

Hallifax 15<sup>th</sup> July 1757

I wrote you last from New York, and mentioned  
to you our embarkation from thence to this  
place. Admiral Holbourne & with his  
Fleet and Transports are all arrived, and  
we make a very formidable appearance;  
I am not in spirits for description or a  
long detail of business therefore refer to  
my next. I beg you'll make enquiry  
after Michael Higgins at W<sup>m</sup> Watts in old  
Pie Street Westminster. W<sup>m</sup> Higgins was  
my servant but discharged into the Centurion  
when she left this place in November last;  
I have received his Prize money for him  
amounting to seventeen pounds fifteen  
shillings and sixpence. If you can find  
him pay him the said sum or to any  
Authority from him that can give you a  
legal discharge. I was in hopes of a  
letter from you by the Fleet; I hope you

you are in good health with the  
mily. God bleps You. I am D<sup>r</sup> Sir

Your affectionate  
humble Servant

James Campbell

## British preparations for the expedition against Louisbourg

From March 18 to 27, Loudon assembled the governors of the neighbouring colonies in Philadelphia where they decided upon the defensive measures to undertake and upon the number of troops that each colony should supply.

In April, Loudon prepared 90 transport vessels in Boston and New York and additional ones at Philadelphia.

By May 5, all transports were assembled at New York. Sir Charles Hardy, governor of New York, was commissioned as rear-admiral of the Blue. His squadron consisted of:

- Sutherland (50), captain Edward Falkingham
- **Nightingale (24), captain James Campbell, flagship of rear-admiral Charles Hardy**
- Kennington (20), captain Dudley Digges
- Vulture (14), commodore Sampson Salt
- Ferret (14), commodore Arthur Upton

Admiral Holbourne's fleet was expected at Halifax from Great Britain at about this time. In fact, as mentioned in the preceding section, it was just getting to sea. Between May 22 and 25, troops embarked on board the transports at New York. The fleet then sailed to Sandy Hook where it anchored. On June 5, Loudon joined the fleet and removed his flag to the Sutherland (50). He decided to wait for Holbourne because 5 French ships of the line and 1 frigate had been reported at Louisbourg. Indeed the same day, part of Beauffremont's squadron, which had previously reinforced the West Indies, arrived at Louisbourg where it made a junction with 4 ships of the line which, a few days earlier, had arrived from Toulon under M. de Revest.

The French squadron then cruised off Halifax. Meanwhile, Loudon sent two sloops to reconnoitre the coast. They soon came back without spotting the French vessels. On June 20, after waiting in vain for Holbourne, Loudon finally put to sea and sailed from Sandy Hook to Halifax where he arrived without meeting any opposition on June 30. The troops were soon landed and encamped at Halifax. Parties of rangers were also sent to patrol the surrounding woods. Meanwhile, vessels were sent to reconnoitre the harbour of Louisbourg.

### **The British and Colonial contingents make their junction at Halifax**

On July 7, all of Holbourne's fleet was finally at anchor before Halifax. Once combined with Loudon's squadron, the fleet counted 17 ships of the line, 14 frigates and sloops, 2 bomb ketches and 1 fire ship escorting 179 transports. The combined land forces consisted of 15 regiments, 500 men of the train, 500 rangers and 100 carpenters, amounting to nearly 12,000 men. They were landed at Halifax and several weeks were spent drilling them. Meanwhile, some attempts were made to learn the state of Louisbourg. Captain Gorham and some of his rangers reconnoitred it from a fishing vessel and brought back an imperfect report. Based on this report, it was resolved to proceed to the attack of Louisbourg. On June 29, another French squadron under M. Dubois de la Motte reached Louisbourg where the united French squadrons now totaled 18 ships of the line (including the recently captured Greenwich) and 5 frigates, a force much superior to that which Holbourne and Hardy were able to dispose of. Vice-admiral Holbourne sent the Winchelsea (24), captain John Rous, and other frigates, to look into Louisbourg. Rous returned and made his report which grossly underrated the strength of the French forces.

### **The enterprise is abandoned**

On August 1 and 2 in consequence of Rous report, the British army was re-embarked and a rendezvous was appointed in Gabarus Bay, 10 km west of Louisbourg.

On August 4, all was ready when a sloop came from Newfoundland, bringing letters found on board a French schooner lately captured. According to these letters, it appeared that all three of the French squadrons were now united in the harbour of Louisbourg and 4,000 regulars besides its garrison (3,000 men) were available for its defence. Indeed, La Motte, the French admiral, had with him a fleet carrying an aggregate of 1,360 guns, anchored in a sheltered harbour under the guns of Louisbourg. Success was now hopeless, and the costly enterprise was at once abandoned.

For his part, Dubois de la Motte had been expressly ordered to protect Louisbourg and on no account to hazard an engagement with the British fleet unless he should be in such overwhelming force as to place the question of his success beyond a doubt. For this reasons, he made no attempt to attack Holbourne's squadron, nor to blockade the British in Halifax. Judging his force strong enough, La Motte sent the 2 battalions of Berry Infanterie to Québec aboard the Bizarre (64) and Célèbre (64).