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Alexander V Campbell *The Royal American Regiment, an Atlantic Microcosm 1755-1782*, University of Oklahoma Press 2010, ISBN 978-0-8061-4102-2; pp356

Probably the most familiar association with the 60th Royal American Regiment is its role in the Peninsular War, when its 5th Battn was among the first exponents of 'rifle' tactics, skirmishing and aimed fire with a firearm capable of great accuracy. Before this participation in this tactical development, however, the regiment exerted a considerable influence in the colonisation of North America, and it is this that forms the subject of this new study by Alexander V Campbell.

The 60th was an unusual corps from the outset. In the wake of Braddock's defeat in North America in 1755, it was decided to strengthen the garrison of that region without exerting a drain upon existing forces by forming a regiment of foreign Protestants. The officer charged with the formation of what was envisaged originally as a mercenary regiment was James Prevost, Swiss by birth and previously in Dutch service who recruited quite widely in Europe, principally in Germany. Doubts about the wisdom of forming an entirely foreign regiment, however, led to a leavening of recruits from Britain and from those already in the American colonies; in 1757, for example, just over one-third of the rank and file were foreigners, about one-tenth American, a quarter English and the remainder Irish and Scots. Accounts of the regiment have been published previously, notably the first of the five volumes of *The Annals of the King's Royal Rifle Corps* (Lewis Butler and Sir Steuart Hare, 1913-32) but the present work is not a conventional regimental history that follows in detail every movement and action of the four battalions of the 60th that existed at this time; rather, it places the regiment in a wider context by covering not only its purely military role but as a factor in the colonisation and development of the North American territories. To this end, the work is divided into six principal sections: on Prevost and the foundation of the regiment; its recruitment and composition; the regiment at war; life within the ranks; interaction between the 60th and the Native Americans; and its part in post-Seven Years War North America. The research is exhaustive with about a third of the book occupied by source-material and footnotes.

The 60th was primarily an effective military unit in the forefront of the tactical developments that countered the irregular warfare of the indigenous peoples, adaptations of conventional European methods that laid the foundation for subsequent light infantry service. Much less familiar is that the regiment's role in the process of colonisation which made its title 'Royal American' peculiarly appropriate for its composition mirrored the nature of those who relocated to the New World, to settle and cultivate. The foreign aspect of the 60th tended to disappear under a process of Anglicization and settlement, exemplified by Prevost himself: shortly before his death he assumed the name and dignitaries of his deceased Scottish father-in-law and became James Prevost Mackay of Scowrey. Similarly, the 60th and its members became an integral part of New World society, which involved much more than a change of nominal identity.

Grants of land in the Americas had been offered as an inducement to those contemplating enlistment and in 1763, when the Seven Years War was concluded, a free distribution of vacant Crown territory was authorised on a sliding scale for those demobilised, ranging from



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5,000 acres for a field officer to 50 acres for a private and those with neither the skill nor taste for farming on the frontier were permitted to sell their entitlements. Many ex-soldiers, however, took up the offer to settle, sometimes in plots alongside their comrades so as to pool resources for common prosperity while officers, with their generally superior financial resources, established successful commercial enterprises. As the author concludes, the influence of the Royal American Regiment extended far beyond the battlefield and into the heart of the process of colonisation and development, and by bringing those from Europe and North America made it a microcosm of the 'Atlantic World'. It is a most valuable study of an aspect of regimental history not previously familiar.

Philip Haythornthwaite



Private, 60th, 1759 from <http://www.reenacting.net/60thRAR/>