessels to take refuge in the Restigouche after a successful cruise against enemy merchant ships.

During the morning of the 22nd the French learned that **Fame** was off Heron Island and the same day LeRoy's schooner was attacked by four boats from the English ship. The French lieutenant realized that his scouting guns and his ten swivels were no match for **Fame's** armament. He therefore beached his schooner on Magouacha Point, landed all his 47 men and set off through the woods for Restigouche. The English seized the schooner. ⁽¹⁶⁾

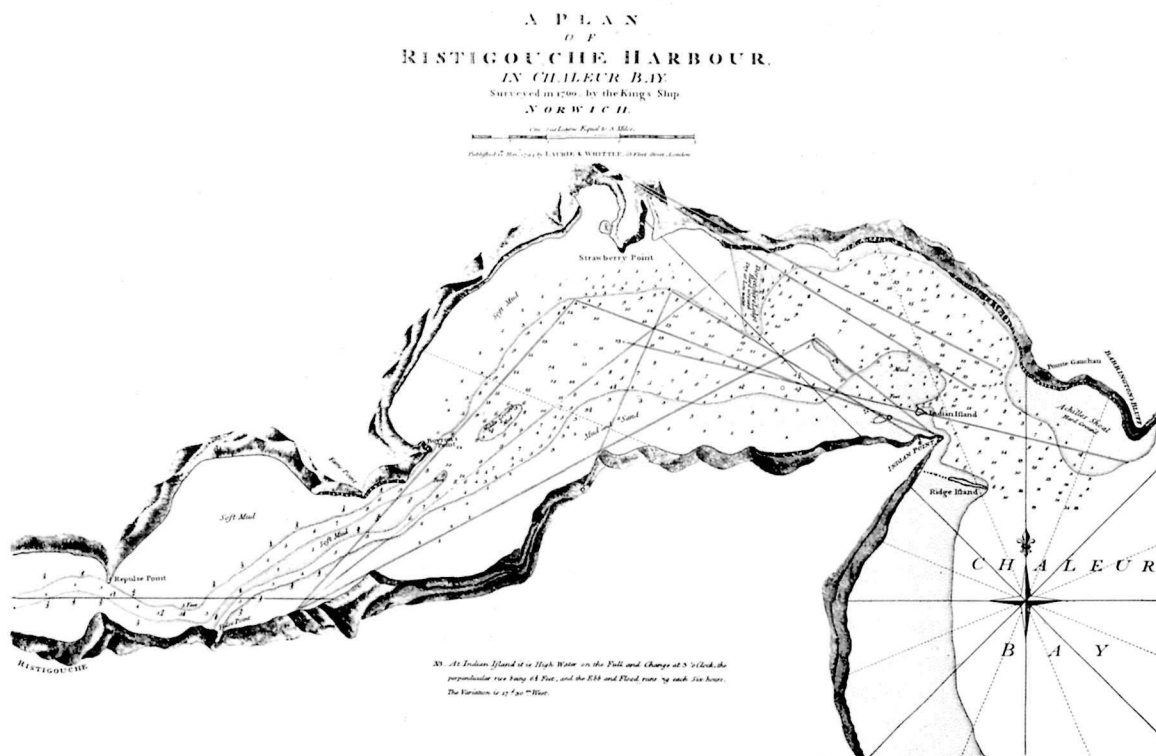
15. In addition to Lord Colville's squadron in the St. Lawrence, Capt. Byron had a powerful force based on Louisbourg.

16. This schooner played a vital part in the British operations in the Restigouche. She is frequently mentioned in Capt. Byron's despatch.

Byron set out in one of the ship's boats to look for the French ships and found them four or five leagues upriver anchored off Battery Point. He returned to his ship and gave orders to sound the channel which he found narrow and hard to navigate. Despite all difficulties he got his ship up to within three leagues of the French.

The next day, 23rd June, while trying to advance upriver, Byron ran aground and for a time seemed destined to stay there. The French considered boarding *Fame* but they wisely changed their minds. After ten hours hard work, in which the captured schooner played an important part, *Fame* was re-floated.

About the same time Lieutenant LeRoy and his men reached the French post. When La Giraudais learned the enemy's strength he landed 4 twelve pounders and 1 six pounder and made haste to construct a battery on the point commanding the river. This spot still is shown on modern charts as Battery Point. To block the channel he sank several small vessels at half range from the new battery and then sent the ships as far up-river as possible with orders to land their provisions and other supplies.



The sixty men and seven women who had been captured in the English prizes were collected in the hold of a schooner under the guard of a detachment of soldiers. This removed the prisoners as any threat to their captors and at the same time gave them security from any attack by the Indians.

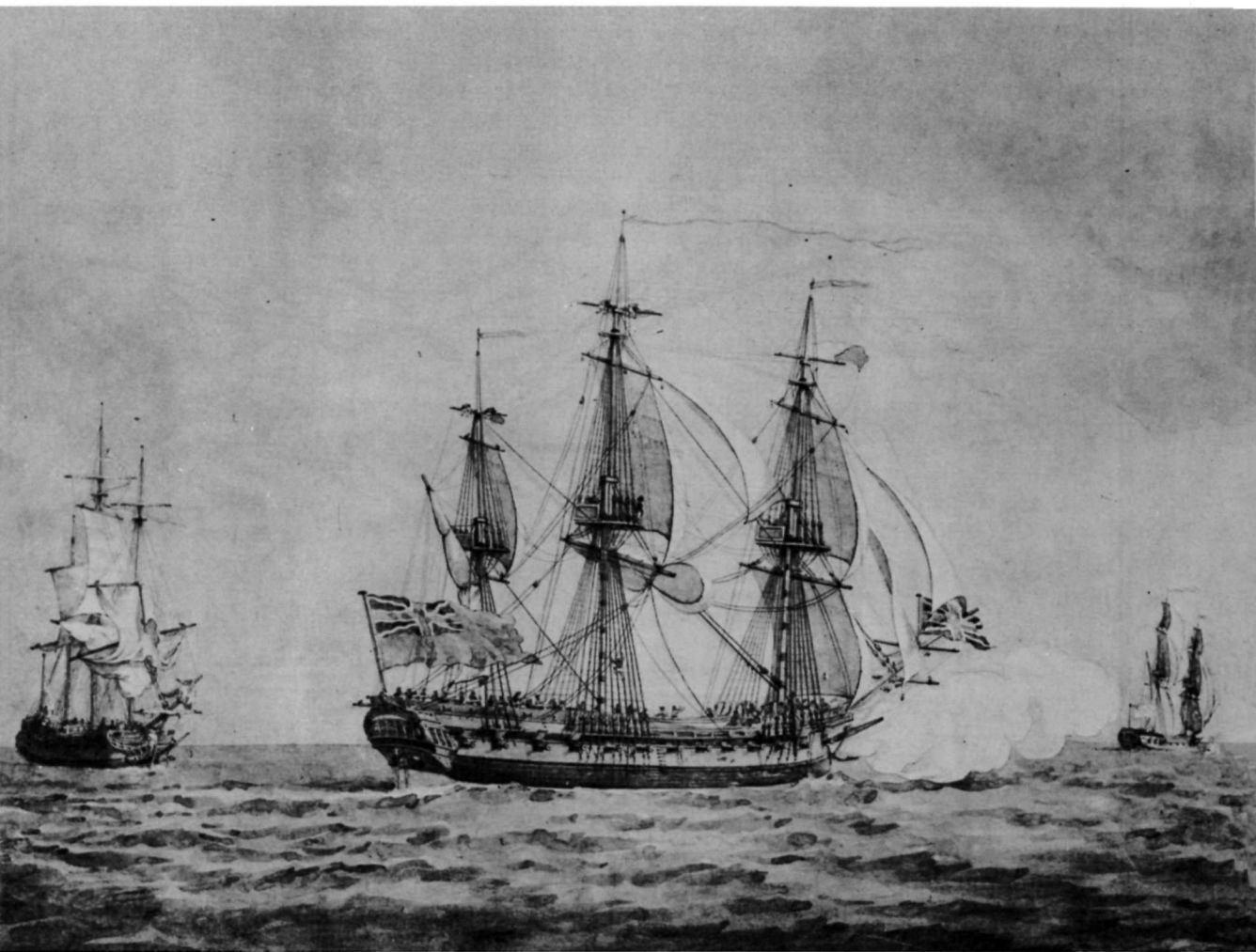
On the 24th the rest of Byron's squadron reached the mouth of the Restigouche. The two frigates **Repulse** and **Scarborough** rejoined **Fame** while **Achilles** and **Dorsetshire** remained four or five leagues down-river.

The two sides were now drawn up. The English had 3 ships of the line: **Fame** (74 guns), **Dorsetshire** (70 guns), **Achilles** (60 guns); two frigates: **Repulse** (32 guns), **Scarborough** (29 guns); and the four gun schooner which they had captured on the 22nd. The total manpower was about 1,700. The French had just one frigate — **Le Machault** (20 guns) — and two merchantmen: **Le Marquis de Malauze** (16 guns) and **Le Bienfaisant** (12 guns). The frigate carried a crew of 150 and the other two about 100 each. In addition there were some twenty schooners and small boats (most of which had been captured from the English) but they had no fighting potential. M. Dangeac had under his command 207 officers and men plus some two to three hundred Acadians drawn from Restigouche and from the small vessels and an equal number of Micmacs from the Indian mission. In their total the French forces varied from 12 to 15 hundred but, whatever their use on land, they had little value in defence against a naval attack.

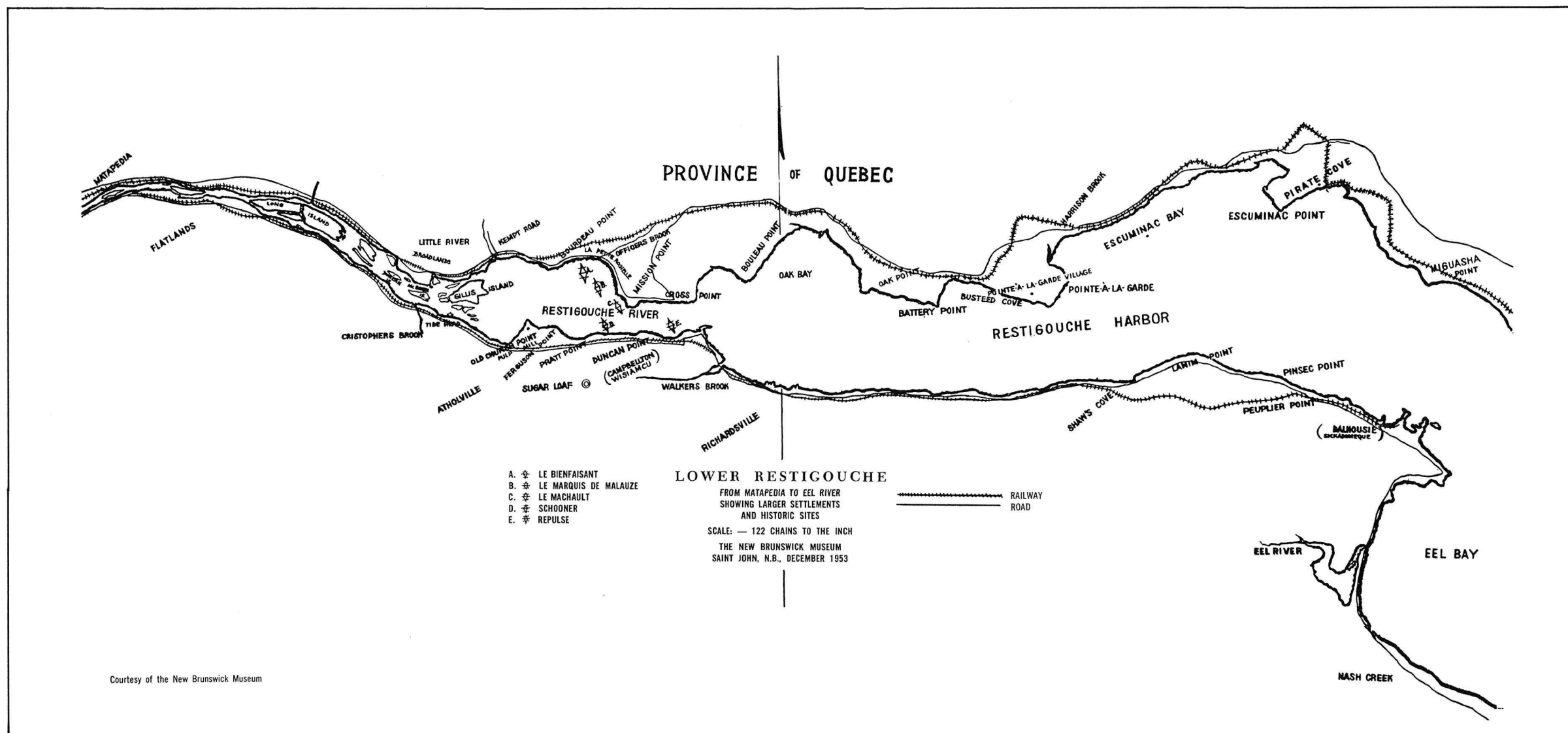
As soon as the squadron assembled, the English tried to close the battery but the shallow channel grounded the ships a dozen times and they took three days to cover the nine intervening miles.

The French did not waste the time they were given. The sailors worked their ships up-river lightening them to gain draught. In the beginning La Giraudais had decided to anchor his ship near the battery for support and for the cover of her guns but when the English frigates appeared he took **Le Machault** up and rejoined the other ships 28th June. The battery was made ready as quickly as possible and by the night of the 26th/27th it was completed. Dangeac manned it against a surprise attack with a detachment of 60 soldiers, 100 Acadians and a few Indians all under Captain de la Vallière.

It was none too soon. On the 27th, **Fame**, the two frigates and the schooner finally succeeded in mooring just beyond the chain of sunken vessels. Immediately the battery under Sieur Donat de la Garde, (Giraudais' second in command), which covered the north channel, opened fire and received a vigorous reply. Shots were exchanged until nightfall when Byron withdrew to the south channel. The following day the English came forward again and the cannonade was resumed between the frigates and the battery. This duel — more noisy than effective — was repeated with various breaks from 28th June to 3rd July.



This coloured etching by Pollard after T. Mitchell represents a typical frigate of the 1770's. H.M.S. REPULSE of 32 guns was of this type. Courtesy National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.



Although they were in full view of the enemy and exposed to the dropping fire of guns superior both in number and in calibre the French proved their courage and tenacity in the face of opponents who were protected by their ships. But on 3rd July Byron moved *Fame* into the south channel which enabled him to get beyond and behind the French post. Thus he took the French position "in reverse" with his superior weapons and forced the defenders to evacuate in the face of unanswerable fire. After spiking their guns La Garde

and La Vallière retreated with their men to rejoin the French flotilla. Then Byron landed a detachment which destroyed the battery and also some 200 houses which composed the village of Restigouche.

During the engagement the French ships discharged most of their cargoes and moved 3 leagues up-river but not before they had gone aground several times. The English, who were determined to get at their foes, worked hard to

clear a channel for their ships by raising some of the sunken vessels which blocked the way. They spent all of the 6th at this task and on the 7th imitated their opponents by lightening the two frigates as much as possible (there were barely 2 to 2½ fathoms of water in the river) and after infinite pains succeeded in working them up to within a short distance of the French flotilla.

Inferior as he was, La Giraudais still tried to block the enemy, or at least to delay them as much as possible, in order to gain the time required to land his supplies. His knowledge of the channel combined with the shallow draught of his vessels had enabled him to get up-river faster and farther than the English. In the time thus gained the land forces and some of the sailors built two new batteries, one on a point of the north shore and the other on the south shore where the river narrows appreciably between Campbellton and Cross Point. The two batteries were so situated that they could cover the channel with their cross fire.

The south battery was under the command of Lieutenant Gilbert of the **Machault**. It consisted of 3 four-pounders and was manned by officers and men from the three ships assisted by several hundred Acadians and Indians.

The north battery was much more powerful. It had 3 twelve-pounders from the **Machault** and 2 six-pounders from the **Marquis de Malauze**. La Giraudais' first lieutenant, Reboul, was in charge and the guns were manned by a group of sailors from the **Machault** reinforced by thirty soldiers commanded by M. Dubois-Berthelot.

La Giraudais moored the **Machault** in the middle of the channel so as to support the north battery with his augmented port guns — 10 twelve-pounders and 1 six-pounder. Only 3 twelve-pounders were retained on the starboard side. to guard against a possible attack by the ship's boats of the English warships. La Giraudais kept on board seventy of his men and a detachment of forty-five soldiers under Dangeac.

All the other sailors and soldiers were ordered to haul the small boats, which were laden with royal stores, within rifle shot of the shore. This hasty improvisation protected the supplies that could not be accommodated in the storage depot which had been arranged by the French on their arrival. A guard of soldiers, sailors and Acadians was mounted under Lieutenant Dupont-Duvivier.

Upstream beyond the **Machault**, **Bienfaisant** and **Marquis de Malauze** were moored. A number of prisoners were in the latter's hold to preserve them from the Indians. A detachment of twenty-five men under two sergeants formed their guard.

As a final measure to keep the English ships out of range La Giraudais blocked the channel with a second series of vessels which were sunk within half gun range beyond the north battery.

Such was the tactical situation when **Repulse**, **Scarborough** and the captured schooner came within range of the south battery on 7th July.

When Byron saw that his great ships could not navigate the Restigouche River he distributed their best officers and men throughout the frigates and put a crew of one hundred in the schooner under one of his own officers. ⁽¹⁷⁾ The schooner tried to take soundings and also to silence the French battery but was forced by heavy fire to withdraw. A second time she returned to the attack and again was driven off. Finally her men took the boats and towed the frigates up-river despite the attentions of the battery. When the frigates came level with the French post they poured in broadside after broadside and soon compelled Gilbert and his garrison to abandon their weapons and retreat.

Byron spent the 7th getting rid of the battery that barred his way and then turned his attention to the French ships which were the real object of his search. At dawn on the 8th **Scarborough** and **Repulse** got up as far as the block-ships protecting the north shore and were thus well within range.

About five in the morning the battle commenced. The English frigates carried out a violent bombardment of both La Giraudais' frigate and of Reboul's battery. Both replied vigorously but neither of the other French ships took part in the engagement because their crews were manning the batteries. Both sides were brave and keen and the gunfire continued energetically well into the morning. Despite the superior fire of their enemies the French showed remarkable firmness and gave the frigates as good as they received.

Repulse in the van, was hit many times. Sails were cut to pieces, masts were toppled, the hull was pierced in several places and finally she was holed at the water line. Then she sank and touched bottom but because the river was so shallow her crew was able to repair the damage, refloat her and resume the fight. **Machault** on the French side received most of the English fire. She, too, was hit at the waterline and her hold filled to a depth of seven or eight feet. However, apart from these events, damage and casualties were light for both opponents.

Suddenly after several hours lively exchange **Machault's** fire slackened:

17. Capt. Byron states that he armed the schooner with four six-pounders and manned her with fifty men under Mr. Cummins, 2nd Lieut of **Fame**. Cummins was wounded during the attack on the south battery. He was relieved in command by Mr. Marshall, 3rd Lieut. of **Fame**.

she was running out of powder. When she sailed from France she had 1,100 charges on board but after supplying the three land batteries only 450 remained for the day of battle. The contractor, who had been supposed to provide a larger quantity, had skimped his contract. La Giraudais sent a boat to fetch powder from the merchant ship where the munitions were stored. Unhappily the owner of the boat became frightened and did not return although powder was available.

La Giraudais was now powderless under the guns of his enemies. He held a council of war with Dangeac who declared that he refused to leave the ship unless she were blown up. The situation was most grave. The last charge would be used up any moment; there were several casualties, including Loppinat; water was rising in the hold; the hundred men on board could not hope to resist the boarding attack that must surely come when **Machault** ceased fire. The French ships could not escape up-river and therefore would fall into the hands of their enemies. Confronted with this problem La Giraudais decided to destroy his ships rather than leave them to be captured. He evacuated the wounded, set fire to the **Machault** and retreated to the shore with his sailors and soldiers in perfect order under the enemy barrage. **Bienfaisant** followed Machault's example: she was set on fire and abandoned. All the small boats came ashore without loss or hindrance.

There remained **Marquis de Malauze** with the English prisoners below deck. First the guns were dismounted and landed; then the prisoners were ordered to come on deck and embark on a raft. However, it proved too light to hold them all. They therefore refused to leave the ship because they were more frightened of falling into the hands of the Indians. Under these circumstances La Giraudais and Dangeac did not fire the **Marquis de Malauze** as they had the other two ships but decided to leave the ship for the prisoners in order not to risk their lives or expose them to the excesses of the Indians. This decision was communicated to them with the announcement that the vessel was theirs and that they must take their chances of survival. The guards made them go back into the hold and then left the ship after closing the hatches. When they were left alone the prisoners became alarmed that the ship would blow up. They broke down a bulkhead, forced open the hatches and found themselves at liberty. While searching the ship to find out whether it had been set on fire they found an old British flag. This they hoisted as a signal to their country men but the smoke from **Machault** and **Bienfaisant**, which were now burning furiously, hid them from sight. Fearing a night attack by the Indians with its dreadful threat of scalping, the prisoners were naturally anxious to escape and they ransacked the ship for weapons. All they found was a barrel of scalping knives. They armed themselves with these, with sticks and with a light gun and prepared to sell their lives dearly. They increased the size of the raft and set up a sail with the object of moving down-river to the English frigates. Then a young prisoner who was an excellent swimmer leapt into the water and succeeded in covering the league which separated them from

Repulse. When the frigate's commanding officer learned the situation he despatched Captain Wood with nine boats to relieve the prisoners. The boats passed bravely under the guns of the French battery, while it in turn was bombarded by the frigates, reached the prisoners and brought them all to safety. Before they left the English fired **Marquis de Malauze** ⁽¹⁸⁾ but lost six men in the operation.

When he got ashore La Giraudais joined Duvivier's picket with a group of sailors and some Acadians for the defence of the small vessels up-river which had not yet been unloaded. The battery meanwhile continued its duel with the frigates. When the two French ships were burnt out Byron sent the schooner and seventeen boats with twenty-five men in each to capture or destroy the rest of the French flotilla. They got safely past the battery and launched an attack.

La Giraudais had nothing heavier than muskets. Rather than see the vessels lying some distance from shore fall into the hands of the enemy, he set fire to four English prizes. Then he and Duvivier put up a stout defence of the ten others that lay within musket range. They succeeded in preventing the English from landing and forced them to retire empty-handed about 11 p.m.

The following day, 9th July, the English frigates and the schooner went down the Restigouche and rejoined the larger warships. **Repulse** sailed for Halifax to repair her considerable damage while the remainder of the squadron stayed at anchor in the river. When the enemy departed the French set about organizing, in the virgin forest, shelter for the supplies and goods that survived the engagement as well as a place of defence against a new attack.

Thus ended the battle of 8th July, 1760. It was really nothing more than a cannonade prolonged over several days with equal losses in personnel: the French suffered thirty casualties including several officers, the English had twelve killed and twelve wounded.

Although the losses were equal, nevertheless the battle remained a decisive English victory. The disproportion of forces made this result inevitable. All the same the French gained honour from their exploits. For 17 days a small frigate and two merchantmen held in check five warships with 256 guns. For 17 days they maintained their fire and prevented the enemy from landing. For days at a time over a front of fifteen miles, they stood up bravely to superior artillery and only when their powder failed did they set their ships on fire as a last resort. Finally they saved most of their belongings and guns, several small ships

18. The remnants of the ship were raised in 1939 and restored to form an historical monument.

and all their troops and ships' companies. Undoubtedly their knowledge of the channel and the shallowness of the river helped them greatly but the senior officers drew the correct conclusions about their position and blocked the channel judiciously with ships that were useless for fighting. All ranks showed great courage and remarkable tenacity.

The English, for their part, fully realized the aim of their expedition: the three French ships were completely destroyed and four French prizes met the same fate. In addition the French lost the vessels sunk to block the channel and their important cargoes, valued at 200,000 pounds. Finally the English destroyed the village of Restigouche. These considerable results were obtained at the cost of a few casualties and extensive damage to the frigate **Repulse**. Well led by their officers the ships' companies displayed courage and matching endurance.

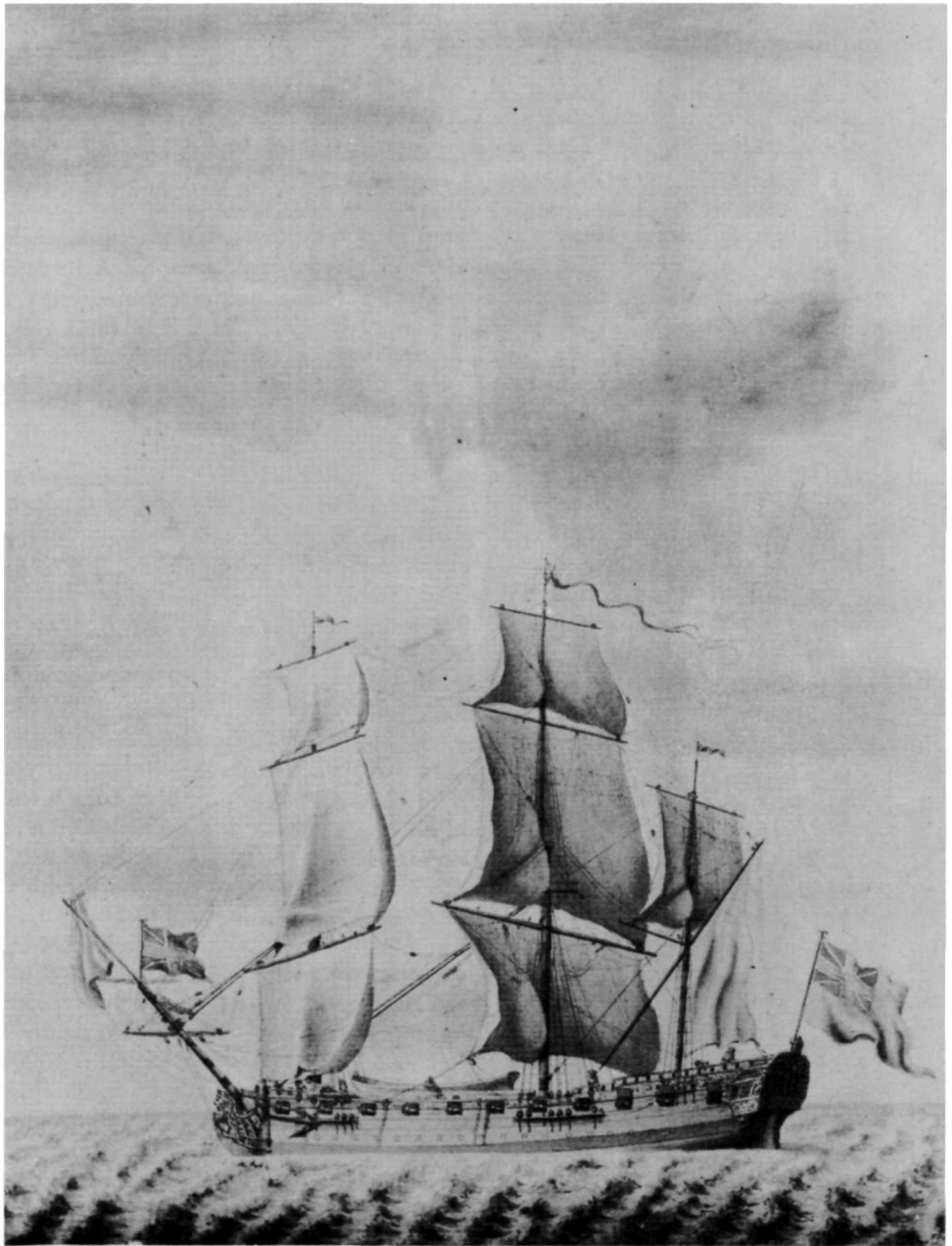
The French expedition was completely ruined. On 17th July the English squadron left the river for the return voyage to Louisbourg. The same day ⁽¹⁹⁾ M. de St. Simon arrived from Montreal with orders for La Giraudais to proceed to France with Governor Vaudreuil's despatches. He sailed 10th August in an Acadian schooner.

The remainder of the troops and crews stayed at Restigouche under Dangeac. At the end of September he received orders from Vaudreuil to return to France with all those under his command. But when his flotilla emerged from the river 15th October an English squadron, which Amherst had despatched to the spot, forced him to retreat. ⁽²⁰⁾ The commander, Major Elliott, handed Dangeac a letter from Vaudreuil instructing him to obey the terms of capitulation agreed upon at Montreal. On 30th October the French troops laid down their arms and embarked for France.

This was the epilogue of the last convoy sent by France to Canada.

19. From 19th May to 17th July was a long time to wait for orders but the journey from the Restigouche to Montreal and back through the Canadian bush must have been a trying ordeal.

20. This was actually part of Colville's squadron. See Occasional Paper No. 4, page 25.



H.M.S. SCARBOROUGH was similar to the 22 gun WINCHESTER shown here in a wash drawing attributed to Robert Short. Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

PART TWO

Editor's Note

The copy of Captain Byron's letter, which describes the Restigouche engagement, has been provided by the Admiralty through Commodore Paul Taylor, R.C.N. The footnotes to the letter have also been supplied by the Admiralty.

Copy of letter from Captain the Hon. John Byron, R.N., on board H.M.S. FAME, Bay of Chaleurs, 11 July, 1760

FAME, Bay of Chaleurs, July 11th, 1760.

Sir,

Please to acquaint their Lordships that after I had finished the letter I send enclosed with this, giving an account of my proceedings till the 18th of last month, I received late that evening the letter of intelligence from General Whitmore which I now likewise enclose to their Lordships. † I immediately waited upon the Governor and applied to him for Pilots for all the ships and gave orders to their respective Captains to get everything ready for sailing the next morning. Our sails being all on shore we got them off with the Governor's assistance before the morning, bent them, and got to sea before noon, which was as soon as the wind would permit us, having given the Rendezvous off Point Goacha in the Bay of Chaleurs. The Pilots the General sent us all declared they knew nothing of the matter and so it proved. At night we were off Flint Island when it came on to blow very hard at SW with very thick rainy weather. I made the signal to bring to. The next day it continuing to blow strong we saw but one ship in company and presently lost sight of her again. At noon it clearing a little I made the signal to make sail and soon after for altering the course. At 4 I saw the Island of St. Pauls but no ship in company. The next morning I made the Madelaine Islands and next day got into the Bay of Chaleurs. I there saw a schooner and chac'd her under French Colours but lost her in the night when we were very near to her. The 22nd we got up to the Island Tischiniket and Point Goacha (as we took it to be) bearing NW about 4 miles, and now being at a loss for the channel and the water shoal and falling almost calm we came to an anchor. The Haze clearing from the land we saw a schooner at an anchor close under Point Goacha. We immediately hoisted the boats out, mann'd and arm'd them and sent them after her, she slipp'd her cable and with the air there was put before it, our boats came fast up with her

† Not included here.

engaged and took her but not before they had run her ashore they had upwards of forty men on board, fired several times at our People but hurt none. She was a large vessel, had six carriage guns two of them six pounders and ten swivels. Mr. Cummins, 2nd Lt. who commanded the boats got her ° easily off and brought her to us that night but all her People saved themselves in the woods. The 24 I sent the boats to sound the channel and found it extremely narrow. We got under sail with the wind right at end and made several tries but gained very little as she had hardly gather'd way before it was time to go about again. At noon we came to an anchor finding it impossible to get higher without a leading wind. I then took the barge arm'd and went in her if possible to find where the French ships lay. After rowing four or five leagues I discover'd several ships and vessels at an anchor about 2 leagues from us, and then return'd to the ship. The next day the boats found a channel of ten and eleven fathom for two leagues above the ship, but very intricate, the mud banks running out from each shore at a great distance. We weigh'd with the wind at East keeping the Prize and boats ahead and got in sight of the ships but was obliged to let go our anchor having but ten feet water within a quarter of a cables length of us. Two or our boats that had been sounding were pursued by eleven of the enemy's boats who left them as soon as they saw our ship. In the morning having a light air of wind we weigh'd with an intention of running up immediately to the ships and a Battery we saw they had near where they lay upon the North Shore, but at 9 fathoms the Channel was so narrow and the tide so rapid that the ship would not answer the Helm and got aground. We started a great deal of water and carried out the Stream and Kedge anchors astern but hove them both home, we then carried out the small Bower with two cables an end in the Prize, and about eleven that night got the ship off again. I have since heard the French intended to have come down to us and boarded us as we lay, as they took us for a single deck ship, and indeed I expected they would have attempted something in the situation we was in. The next day the 27th it proving quite calm I endeavoured all I could to recover our small Bower anchor but was at last oblig'd to desist till one of our Frigates should come in as it lay in shoal water and the schooner not able to weigh it for want of sufficient purchase. As soon as the wind sprung up we were getting under way again to go up when we saw four sail to the eastward which proved to be our ships. The Dorsetshire and Achilles anchor'd off Pt. Goacha but the Repulse and Scarborough taking us for a French ship endeavour'd to get up to us. The Repulse got aground and lay there part of the night. The Scarborough anchor'd in the channel near her. I sent them assistance and got them up to us the next morning. We then all three weigh'd keeping the Prize and boats ahead of us but were obliged frequently to bring up with the Stream anchor astern, the channel was so narrow there was no room for a ship to swing. At 2 in the afternoon the Repulse touch'd the ground and

° Master's Log says: " . . . named the Aimable Catiche, and supposed to be fitted out for war."

sheer'd aboard of us but did us no harm, a little after both the Repulse and Scarborough were aground not above two cables length ahead of us, the schooner at the same time got aground a little ahead of them in five feet water. We let go the best Bower but could not veer a third of a cable out. Soon after the Battery fir'd at both the Frigates but did them little damage. The North shore which we was very near was lin'd with musketry and kept firing at us from the woods but our shot soon dispersed them. A french Frigate of thirty guns lay moor'd head and stern a little above the Battery. Two large ships which appear'd to us to be storeships got farther up towards the head of the Bay with many small vessels. We sent all the assistance we could to get the Frigates off but they were no sooner afloat but they were aground again for two days together. We discover'd at low water the enemy had sunk many vessels near the Battery. The 28th the French Frigate follow'd the two storeships and came to an anchor near them; the two former we observed were aground at low water. Our boats had found a channel for some little way up on the southern shore but so narrow that the Frigates could not swing there. The Battery was continually firing either at the ships or boats in sounding. We resolved if possible to warp the Fame near to it and got her into a half four when the Battery began to fire at us, their shot did not reach us by two ships length. We fir'd our lower deckers and they all ran away, having we observed split some of their guns in overcharging them. The schooner cover'd our boats in landing, and the People found four twelve pounders and one six split and burst to pieces. They burnt the woodwork of the Battery and carriages of the guns and above a hundred and fifty houses with all the furniture which they had not time to take with them. The Battery was regularly built. We sent our boat after a french boat going to the ships, the People got ashore but ours brought the boat off which had powder, muskets etc. I put four six pounders more into the schooner and mann'd her with fifty men and appointed Mr. Cummins to command her. The Dorsetshire and Achilles lay between three and four leagues below us. I advis'd their Captains not to attempt coming any higher as it was attended with so much difficulty. The Achilles had already been aground but got off some hours after without receiving any damage and the Dorsetshire very narrowly escaped. I ordered them to send us all the boats they could spare well arm'd besides a number of men for both the Frigates. The Repulse and Scarborough endeavour'd to get higher but both got aground at last. Captain Allen return'd and told me it was impossible to go farther for there was not two fathom water. Giving up all hopes of finding a channel I came to a resolution of going that night and boarding the Frigate with the Schooner and boats, everything being settled for that purpose and Captain Allen agreeing with me it was the only thing left to be attempted, when Captain Stott came on board and told me that Mr. Gibbs, 3rd Lt. of the Dorsetshire, had found a channel for the Frigates close in upon the North Shore, which they had been prevented finding before the Battery was taken by the continual fire upon the boats from the people in the woods, upon which I ordered both Frigates to warp into that channel as fast as possible, and to lighten their ships by leaving their anchors and cables they

should not want, with their booms and everything else they could get out of them. About this time, seeing a number of men at work upon a point of land on the South shore, I order'd Mr. Cummins to annoy them all he could with his great guns, but he going too near let go his anchor within musket shot. The French and Indians kept a constant fire upon him behind a breastwork, he was presently brought on board of us having received a musket ball in his body which was afterwards cut out of his back, he is now out of all danger and will be soon well again. Soon after Mr. Lernean was brought on board with his leg shattered by a musket ball, he was a Midshipman belonging to the Achilles, his leg was taken off but he died two days after. ° A Marine † belonging to us was wounded in the body. The Repulse got aground several times in going up, as did the Scarborough, the latter opposite to the firing battery had a sergeant of Marines shot through the head in the boat by a musket from the woods and one of the Dorsetshire's men shot through the leg. I sent Mr. Marshall, third Lt. of the Fame to command the schooner, he went immediately to the South point again to prevent their working, but had not been long there before they open'd masqued Battery upon him of three guns and drove him back to the Frigates. The moment the Repulse could get that length she silenc'd that Battery and having sounded in the night and gaug'd the channel she and the Scarborough got up the next morning near the furthest north point upon which was another Battery of four twelve pounders and two sixes, and which all the French ships had warp'd round. The French Frigate lay close to it moor'd head and stern. About nine the Battery and Frigate began to fire and the Repulse got aground in a very bad position with her head on to them. The Scarborough did all she could to cover her till she got off. Neither one or the other got half so near as they could have wish'd for want of depth of water. They both kept a very brisk fire till eleven when the french Frigate struck and the Battery was silenced for a time but began to fire again at intervals. Captain Allen was afraid to attempt sending any boats to the Frigate as he imagin'd they intended to blow her up, which accordingly happen'd about one o'clock, with several of their wounded in her, presently after one of the storeships blew up, she was pierced for thirty guns but had only sixteen on board, she had her whole cargo on board which consisted of warlike stores. About this time an Englishman swam from the other storeship ° which lay about a league from them and acquainted Captain Allen that there was on board of her sixty two † English prisoners in the hold who the French had left fetter'd and handcuffed, but they expecting to be blown up every moment had contrived to get themselves loose and begg'd he would send the boat for them if possible, upon which the schooner and the boats went up, the latter under the command of Lt. Rutherford first Lt. of the Repulse, and notwith-

° Master's Log says he died on 7th July.

† John Flemming — subsequently died (Master's Log).

° Which had previously "hoisted an English Jack at his masthead" (Master's Log of the REPULSE).

† "58 men and a boy" (Master's Log of the REPULSE).

standing the fire from the Battery and musketry boarded the ship, releas'd all the Prisoners amongst whom were many Masters of vessels and merchants and then set her on fire, her cargo consisted of wine and brandy, bales of goods and warlike stores. Several of our People got into the hold at the liquors and though they were frequently call'd to that the ship was on fire would not come up, Mr. Shuttleworth a midshipman belonging to the Achilles, a young man of good character, was unfortunately burnt in her with five more, four of them * belonged to the Fame. She burnt so quick that even those upon deck had hardly time to save themselves. The schooner at this time was so near her that it was thought she must have been burnt with her, Mr. Marshal and Mr. Weir, Lt. of Marines, with all those on board her that could swim jump'd overboard and were taken up by the boats who at last tow'd her clear. Le Blanc who had done so much mischief to our trade came in here the day before we did (in the Fame) with nine vessels from Miramiche and all the inhabitants from there, as they intended this place for their chief settlement. We burnt and destroy'd ships, sloops and schooners, twenty two, there is but two small vessels left haul'd so far up as a little River that it was impossible for our boats to get at them. Most of the vessels destroy'd had valuable cargoes. The Frigate had thirty twelve pounders, was commanded by Mons. Le Gerandre † and was called the Marchand. † We have two Deserters from her and one of the Canadians. The English Masters of the vessels we releas'd and the merchants say the French have lost at least two hundred thousand pounds besides the settlements being ruin'd. The French had killed and wounded about thirty men amongst which was the Major of the Troops. Their force on shore consisted of about a thousand men, three hundred Regulars the rest Canadians and Indians. The Frigate had three hundred and fifty men. Captain Allen shew'd the seaman and good officer in every respect upon this occasion, he had kill'd on board the Repulse only two men and seven wounded, one of those kill'd belong'd to us as did some of the wounded. The Scarborough had only one kill'd and none wounded. I have order'd the Repulse to Halifax, as her rigging, masts and hull are much shattered and there was no stores left at Louisbourg when we came away. The moment he is ready again I have order'd him to join us at Louisbourg. I shall proceed for that place as soon as we get up our anchor and cables we left in the Bay before we came up here. The Fame has been aground here six or seven times and is very leaky but so she has been ever since we left England.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servt.

J. BYRON.

I have not sent the state and condition of His Majesty's Ships under my command as some of them are now four leagues from us and Captain Allen will sail immediately.

* "Pinnace men — viz. Brown Reynolds, Hugh Delly, Christopher Barnet and John Oneal" — (Master's Log of the FAME).

† Master's Log of the FAME says: "Mons. Girandais" and "Machault".

PART THREE

Editor's Note

The following articles are among Vaudreuil's instructions to the officers at Restigouche. They have been translated from the handwritten French provided by the Public Archives of Canada in "Archives des Colonies, Series C "A" Vol 87, p. 422. It will be noted that Dangeac is spelled "Danjac" and La Giraudais "La Girauday".

ARTICLE 19

As the English may on their part also plan to extend their possessions, M. Danjac is to take every step within his power to prevent them from gaining a foothold in our territory.

ARTICLE 20

M. Danjac is to engage the Acadians who have vessels to fit out and put in service. For this purpose we addressed to M. Bourdon last winter six blank Admiralty commissions. He will take care to distribute them to those Acadians who are in the best position to provide suitable vessels. We think they are two named Gautier and Beausoleil. We recommend them to him in view of their zeal and past services.

ARTICLE 21

We are sending to M. Danjac a list of the vessels which wintered at Restigouche. He is to waste no time putting the boat **L'Oiseau Royal** into condition — or any other better able to go to sea. He will have **Sieur La Girauday**, Captain of the **Machault**, appoint a good officer in command, and the pilots and sailors required to complement this vessel are to be taken in equal numbers from the three ships. We intend this vessel to carry the despatches which we are constantly sending to M. Danjac for the court. He is to victual this vessel with supplies as we have received them from France. ⁽¹⁾

ARTICLE 22

When **Machault** and the two other ships have been unloaded they are free to go wherever they choose unless they have a special order from the King. However, M. Danjac is to warn **Sieur La Girauday** that we have received advice that the English were sending a large vessel to meet him and that he should watch out for it.

ARTICLE 23

Sieur La Girauday and the captains of the two other ships are to retain their prizes and take them wherever seems best.

NOTE (1). Lieut. La Giraudais was an excellent naval officer as all references prove. He added to his renown by bringing his Acadian schooner safely to Santander which he reached 3rd September 1760.

