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**“THE MEN WERE SICK OF THE PLACE”:
SOLDIER ILLNESS AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE WAR OF 1812**

By

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B.A. North Georgia University, 2003

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(in History)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May 2020

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Dissertation Advisors: Dr. Scott W. See and Dr. Jacques Ferland

An Abstract of the Dissertation Presented
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War of 1812 scholarship has focused primarily on classic military studies of decisive battles. Likewise, scholarship on the experience of war essentially concentrates on how killing and combat effected the human psyche. This dissertation pursues a broader perspective. It examines the impact of the environment on the health of soldiers and emphasizes everyday conditions and environmental suffering. Veterans’ accounts typically elevate suffering in camp over combat. A substantive study of soldiers’ responses to daily environmental conditions demonstrates the importance of health management to the outcome of the War of 1812. Through case studies of health measures related to frontier conditions, the use of alcohol to manage morale, the role of rations and food insecurity on the 1814 campaign, and close attention to two military units on either side of the conflict – the British 104th Regiment of Foot and the U.S. 21st Infantry Regiment – this dissertation argues that daily environmental management was far more important than victories in battle.

The environment may have been the most significant factor in the War of 1812, but that did not reduce the importance of human agency. An exploration of illness demonstrates that the best commanders took proactive steps to protect the health of their soldiers. The British

Army used veteran units in intensive combat areas and placed unfit and inexperienced soldiers in less threatened locations, such as the Maritime provinces of British North America; moreover, it reduced the size of its forces when the environment could not sustain large armies. The Americans, on the other hand, promoted officers with the most experience in frontier warfare and allowed leaders to move freely between militia and regular units to gain experience. For both sides the management of provisions was central to troop morale, patriotism, and health. This included generous alcohol rations to mediate harsh climatic conditions and the horrors of combat. The 1814 campaign in Niagara demonstrates that success on the battlefield was secondary to and dependent upon an effective logistical system that provided enough calories for each soldier.

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INTRODUCTION

Lying in bed alone, a young captain was too ill to troop the line. He was destined to lead armies in Mexico and Florida and become the President of the United States. However, as the commander of the small Fort Harrison on the Ohio frontier, Captain Zachary Taylor was outnumbered, most of his soldiers were ill, and he was completely cut off from reinforcements. To make matters worse, Taylor's strongest soldiers remained well despite the fever raging in his company, but they had abandoned their post to seek survival on their own. The situation was hopeless; however, Taylor continued to lead.¹ He encouraged his soldiers to fight, and he managed to hold Fort Harrison. His letter recounting the episode shifted from the first-person to the third-person narrative, and Taylor was surprised by his performance in a terrible situation.² The military and political leader of the Shawnee Confederacy, Tecumseh, commanded the force opposing Taylor. Tecumseh surrounded Fort Harrison, and because of William Hull's pledge of extermination it was likely that all the American soldiers would be killed if Fort Harrison capitulated.³ The hopelessness of brutal frontier warfare situations and a trend towards massacres between Americans and Native Americans pushed Captain Taylor to defend his fort with soldiers completely unfit for regular duty.⁴ Yet the Americans answered the call, overcame their ailments and injuries, and held off a much larger force. Fighting

¹ Zachary Taylor to William Harrison from Fort Harrison 16 September 1812, in John Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, During the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15 : With Some Additional Letters and Documents Elucidating the History of That Period* (Washington City: Printed by Way & Gideon, for the editor, 1823), 62. Short citation will be, Brannan (Ed.), *Official Letters*.

² Ibid.

³ The Proclamation of William Hull to the Inhabitants of Canada from Sandwich, Upper Canada 12 July 1812 in Brannan (Ed.) *Official Letters*, 31.

⁴ Taylor to Harrison, in Brannan (Ed.) *Official Letters*, 62.

while ill or injured was one of the best demonstrations of personal honor and courage in part because of the harsh realities of frontier siege warfare. In many ways, soldiers longed for opportunities to respond in hopeless military encounters, and to overcome sickness and perform well in battle was the best way to demonstrate character in an Army that was still connected directly to a Revolutionary tradition of suffering and perseverance.

Like Captain Zachary Taylor, American soldiers and commanders were not always sure why they survived, and how they succeeded or failed. Like Taylor's shift from first- to third-person voice, War of 1812 soldiers often surprised themselves with their own actions, because the challenges themselves were surprising. It was often harder to survive the elements than face the enemy. Honorable victory proved the character of the soldiers on both sides, but battles won or lost mattered a lot less than securing lines of supply and communication and simply taking the actions necessary to keep soldiers in the ranks while fighting in the frontier borderlands region between the United States and British North America. While the environment – specifically its influence on sickness – was an important factor in the conflict, the actions of soldiers and commanders to influence their environment mattered more. Officers struggled to keep soldiers in the ranks, and when they gave soldiers the ability to prove their character by fighting while ill, injured, or inebriated, they were often rewarded with victories in seemingly hopeless situations. The War of 1812, regardless of the persistence of nationalistic portrayals and interpretations, was like all others: cruel and unromantic, and the methods used to gain victory were often unremarkable. Patriotism was fueled by extra alcohol rations, battlefield victories lost initiative because of poor national logistics policies, some of the best soldiers sat in garrison for most of the conflict, and New Englanders bore a

disproportionate share of a war that their states opposed. An unpopular war was fought in an extremely challenging environment, where success was often measured more by logistical policies than courage under fire.

The War of 1812 began with American failures caused largely by the challenges of environmental management. At the outset of the War of 1812, the British had fewer soldiers. However, the seat of war in Upper Canada allowed the British 41st Foot to fight both against the U.S. forces in Michigan and the invasion coming from New York. In the western campaign, the U.S. army commanded by William Hull had more frontier militia that could handle remote warfare and logistics as well as heavy cannon moved via Lake Erie. In New York, Stephen Van Rensselaer had to build a road to move artillery into the Niagara region. Because of differing capabilities in light infantry tactics and different environmental challenges, William Hull's army began its invasion long before Rensselaer's army could attack, and the small British 41st Regiment of Foot was able to fight in both key engagements during summer of 1812: the battles of Detroit and Queenston Heights. However, the two American losses illustrate one of the most important themes in the conflict. In Detroit, citing high numbers of soldiers on the sick list, the highly experienced Revolutionary War veteran William Hull surrendered without a fight.⁵ At Queenston Heights, Stephen Van Rensselaer, despite being a political general with little military experience, fought fiercely until he collapsed due to blood loss following being wounded in the assault. Hull's soldiers strove to fight despite illness, but he surrendered, and he was tried and convicted of cowardice. Van Rensselaer also failed

⁵ Letter from William Hull to William Eustice from Fort Malden 26 August 1812, in Brannan (Ed.) *Official Letters*, 48.

but fought on despite enfeebling wounds, and thus he preserved his honor.⁶ It may seem reasonable to understand Hull's failure in Detroit based on his losses to illness, but it was unacceptable to his peers and subordinates because soldiers were expected to persevere, and officers were expected to adapt to the challenges of illness and environment. The British strategy exploited the region's environment, and the battles of Detroit and Queenston Heights may have been the only major tactical victories that brought strategic gains in the entire conflict.

The initial failures of the American Army led to an assault by Tecumseh's confederation and a British Army commanded by General Henry Procter. Militia officers like William Henry Harrison, Isaac Shelby, Green Clay, and Duncan McArthur became the leaders of the Army in Northern Ohio. Following the massacre at Raisin River, the Americans managed to hold out in sieges at small fortifications.⁷ The sieges were difficult but largely successful, and all the commanders had the same problems with high rates of sickness that William Hull had at Detroit, but they called for their garrisons to fight rather than surrender. The soldiers and officers weathered the British offensive in their garrisons until Oliver Hazard Perry's naval victory gave the Americans control of Lake Erie.⁸ The 1813 campaign led by William Henry Harrison experienced some of the most difficult environmental challenges faced by an Army from Ohio to the Niagara

⁶ Solomon Van Rensselaer, *A Narrative of the Affair of Queenstown: In the War of 1812* (New York: Leavitt Crocker & Brewster, 1836), 25-26.

⁷ For the American Soldier perspective on the Raisin River Massacre see William Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat of the North-Western Army under General Winchester: Massacre of the Prisoners: Sixteen Months Imprisonment of the Writer and Others with the Indians and British* (Frankfort, KY: Printed for the author by A.G. Hodges, 1842).

⁸ No one understood the significant role that the control of Lake Erie played more so than William Henry Harrison. He related the control of the lakes to which Army required the most labor. The American concentration on siege warfare was significant, but this shifted quickly after Oliver Hazard Perry's victory. See William Harrison to John Armstrong from Seneca Town, 4 August 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters, 184*.

region, and his emphasis on light infantry tactics created significant success. From the outset of the 1813 offensive, Harrison embraced a light infantry supply line that traded wagons for pack horses and employed local provisioning and naval support.⁹ Harrison pushed the allied forces of Tecumseh and Henry Procter back to Niagara through a constant pursuit until the Battle of the Thames.¹⁰ The militia officers also instituted hygienic policies that kept soldiers off the sick list longer and allowed Harrison's army to go deeper into enemy territory.¹¹ Although Harrison won few traditional battlefield victories, he accomplished the most strategically because the British and Tecumseh coalition never threatened Michigan and Northern Ohio in a meaningful way again. Henry Procter remained aggressive even after he lost the environmental advantages, he previously held when he controlled Lake Erie, and this loss forced his army into a long and miserable retreat that crippled most of his force. William Henry Harrison's army faced the worst environmental challenges when it penetrated the Upper Canadian frontier border region just when extremely poor rainy weather made the roads impassable for supply wagons.¹² Environmentally conscious light infantry tactics did not win any major

⁹ The first reference to the use of pack horses in Harrison's army was in December of 1812, William Hull's army also used pack horses, because it was also capable at light infantry tactics. See Letter from Lieutenant Colonel John Campbell to Major General William Henry Harrison from Fort Greenbush 23 December 1812, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 110-17.

¹⁰ Letter from Major General William Henry Harrison to Secretary of War John Armstrong from Moraviantown, 5 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 229.

¹¹ General Orders 19th Infantry Regiment 1 August 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Library of Congress.

¹² This region is currently one of the most fruitful environments in North America, and its ability to grow crops is impressive. During the War of 1812 the region was transitioning from first to second nature, but the armies destroyed crops at a high rate. The most significant factor in the perception of the region's sparseness and parsimony, however, was its roads. The Niagara region was theoretically best supplied by water. However, the Royal Navy's presence was limited in North America and the American Navy was a very modest organization. Although portions of the region were bountiful, poor roads impeded the movement of supplies for large armies. The other problem during the War of 1812 was the common and often brutal civil destruction. Campaigns during the French and Indian War were more successful, largely because Jeffrey Amherst used a counterinsurgency strategy that cultivated positive relationships with the local population. As a result, Amherst was able to move a much larger army through the same region.

battles for Harrison, but the states and territories he governed were no longer under threat of a British supported assault.

East of Niagara in 1813, the British continued to win victories, and seasoned regular American Army commanders fared much worse than Harrison's invasion. The largest problem in the Niagara region was the regular officers placed in command, with Henry Dearborn and James Wilkinson commanding at the highest echelons. Both commanders relied most heavily upon regular regiments and regular tactics. Winfield Scott was an exception because he recognized a series of small but essential disasters that befell the American forces in the Niagara Region.¹³ A skirmish at Stoney Creek cost the Americans two captured generals, even if the Americans stopped the British attack. The complete loss of a detachment led by Colonel Boerstler led to Henry Dearborn's return to Washington D.C., suffering from nervous exhaustion.¹⁴ Colonel Winfield Scott recognized the ability to support the efforts of William Henry Harrison. Scott wanted to complete the defeat of General Henry Procter's 41st Regiment of Foot, but Wilkinson led in an "abortive" manner.¹⁵ Wilkinson not only withdrew Scott's support of Harrison, but he also withdrew all regulars from Fort George on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. During the 1813 campaign in the Niagara region, America's greatest victory was the destruction of a supply depot (and the unjustified burning of public property) at York. However, Wilkinson nullified his victory by withdrawing his forces from the frontier, leading to defeats at Crysler's Farm, Chateauguy, and La Colle Mills. His abject failure

¹³ Winfield Scott, Winfield, and Timothy D. Johnson (Ed.) *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Winfield Scott. Voices of the Civil War* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2015), 51. Short citation will be, *Memoirs of Winfield Scott*.

¹⁴ *Memoirs of Winfield Scott*, 50.

¹⁵ Letter from Winfield Scott to James Wilkinson from Fort George 11 October 1813, in *Memoirs of Winfield Scott*, 54-55. The term abortive was in Scott's commentary about the letter.

at La Colle Mills led to a court-martial and his relief from duty. Wilkinson's focus on the campaign toward Montreal failed to stress how William Henry Harrison weakened the British in Upper Canada. Instead, Wilkinson focused on the capital at York and failed miserably. Wilkinson preferred to use regulars, and they suffered significantly from health problems, so much so that Wilkinson never felt he had adequate forces.

Wilkinson's army suffered far more significantly from "the rainy season" than Harrison's army, and Winfield Scott bitterly clashed with Wilkinson because of the lack of emphasis on "*la petite guerre*."¹⁶ Scott understood that fighting in North America required a combination of regular and indirect small wars tactics that emphasized ambushes and rapid raids on fortifications and supply lines. On the British side, Henry Proctor was in a much weaker position. The British no longer controlled Lake Erie, and Proctor's 41st Foot was cut off from supplies. As General Harrison actively pursued Procter, and the widespread health afflictions caused by the frontier environment had a larger effect on weakened British forces in Upper Canada, Wilkinson's "abortive" campaign meant that a better led American Army would face off against massive British reinforcements in 1814.

The military dynamic of the War of 1812 changed significantly in 1814. Gordon Drummond commanded the British Army in that year, and he combined local knowledge with classic British education and experience fighting the Napoleonic Wars in the Netherlands, Egypt, and Jamaica. His family settled in Quebec, so Drummond understood the environmental limitations of Canada better than any previous commander.¹⁷ The initial success of the aggressive strategy of Isaac Brock and Henry

¹⁶ *Memoirs of Winfield Scott*, 56, 51.

¹⁷ Kenneth Stickney, "DRUMMOND, Sir GORDON," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 8, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed November 8, 2019, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/drummond_gordon_8E.html.

Procter overstretched the British after the loss of Lake Erie. Drummond, unlike previous leaders, used the minimum forces necessary to control the Niagara region.¹⁸ His operation employed an economy of force distribution, not in the classic manner of focusing combat power elsewhere but rather to minimize logistical challenges. His leadership at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane led to losses in the frontline fighting but succeeded in cutting off American supply lines with militia and Native American allies. Drummond traded the best battlefield tactics for the best long-term *petite guerre* strategy. After losses at Lundy's Lane and Chippewa, he went on the offensive for the sieges at Plattsburgh and Fort Erie. All the battles fought in the summer of 1814 were American victories, but Drummond gained the most and took the offensive. With reinforcements from the end of the Peninsular War, Drummond had more troops than the Americans, but he instead limited the size of his Army to create a feasible supply system in an isolated frontier border region. The veterans of hard fighting in Europe were exceptional soldiers but the veterans also came with the injuries and diseases common in years of combat duty. Drummond chose a strategy that led to losses on the battlefield, but few leaders gained in victory what Drummond gained in defeat.

For the United States Army, 1814 was a watershed moment of reform in training and tactics. General Jacob Brown, with the help of officers like Winfield Scott and James Miller, focused on training with the Baron von Stueben's drill manual. Brown's army was the best led in the entire conflict, and it showed on the battlefield. Soldiers held up to the repeated British attacks at Lundy's Lane, won a smaller battle at Chippewa, and stood

¹⁸ A. M. J. Hyatt, "PROCTER, HENRY," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 6, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003—, accessed November 8, 2019, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/procter_henry_6E.html.

firm in the sieges of Fort Erie and Plattsburgh. The officer performance was exemplary, with officers leading from the front. James Miller was the only unwounded senior officer in 1814, and he led three bayonet charges: one at Chippewa, one seizing a British battery at Lundy's Lane, and one destroying the British powder magazine at Fort Erie. What Jacob Brown could not change was contracted logistics that operated outside the military chain of command.¹⁹ The British Army also managed logistics by contract, but Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, integrated a British Army officer to serve as commissary general. Gordon Drummond maintained a Commissary General as well, and he shaped his strategy around his Commissary General's ability to provide adequate sustenance.²⁰ Jacob Brown's army won its battles but could not keep soldiers in the field after victories because of high rates of sickness caused by an inadequate supply system.

Overall, victory in battle rarely matched the impact of weather and the environment. Commanders who embraced more environmentally conscious tactics gained the most strategically, with or without victories on the battlefield. A *petite guerre* strategy preserved logistics but also got the most out of soldiers technically unfit for duty because of sickness. In the early war years, the British relied on the coalition led by Tecumseh for sound, light infantry tactics; William Hull surrendered a large army because of sickness; and another army lost most of its force building a road to transport artillery to the Niagara River. In the second year, the British environmental advantages in Upper Canada shifted to the Americans because of the Royal Navy defeat on Lake Erie.

¹⁹ Contract logistics means paying a private company to provide supplies. Ideally, contract logistics gains efficiency and decreases cost; however, military commanders lose control of logistics.

²⁰ Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, "District General Orders, Niagara Falls 12 October 1814," in Ernest Cruikshank, *Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, Commanded by General Jacob Brown, in July and August 1814* (Toronto: Canadian House, 1968).

The worst environmental conditions in the conflict emerged in 1813, but William Henry Harrison's use of a strategy that was not reliant on the poor roads of Upper Canada completely routed the British Regiment threatening Northern Ohio. In 1814 the American Army won every battle; however, Gordon Drummond's emphasis on sending troops only if he could adequately supply them and his tactic of cutting Americans off from their supply lines during battle meant the British gained more than the Americans did on the battlefield. Policies that kept soldiers in the field mattered more than heroics and battlefield victories.

Another important component of this introductory summary addresses the composition of forces on both sides of the conflict. The British Army was rigid in many ways in terms of purchased commissions and an overemphasis on European line order tactics. However, the Napoleonic Wars made the British more flexible about commissioning by merit and more open to light infantry strategy. Somewhat paradoxically, the British Army was both rigid and flexible. The British were, at times, fixated on inefficient traditions and other times changed significantly based on the realities of the conflict in North America. The regiment was the most significant structure in the British Army. The British regiment was as much a family as it was a military unit, and all training, direct command, and correspondence happened there. This explains the mixture of adaptation and rigidity, because each regiment was unique, and all the commanders came out of that system. The British Army also embraced the use of militia in skirmishing, flanking duties, and other *petite guerre* tasks. Those militia soldiers also possessed local knowledge and could return home whenever they were sick or necessary for the harvest or local security. Their most useful allies throughout the conflict were

Indigenous peoples. There were no British victories without significant help from tribal allies. Tecumseh was so revered that he was offered a British Brigadier commission; he significantly influenced the British victory in Detroit and held off any American invasion from Northern Ohio while the Royal Navy controlled Lake Erie. At Chippewa and Lundy's Lane, militia and Native American troops cut off United States supply lines. The British lost those battles but gained the most through using the militia and Native Americans as their best light infantry force.

The American Army was very different, with a unique hierarchy of forces. There were three types of forces in the United States. At the highest echelon was the regular armed forces, the second tier was temporary federal volunteer regiments, and state militias were at the bottom. While the hierarchy was a well-entrenched system, it is problematic to interpret the hierarchy deterministically. Like the British, each American regiment was very different, and typically regiments were drawn from the same region. Also, for officers, service in the militia on the frontier brought combat experience and rapid promotions. Successful leadership in combat often led to federal recognition of rank and allowed for a faster path to regular general officer commissions. All that was required for militia units to transition to volunteer regiments were new uniforms and equipment. The order books for forward-deployed federal regiments also listed new recruits coming directly out on the front line in the combat theatre, meaning that soldiers often transitioned between the different levels of ground service. The hierarchy with regular units and officer commissions at the top meant that service in the militia and volunteers could become a path to the highest echelons of command. As such, militia

officers with service in the frontier typical rose to the highest level of leadership because militia service was the best path to combat experience before the War of 1812.²¹

The final topic of this brief overview of the war, before a review of pertinent literature, focuses on vocabulary. The term “soldier” will be used universally regardless of the soldier’s role as regular, militia, or volunteer. Soldier is not technically a term for junior officers; however, when interpreted more generally, a soldier is someone who fights in a war. This dissertation seeks to understand the War of 1812 experientially, so viewing all soldiers as fighters regardless of their rank or status in the militia or regular forces is more sensitive to the experience of all soldiers in a harsh frontier climate. Those divisions will only be referred to when necessary because the environment did not distinguish the hierarchies embedded in the institutional cultures of the British and American armed forces. Both sides varied significantly with the roles of the militia and regular forces. For officers in the American army those roles were flexible, and most successful commanders gained experience in frontier militias before the war. Conversely, the barriers between British regular army units were more defined, and often forces that transitioned to British Regiments of Foot struggled to attain parity. Native Americans shared those features as soldiers or warriors, but that dynamic ignores their tribal identity. Thus, they will be referred to by tribe unless that is impossible to ascertain from the record. The War of 1812 was not just an operational conflict, it was also about the

²¹ The exception to this rule would be the younger officers at the outset of the conflict. Josiah Snelling, Thomas Sidney Jesup, and Winfield Scott were the core group of highly successful regular Army officers, whose commissions came at the beginning of the War of 1812. Thus, while they contradicted the trend amongst senior officer they did so because the War of 1812 offered the same level of combat experience to them as frontier militia experience did in peace time. *Memoirs of Winfield Scott*; Thomas Sidney Jesup, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress.

experience of people, and “soldier” is the best term to encompass the wide variety of ways that people served in the conflict.

Current scholarship in multiple fields of study has the potential to inform the historiographical interpretations of the War of 1812. The University of Maine’s approach to borderlands scholarship is ideal geographically for exploring the northern theatre of the War of 1812.²² The multidisciplinary emphasis of borderlands elucidates the conflict more significantly. Environmental history, the social science of violence, and the so-called “new military history” have the potential to shift the focus of scholarship of the War of 1812 from a decisive battles approach toward an emphasis on daily management of soldiers. Canada is a region that is aptly described as “parsimonious,” so supplying armies was far more difficult and significant than winning battles.²³ Likewise, North American warfare has been understood to be about brutal *petite guerre*, emphasizing unlimited but indirect means of defeating opponents, in contrast to how decisive battles decided conflicts in Europe. The social science of violence is moving away from theories that elevate combat and killing as the most difficult psychological challenge to embrace theories that emphasize moral injury and the constant strain of campaigns over combat. Three seemingly different approaches to the study of violence and environment illustrate that the day-to-day grind of warfare and campaigning was far more difficult and significant than when armies clashed openly. In fact, winning battles rarely gained enough advantages to overcome systemic day-to-day problems. Most importantly,

²² The bulk of the armies served in the northern theater, and most of the fighting occurred there. For most of 1812 and 1813 the other theaters experienced infrequent combat. However, popular memory of the war tends to focus on the burning of public buildings in Washington and the sensational victory of Andrew Jackson at New Orleans.

²³ Cole Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

soldiers have been elevating the challenges of daily military service over moments of crisis and battle since time immemorial, and the experience of war needs to inform both the “new” military historiography and the operational interpretations of the War of 1812.

In a dissertation that seeks to create a shift in methodological approaches to the War of 1812, it will be important to first explore the innovative works in other disciplines. Specifically, David Livingstone Smith is fundamentally altering the way that scholars approach war and violence to focus on an evolutionary psychological perspective. His work challenges years of research that defines war and killing as inhuman and understands human beings as uniquely violent animals.²⁴ As group-based animals, human beings rarely murder those that they believe are also humans. But barbarians or individuals that are considered *less than human* are far more likely to be brutalized and exterminated like animals.²⁵ Human beings are capable of remarkable empathy to groups they identify with, while atrocity, systematic ethnic cleansing, and targeting of civilians often occur against groups that are not considered human beings. Native Americans were “savages,” Jews in the Second World War were considered insects worthy of industrialized death through an insecticide, and American soldiers justified Vietnamese suffering through the excessive use of napalm and defoliants due to their backward society. Alan Taylor’s argument that the War of 1812 was a “race war” in which the British utilized barbarian slaves and Native Americans against white frontier settlements is especially evocative of Smith’s approach to warfare.²⁶ Likewise, John

²⁴ David Livingstone Smith, *The Most Dangerous Animal: Human Nature and the Origins of War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2007).

²⁵ David Livingstone Smith, *Less than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011).

²⁶ Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Random House, 2010), 137.

Grenier's work on the unlimited and brutal targeting of noncombatant villages during the War of 1812 illustrates how useful Smith's evolutionary approach is to the conflict. Dehumanization does, however, create much higher rates of psychological impairment.²⁷

It is also important to emphasize how brutality through dehumanization created high rates of mental illness before the twentieth century. The question of killing as an emotionally charged psychological event, and the general overemphasis on killing, combat, and battle ignore how significantly sustained detrimental stress is on an individual's health.²⁸ Robert Sapolsky's work in biological neuroendocrinology has reoriented any substantive study of stress. As a neurochemical expert, Sapolsky has illustrated the effect that cortisol, rather than epinephrine (typically understood as adrenaline), has had on the human body. While epinephrine provides significant energy under duress, cortisol shuts down every system in the human body that is not immediately necessary for survival.²⁹ The immune system, reproductive system, and digestion are all significantly affected by cortisol. Jonathan Shay has argued that Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the continuation of survival response in a non-survival environment.³⁰ With the elevation of cortisol levels during stress, the long-term systems shut down become detrimental to the health of soldiers. Day-to-day stressful

²⁷ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁸ The work of Dave Grossman is most responsible for the overemphasis on the act of killing but existed in the wake of problematic, and ethically compromised work of Philip Zimbardo. Additionally, Grossman relied on the much-criticized work of U.S. Military Historian S. L. A. Marshall, who is widely known to exaggerate the reluctance of killing by soldiers. See Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (New York: Little Brown, 1995). See also Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (New York: Random House, 2007).

²⁹ Robert Sapolsky, *Why Don't Zebras Get Ulcers* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994).

³⁰ Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 2002).

situations are, therefore, far more damaging to human health than extreme moments like a battle.

Additionally, Sapolsky described how low socio-economic status, specifically food insecurity, and the unpredictability of stressors are worse for the health of people than extreme events. Scholars rarely link hunger caused by challenging logistics on a frontier with the psychology of warfare, but it was probably the most significant psychological factor. Likewise, the War of 1812 was a series of small skirmishes that could occur in any place, which was more stressful than the small group of “decisive” engagements. Even the most innovative military histories of the experience of war, such as *This Republic of Suffering* by Drew Gilpin Faust, have been based upon the dated stress research of David Grossman.³¹ The broader literature will be strengthened by moving military histories on the experience of war away from the Grossman perspective that exaggerates the emphasis on combat and killing towards the Sapolsky neuroendocrine perspective that recognizes the deleterious effects of sustained stress.

Jonathan Shay is perhaps the most influential scholar on the experience of soldiers in warfare from antiquity until the present. His books coined the term “moral injury” that significantly altered the study of the experience of war. Shay differentiated the types of killing typical in battle from those done immorally. Atrocity, the targeting of civilians, and unconscientious leadership were more detrimental to soldier health than killing in morally justified military situations.³² Systematically, *petite guerre* in the early nineteenth

³¹ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).

³² Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

century was unlimited warfare that, by design, targeted civilians, discouraged tribal fighters via brutality, and, in general, destroyed all public property. William Hull's call for a "War of Extermination," the Raisin River Massacre, the burning of York, and the partial destruction of Washington D.C. represent a war characterized by moral injury. When Shay's work on emotional trauma is understood alongside the general health decline caused by persistent stress identified by Sapolsky, it becomes clear that the brutal style of warfare on the North American frontier led to significantly high rates of sickness.³³

Out of western militaries, the Canadian Armed Forces have perhaps the best grasp on the role that moral injury plays on observers of atrocity who do not personally act immorally. Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire's struggle with significant PTSD occurred not because he committed atrocities. Instead, he suffered psychologically because the United Nations did not supply forces adequate to stop the Rwandan Genocide.³⁴ In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries the Canadian Armed Forces have been employed almost universally in peacekeeping roles, yet they still have struggled extensively with conflict-related mental illness. American prisoners who directly observed brutality as prisoners produced far more emotional accounts than descriptions of battles. Likewise, when the American commanders like William Henry Harrison and Jacob Brown targeted grist mills, the resulting labor and hunger triggered

³³ Jonathan Shay defines PTSD in the veterans' experience as the persistence of combat adaptations to non-combat settings. It is important to understand both of his key theories of moral injury and the persistence of battlefield adaptation into civilian life, although his work on soldier experience, *Achilles in Vietnam*, will be used in this dissertation. See Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 2002).

³⁴ Roméo Dallaire with Jessica Humphreys, *Waiting for First Light: My Ongoing Battle with PTSD* (Toronto: Vintage, 2016).

significant emotional expressions from British and Canadian observers. Focusing on the day-to-day small war experiences of soldiers reveals how much more significant the unlimited approach to *petite guerre* tactics played on the minds and health of soldiers. Most soldiers observed what we now call moral injuries directly, but all soldiers feared brutality because it occurred without predictability.

In the 1980s, when the PTSD diagnosis became formally codified in the American Psychological Association's *Diagnostics and Statistics Manual Version Four*, major weather events were also officially included as a catalyst for emotional disorder. Weather brought real sickness in the form of stagnating pools of water, which produced malaria-carrying insects.³⁵ However, contemporary accounts in Africa reveal the psychological influence of weather, as it pertains to rain and malaria. In his book *What is the What*, Dave Eggers novelized the lived experience of an African refugee. Eggers described how rain led to physical and psychological burdens for Liberian refugees. In their emaciated state, the African refugees knew that rain brought dengue fever and, therefore, brought on depression and hopelessness about the possibility of survival. Again, unlike the mental predictability of a large battle, the weather was outside of each soldier's control and often led to life-threatening illnesses.³⁶ Sapolsky's descriptions of recent shifts in stress research illustrate how soldier complaints about the weather were

³⁵ The work of Edwin Dexter was foundational to environmental psychology, and he is known as a foundational psychologist on the influence of weather on the human mind. See Edwin Grant Dexter, "Conduct and the Weather: An Inductive Study of the Mental Effects of Definite Meteorological Conditions" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1899), and "Drunkenness and the Weather," *Nature* 61 (1899): 365-67.

³⁶ Dave Eggers, *What is the What* (New York: First Vintage, 2006).

more significant psychologically than battle and killing because of the unpredictability and complete lack of control early nineteenth-century armies had over the weather.

Despite the recent, but not current, overemphasis on singularly stressful events, stress research was not born in the study of trauma; Hans Selye created the concept in the study of the common additional health problems that most patients contracted when admitted to hospitals. Selye recognized a clinical concept of stress by realizing that fear generated by a hospitalization created a condition he called general adaptation syndrome.³⁷ Selye became the father of the idea of stress by first understanding nonviolent day-to-day stressors, yet single incidents of violence became the most represented source of emotional trauma. The elevation of singular battles in military history fundamentally masks the realities of stress research, and, more importantly, ignores soldier accounts that continually emphasize the challenges of camp life over large-scale violence.

While the work of David Grossman *On Killing* is trendy and has captured the broad imagination, it has also overemphasized the act of killing as the most challenging feature of warfare.³⁸ However, the social science of stress and violence is far more oriented on the stress concept of persistent stress than singularly extreme events. Day-to-day understanding of soldier experiences in warfare is an approach to the experience of war that is far more grounded in stress research than the typical decisive battles approach to the War of 1812. *Daily management* is the best approach to understanding the way that

³⁷ Lumsden, D. Paul, "Hans Selye." In *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Canada. Article published December 13, 2007; Last Edited March 04, 2015. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hans-selye> accessed 10 September 2019.

³⁸ Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*.

human beings experienced the War of 1812 and how that shaped its outcome.

Additionally, the “new military history” is shifting the field of military history away from campaigns and commanders into explorations of social and cultural factors, and this dissertation’s emphasis on stress research can also strengthen military historiography.³⁹

Another significant but problematic theory that has influenced scholarship on the experience of warfare was the work of literary scholar Joseph Campbell. While Campbell’s analysis of the hero’s journey through currently accepted social science created a model for the work of Jonathan Shay and David Livingston Smith, Campbell’s psychoanalytical analysis of the “The Hero’s Journey” was built on problematic Freudian psychology.⁴⁰ The uncritical elevation of Freudian psychoanalysis as the material neurobiological source of mythology relating to male warrior archetypes was far too grounded in high-level intellectual theory. It is not difficult to reify the ideas of Freud in seemingly convincing ways, but the analyses of heroes ignore the ground realities of common soldiers. The evidence for a prescriptive universal soldier experience is certainly available, but Campbell’s narrative ignores nuance. Likewise, the work inspired quite a bit of less competent Freudian psychoanalytical history that has led to the idea that psychological history is bad history that discourages work based on more sound social science. Contemporary research, specifically surrounding the theme of psychological resiliency, illustrates how people react to combat and trauma very differently.⁴¹ Moral injuries, relating to unethical war crimes and genocide, are far more predictive of post-conflict psychological problems than a universal heroic journey. From a social

³⁹ Stephen Morillo, with Michael F. Pavkovic, *What is Military History?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 37.

⁴⁰ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁴¹ Salvator R. Maddi, “On Hardiness and other Pathways to Resilience,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 3 (April 2005): 261-62.

perspective, Campbell's analysis of heroes at the highest echelons of society is the biggest problem because mythological heroes ignore most human experience. Campbell's influential work on heroes explores exceptional cases and ignores common experience. The spiritual talisman of elite heroes that create success in battle and post-conflict atonement is just as easily the result of class and racial privileges that are typically not available for the ordinary soldiers. Additionally, soldier is becoming a term that applies to more than male archetypes. The classic heroes approach ignores multiple gender categories. Still, Campbell's biologically materialist argument about mythology has inspired the work of scholars using more sound social science.⁴² The work of Campbell set a model for the work of Jonathan Shay and David Livingston Smith, and science is always changing and developing new avenues for research. Campbell's work on elite archetypes through the social science of his era opens the way for a dissertation that employs up-to-date trauma scholarship to inform our understanding of the daily experience of ordinary soldiers.

From a historiographical perspective, this dissertation seeks to unite the outstanding publications of award-winning early American scholars like Alan Taylor and Nicole Eustace with the work of "new military historians" such as John Grenier and David Preston. Taylor and Eustace's books affect broader fields in early American scholarship, while new military historians are modernizing the technical military historical approach. However, these works usually do not correspond with one another

⁴² Psychoanalytical research is not currently considered the soundest approach to the human mind, especially from a materialist perspective. Psychoanalysis was the most accepted science on the human brain during the writing of Joseph Campbell. Scientists may not accept Freudian analysis as a materialist approach to the human mind today, but it was the most accepted view for nearly a hundred years. Methods based on social science should require periodic updates as the science on the human mind develops.

and have made less impact on the operational understanding of warfare. For Grenier's *The First Way of War*, the War of 1812 represented a conflict in which active officers discounted the contributions of rangers in the Northern theater. Grenier's subsequent work transitioned to leaders like Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison, who better-employed ranger tactics and the militia, but discounted the role of regulars who originally served in the militia. Grenier's argument is useful because officers like James Miller, Jacob Brown, and Eleazer Ripley may have technically been federal officers, but they held commissions in the militia early in the war. Most successful officers held federal rank but had militia experience. Grenier changed the way that early American scholars understood warfare because he placed the principle of unlimited warfare, which targeted civilians, front and center in small-scale conflicts. Also, Grenier did not sanitize violence; he explored violence as something that produces racism rather than the notion that racism engenders brutality.⁴³

Building on a strong foundation of work on Native American warfare, David Preston constructed an approach to the Battle of Monongahela in 1755 that explores the battle from an environmental perspective. British officers wasted most of their logistical resources because of the personal supplies of officers in the preservation of class division and a fixation on heavy infantry wagons. General Edward Braddock's army's loss at Monongahela occurred because of the mismanagement and harsh environment of North

⁴³ Grenier, *The First Way of War*. Light infantry and *petite guerre* are often used interchangeably in this dissertation. However, there are important distinctions between the terms. Light infantry tactics involved the deployment of soldiers in operations and battle. The tactics of *petite guerre* were similar, but they included destruction of the environment and attacks on the civilian population. As a result, *petite guerre* warfare was very personal and brutal.

America.⁴⁴ *Braddock's Defeat* highlighted how poor management of the environment and a reluctance to embrace light infantry *petite guerre* led to abject failures. A poor grasp of the environment drove sickness due to poor logistics, and light infantry tactics emerged as a force of foot soldiers more adept at using the environment to their advantage. When grappling with Preston's study and the work of other environmental historians such as Elizabeth Fenn and J. R. McNeil, it is equally important to remember that the best implementers of *petite guerre* tactics were also adept at using disease ecology to their advantages.⁴⁵ Winfield Scott, a veteran of the War of 1812, was celebrated as a military genius for his victory in Mexico because his strategy was based significantly on the disease ecology of yellow fever.⁴⁶ He gained those insights on small wars as a junior commander in Upper Canada. Likewise, Jeffrey Amherst's exploitation of smallpox blankets through decentralized authority and subordinate initiative coincided with his formidable skill in moving British armies on the isolated North American frontier.⁴⁷ Officers who were skilled in managing small wars tactics also excelled at manipulating the health of their soldiers and the opponents.

Nicole Eustace's recent monographs on the Revolution and War of 1812 illustrate the role of emotion and national identity. Eustace explored patriotism through population

⁴⁴ David Preston, *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to the Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). Preston notes that during the Revolutionary War the quartermaster department housed some of the best officers in the Continental Army. George Washington learned to value logistics from General Edward Braddock, and he placed some of his most skilled officers in logistical roles. Many of those officers were highly educated Europeans. Following the Revolution, however, the military often contracted civilians to supply the military. The new system was less effective, and as a result soldiers suffered from deficient supplies.

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), John Robert McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴⁶ Fenn, *Pox Americana*, 291-92.

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Fenn, "Biological Warfare in the Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffrey Amherst," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 4 (March 2000): 1552-80.

expansion, manhood, civil society, and the destruction of Native Americans. Her observations on crucial themes related to elite ideas about patriotism are especially valuable.⁴⁸ However, her attention to detail, such as the facial expressions of William Hull during his surrender as argued in his court-martial, are often too removed from the material realities. Brilliant revelations from an award-winning scholar do much to tell us what elites thought and less about how that translated to the actions of soldiers and junior officers. By exploring daily realities with an emphasis on the soldiers' experience of the environment, this dissertation will investigate how patriotism happened in the stomachs of soldiers. Specifically, it investigates how the generous use of liquor increased combat morale and motivation and how low food rations taxed the minds and bodies of soldiers to such a degree that the purest love of country could not overcome. Patriotism was a powerful idea, but it could also be defined by a warm belly – full of liquor – on the Fourth of July.

Alan Taylor has changed the way scholars understand the war in fundamental ways, specifically by introducing an environmental argument in his broad monograph on the northern theatre of the War of 1812. His books also advance a tragic interpretation of the war that is far closer to the harsh realities experienced daily by soldiers.⁴⁹ In an article exploring the problem that environmental historians have seldom embraced social history, Taylor claims that he is a social historian interested in the environment. By employing the borderlands approach emphasized at the University of Maine, with a

⁴⁸ Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

⁴⁹ See Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*. This book represented a stark criticism of any romantic understanding of the War of 1812. His emphasis on citizens with shifting loyalty, and the violent race war emphasized the tragic aspects of the conflict.

closer study of day-to-day environmental experiences, this dissertation will take an essential step in expanding Taylor's work. Additionally, Taylor's scholarship described the Royal Navy's use of African American slaves as supplements to marine raids in Virginia. His book illustrates how the Southern Democratic-Republican strongholds that supported war politically employed most of their soldiers in defending against slave revolts.⁵⁰ Because of the fear of slave revolts, the soldier who fought in the northern theater came from the states most opposed to the war, and therefore soldiers and junior officers were far more likely to speak honestly about the harsh realities of the war. Taylor's approach will be strengthened significantly with a dissertation that uses day-to-day specificity to support his shift away from celebratory interpretation.

The military history of the War of 1812, in many ways, exists in a separate realm from other scholarly breakthroughs. There has been a fair amount of keeping pace with military historical interpretations of organizational leadership and a shift toward campaign analyses. The incorporation of social history is well underway, and there are significant exceptions to the trend toward battle case studies. The best case is John Grodzinski's history of the 104th Regiment of Foot.⁵¹ His work's attention to one regiment illuminates the way that illness influenced the Maritime-recruited regiment, as well as its skill in employing the tactics of *petite guerre*. Grodzinski's excellent account of the 104th is why building a dissertation on evidence from day-to-day records is so necessary for the field. Grodzinski's attention to lower-level regimental sources is

⁵⁰ Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and the War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

⁵¹ John Grodzinski, *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot in the War of 1812* (Ottawa: Goose Lane Editions and the New Brunswick Military Heritage Project, 2014).

exceptional, but comprehensive work covering all the regimental order books is needed to understand the war from the bottom up.

The most troubling aspect of the War of 1812's military histories relates to the analysis of brutality. At the highest forums of military history, there is still a well-developed "he started it" debate about the burning of cities.⁵² Reciprocity was the problem in the War of 1812, so continuing the cycle of blame in contemporary scholarly publications without contextualizing the actions as morally questionable on both sides is extremely problematic. In a presentation on his experiences in Vietnam, Tim O'Brien described his frustration with the people in the village at My Lai. He described his desire to take out his frustrations out on the local villagers there: "We *did not* turn our *machine guns* on *civilians*."⁵³ Understanding the motivations of brutal reciprocity should not also

⁵² This debate is largely regional with historians focusing on the Old Northwest defending the actions of the United States poised against Canadian nationalist historians. Alec Gilpin's defense of the surrender of William Hull is central to the U.S. regional argument because he assumes a massacre would have occurred at Fort Detroit without a surrender. While that massacre may have occurred, indeed it was likely, his argument ignores evidence that Hull incited that massacre with his policy of killing any British officer serving with Native Americans. Gilpin's student and Army Signal Corps historian Stephen Rauch has defended this argument. J. C. A. Staggs's social history of officer courts-martial also justified the assumption of tribal brutality as a rationale for Hull's actions. Donald Graves came to the defense of the Canadian peaceable kingdom myth, in bi-centennial *Journal of Military History* article. He argued that the burning of Washington only occurred as a response the U.S. burning of York. As an Army Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor teaching future military officers about the ethical application of violence, the author of this dissertation has stepped into this debate with a recent *American Review of Canadian Studies* article describing the problem of reciprocal violence. Both sides used the concept of reciprocity to justify atrocities and how this current scholarly debate uses the same logic that caused all the violence. See Alec Gilpin, *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012); Stephen Rauch, "A Stain Upon the Nation? A Review of the Detroit Campaign of 1812 in United States Military History," *Michigan Historical Review* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 129-53; J. C. A. Stagg, "United States Army Officers in the War of 1812: A Statistical and Behavioral Portrait," *Journal Of Military History* 76, no. 4 (October 2012): 1001-34; Donald Graves, "Why the White House Was Burned: An Investigation into the British Destruction of Public Buildings at Washington in August 1814," *Journal Of Military History* 76, no. 4 (October 2012): 1095-127; and Joseph Miller, "Two Brownstowns: A Case Study on Moral Injury and Reciprocal Violence," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2018): 138-51.

⁵³ Marilyn Wesley, "Truth and Fiction in Tim O'Brien's 'If I Die in a Combat Zone' and 'The Things They Carried,'" *College Literature* 29, no. 2 (2002): 1-18. The author was initially exposed to this speech listening to a Bryan Cranston reading of *The Things They Carried* by Audible Studios. The speech is additional content. Tim O'Brien, *The Things they Carried*. Narrated by Bryan Cranston (Newark, NJ: Audible INC, 2013).

justify. Any adequately parented toddler knows that one wrong does not justify retribution. Even if the Raisin River Massacre predated the burning of York, which in turn predated the burning of Washington, reciprocal brutality is still wrong. Today, infantry platoon leaders know that they will be incarcerated by acting based on such logic, and this kind of debate should not guide academic discourse.⁵⁴ The reciprocity itself was the cause of most of the brutality, so historical observers must help disengage from the “who started it” debate. The concept of moral injury should not, as in many studies on the subject, be overgeneralized because most soldiers feel the hatred of war, understand the desire to lash out at prisoners or non-combatants, and suppress the appetite for reciprocity.⁵⁵ O’Brien’s frustration above with the My Lai massacre becoming symbolic of the war resulted from his difficulty of overcoming the force of desire to lash out against the population. The whitewash of the brutality of the War of 1812 as a form of retaliation is based on a flawed assumption that every veteran, soldier, or militiamen had no moral compass because of the savagery of warfare. Open prejudice of veterans as non-agents is unmistakable in fashionable society, and the irony of national

⁵⁴ The best example of this is the placement of the book *Black Hearts* on multiple U.S. military professional reading lists. The book is something that all ROTC faculty at the University of Maine are expected to read and it is taught to fourth-year cadets. The book explores the relationship between a toxic command climate and an atrocity carried out by a soldier struggling with mental illness. See Jim Frederick, *Black Hearts: One Platoon’s Decent into Madness in Iraq’s Triangle of Death* (New York: Random House, 2012). See “Commandant’s Reading List - A Complete List.” USMC OFFICER. Accessed September 11, 2019. <https://www.usmcofficer.com/marine-corps-knowledge/commandants-reading-list/>. See also “Suggested Readings: Library: CAPL.” CAPL News. Accessed September 11, 2019. <https://capl.army.mil/library/suggested-readings.php>.

⁵⁵ Karl Marlantes argues that moral injury more often creates an exaggerated morality. A Vietnam veteran, he used the example of how that as a platoon leader he excessively used painful weapons like napalm, but as a veteran he is opposed to the production of such weapons. However, were he to go back he knows that he would use the weapons again, because as leader it was his job to do whatever he could to keep his Marines alive. He recognized the contradiction between his post-war sense of ethics pertaining to weapons like napalm and the pragmatic sense use of whatever weapons needed to survive. See Karl Marlantes, *What It Is Like to Go to War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2011).

myths of espousing peaceable republican virtue while condoning reciprocal violence strengthens the idea.

Most of the works on the conflict have been operational military histories or battle case studies. Donald Graves has made a career of works focused on highly nationalistic operational military histories. His books celebrate the pre-Confederation military service in ways that mirror significantly the American “Greatest Generation” approach to World War II. His work is substantial and accurate but is a part of a long tradition of bugles and trumpets battle narratives. It rejects new methodology and typically describes battles in detail with little sense of the impact and the fact the most battles did not generate much in the way of strategic importance.⁵⁶ Graves still celebrates the glory of battlefield exploits, and that is unique in the era of modern military history. However, he excels at technical military history, uses extensive primary sources, and reaches a broad audience of readers. His approach to narration is valuable, and “New Military” histories typically only reach academic audiences. His approach to the readable battle narratives can be strengthened significantly with studies that use newer approaches.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ A recently published book by Joseph Stoltz is an excellent example how the study of historical memory greatly strengthens the historiography of the War of 1812. In his book, *A Bloodless Victory*, Stoltz explored the way that interpretations of the Battle of New Orleans have changed over time. He argues that nationalist and Confederate processes of historical memory have made the realities of the battle more obscure. The battle was won largely because New Orleans had a large quantity of French Napoleonic War veterans who were skilled in artillery. However, that highly experienced group of recent immigrants have never fit into the American stories of Western and Southern masculinity. See Joseph Stoltz, *A Bloodless Victory: The Battle of New Orleans in History and Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).

⁵⁷ Donald Graves, *Field of Glory: The Battle of Cryslers Farm, 1813* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 1999); *Where Right and Glory Lead!: The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 1814* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 1997); *And All Their Glory Past : Fort Erie, Plattsburgh and the Final Battles in the North, 1814* (Montreal: Robin Brass Studio, 2013); and *In Peril on the Sea : The Royal Canadian Navy and the Battle of the Atlantic* (Toronto: Canadian Naval Memorial Trust by R. Brass Studio, 2003).

The group of military officers studying the War of 1812 have produced far more rigorous work but have limitations based upon the process of historical studies and officer development. Military historians trained in officer service schools typically focus solely on the Military Decision-Making Process, and as such, concentrate strictly on operational management.⁵⁸ The Military Decision-Making Process is a high order process trained through graduate-level coursework and executed primarily by professional officers. Scholars from this point of view often overlook problems of day-to-day management, junior officers, and soldiers. The analyses are above the company level, and this dissertation seeks to explore the war from the lowest levels possible. Scholarship focused on operational history is intellectual history, with more attention to big ideas than material realities.

⁵⁸ It is interesting that most of these authors work directly for the U.S. Government and their standard for publication is books written for officers above the rank of captain. Some officers play similar roles in the Canadian military. Most of the studies focus solely on operational command, to inform the work of operational leaders. Many of these authors have published “New Military History” texts in peer reviewed presses, but the volume of the professional writing is for officers studying in U.S. military graduate-level education service schools. See Richard Barbuto, Jonathan M. House, and Combat Studies Institute (U.S.), *Forgotten Decisive Victories* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: The Army Press, 2017); Richard Barbuto, and Center of Military History, *The Canadian Theater*, 1813 (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2013); Richard Barbuto, and Center of Military History, *The Canadian Theater, 1814* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2014); Richard Barbuto, *Niagara, 1814: America Invades Canada* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000); Donald Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Bicentennial ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012); Donald Hickey, *Don't Give up the Ship!: Myths of the War of 1812* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); and Donald Hickey, *Glorious Victory: Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). See also Wesley Turner, *The Military in the Niagara Peninsula: Eighth Annual Niagara Peninsula History Conference* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell, 1990); Wesley Turner, *British Generals in the War of 1812: High Command in the Canadas* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999); Wesley Turner, *The War of 1812: The War That Both Sides Won* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2000); Donald Graves and John R. Grodzinski, *Fighting for Canada: Seven Battles, 1758-1945* (Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 2000); John R. Grodzinski, *Defender of Canada: Sir George Prevost and the War of 1812* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013); Joseph Stoltz and Center of Military History, *The Gulf Theater, 1813-1815* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2014); John Elting, *Amateurs, to Arms!: A Military History of the War of 1812. Major Battles and Campaigns* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1991); and Robert Quimby, *The U.S. Army in the War of 1812: An Operational and Command Study* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997).

The exception to this rule would be Canadian military officers because the strong militia tradition in Canada is not antagonistic to the institutional culture of the Canadian military. There has also been a rich tradition of rigorous historians in the ranks of the Canadian Army. Colonel Ernest Cruikshank has been referred to as the master chronicler of the war because of his editorial creation of exhaustive documents collections. The field of study owes so much to Cruikshank regarding the available printed primary sources that are now searchable, but his scholarship was impressive as well.⁵⁹ His work in counterinsurgency is still timely as he often celebrates leaders who shared tribal culture and treated Native Peoples like equals and allies.⁶⁰ Cruikshank even made that case to American historians amid controversy relating to torture in the Philippines.

C. P. Stacy is an even more towering figure in the field of Canadian History in general. As a veteran officer and historian, Stacy recognized the complexity and persistence of national myths. He acknowledged the role that loss of Lake Erie played in the failures of often-criticized Henry Procter. Stacy's contemporary, Jay McKay Hitsman, likewise explored the mythology of the Canadian militia.⁶¹ In many ways,

⁵⁹ Ernest Cruikshank, *Drummond's Winter Campaign 1813* (Niagara Falls, ON: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1900); Ernest Cruikshank, *The Battle of Fort George* (Welland, ON: Tribune Print, 1904); Ernest Cruikshank, *General Hull's Invasion of Canada in 1812* (Ottawa: The author, 1908); Ernest Cruikshank, *Harrison and Procter the River Raisin* (Ottawa: Printed for the Royal Society of Canada, 1911); Ernest Cruikshank, *Documents Relating to the Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812* (Ottawa: Govt. Print. Bureau, 1912); Ernest Cruikshank, *Documents Relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, Commanded by General Jacob Brown, in July and August 1814* (Toronto: Canadian House, 1968); Ernest Cruikshank, *Queenston Heights* (Niagara Falls, ON: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1891); Ernest Cruikshank, *The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1814* (Niagara Falls, ON: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1896); and Ernest Cruikshank and William Hamilton Merritt, *Campaigns of 1812-1814 Contemporary Narratives by Captain W.H. Merritt, Colonel William Claus, Lieut-Colonel Matthew Elliott and Captain John Norton* (Niagara Falls, ON: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1902).

⁶⁰ Ernest Cruikshank, "The Employment of Indians in the War of 1812," in *American Historical Association*, (Washington: Government Publication Office, 1896).

⁶¹ C. P. Stacey, *The Military Problems of Canada; a Survey of Defence Policies and Strategic Conditions Past and Present* (Toronto: Issued for the Canadian institute of international affairs by the Ryerson press, 1940); C.P. Stacey, *The Undefended Border; the Myth and the Reality* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical

scholars like Donald Graves are a regression toward more nationalistically romantic texts. With some exceptions, combat veterans like Stacy do not typically romanticize nationalism and conflict; the field would be strengthened significantly by writers with firsthand combat experience and without the bias toward high order military operations processes that are conventional in the writing of field grade officers. Cruikshank and Hitsman, as well as Stacy, were all scholars ahead of their time, and returning to their more critical view of nationalism based upon the practical realities of military service will re-center the field while simultaneously contextualizing the War of 1812 within a broader impulse toward “New Military History.” Like the works of veteran Canadian historians, this dissertation seeks to take a veteran’s perspective to understand the conflict better. Veterans’ viewpoints are too often dismissed by historians, even though personal experience would be celebrated in other fields of academic study. Scholars acknowledge literary authors like Tim O’Brien, Ernest Hemmingway, and Joseph Heller for their truthful accounts of war, yet military veterans are considered too personally invested for objective military history when they depart from classic operational history.⁶² The perspective of a veteran junior officer with an academic historical approach is useful to add depth to the more nationalistic and Military Decision Process grounded studies. Celebratory nationalistic accounts ignore the sheer unreality of conflict for soldiers, and

Association, 1967); “Another Look at the Battle of Lake Erie,” *Canadian Historical Review* 39, no. 1 (March 1958): 41-51; J. Mackay Hitsman, *Military Inspection Services in Canada, 1855-1950* (Ottawa: Dept. of National Defence, 1962); J. Mackay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812; a Military History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); and J. Mackay Hitsman, *Safeguarding Canada, 1763-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968).

⁶² Joseph Heller, *Catch-22, a Novel* (New York: The Modern library, 1961); Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribner, 1957); and Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010).

the manner in which nationalistic texts find the bright side is often dismissive of the unrelentingly terrible daily experiences of soldiers in the War of 1812.

The last meaningful source of military history lies in the first-person accounts of soldiers and military commanders that link this dissertation to a broader dialogue about warfare. The first example is the campaign of William Slim in the China-Burma Theater in World War II. After an embarrassing defeat, Slim recognized that the overreliance on conventional tactics using standard roads was the key cause of Allied failure.⁶³ A shift to irregular jungle warfare tactics coincided with discipline concerning the health of soldiers.⁶⁴ In the first campaign, crowded roads hindered the logistics of Slim's force, and one of the key additions to traffic was the movement of sick and wounded soldiers.⁶⁵ Slim faced the biggest problem with malaria; he recognized that these soldiers needed rest closer to the front line in order to limit deaths in long marches to hospitals and eliminate massive amounts of road traffic that hindered logistics. Slim also held battalion commanders responsible for the hygiene of their soldiers by firing any leader that had a rate of loss greater than five percent from malaria.⁶⁶ Simple measures, like always wearing full uniform in searing heat, were measures best controlled by commanders, and lower rates of sickness improved combat effectiveness.

⁶³ William Joseph Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press: Distributed by National Book Network, 2000).

⁶⁴ Slim's strategy worked to keep all soldiers in forward areas, expected all support soldiers to behave like combatants, and made all soldiers comfortable in the jungle away from the roads and urban areas. Keeping soldiers fit and in forward areas was central to his strategy, including basic public health measures like what was available in the War of 1812. See Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 142-43.

⁶⁵ Slim employed Malaria Forward Treatment Units (MFTUs) to eliminate crowded roads. See Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 178.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

The second experience is less about the management of sickness and more about the role of environment on strategy in *petite guerre* conflict. Basil Liddell Hart considered T. E. Lawrence to be among the greatest thinkers in military history.⁶⁷ The campaign of T.E. Lawrence as an advisor of Arab Bedouins may seem extremely remote from the War of 1812, but his philosophy of irregular war is one of the most influential ideas for this dissertation. In a professional article titled “The Evolution of a Revolt,” Lawrence described his strategy in terms of mathematics.⁶⁸ Lawrence described war with three elements: “one algebraical, one biological, a third psychological.”⁶⁹ Lawrence understood war as an extension of metabolism, and he developed a strategy that purposefully gave his Turkish opponents more terrain than they could control. For Lawrence, planning natural limitations was based on the principle that was “biological, the breaking point, life, and death, or better, wear and tear.”⁷⁰ His philosophy broke war down to the lowest level of energy management and production. Because Lawrence fought in a remote desert, he recognized that camels metabolized energy better than motorized vehicles. Thus he designed a strategy around efficiency. For Lawrence, the use of camels was frugal and based upon the Bedouin lifestyle. He explained, “We used the smallest force, in the quickest times, at the farthest place.”⁷¹ While sickness was not a key struggle for Lawrence, his strategy was the most characterized by an understanding of his environment. When he traded the traditional measure of military success, terrain gained, for a more feasible metabolic strategy, he represented a genius for warfare in frontier or

⁶⁷ Basil Liddell Hart, *Colonel Lawrence, the Man Behind the Legend* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934).

⁶⁸ T. E. Lawrence, “The Evolution of a Revolt” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1990). <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS68452>.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

wilderness environments. The quote that best illustrates Lawrence's understanding of the human environmental experience of war follows: "The invention of bully-beef has modified land-war more profoundly than the invention of gunpowder."⁷² Lawrence's embrace of the metabolic and biological realities of the human body grasped essential aspects of irregular war, and his strategy of frugality of effort informs any military environmental analysis. In Lawrence's case, strategy focused on metabolism did not necessarily affect soldier health but was the most important path to victory, yet those two things are nested significantly.

The campaigns of Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman are also useful to understand the theme of war and the environment in the United States. While *War Upon the Land* is a compelling environmental history of the American Civil War, it is also important to consider the philosophy that created Grant and Sherman's targeting of the agro-ecological system of the Confederacy.⁷³ Grant worked directly with War of 1812 veterans during his service in Mexico; he believed that Winfield Scott was the finest specimen of manhood he had ever encountered.⁷⁴ In contrast, he directly observed the informal frontier dress and strategy of Zachary Taylor.⁷⁵ Taylor praised Grant for his sharing of hard labor during a harrowing river crossing, and Grant developed a highly rustic, environmentally pragmatic leadership style. Serving as the quartermaster of the 4th Infantry Regiment, Grant also worked directly with Thomas Sidney Jesup, whose reforms

⁷² Ibid., 14.

⁷³ Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

⁷⁴ Ulysses Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Selected Letters 1839-1865* (New York: Library of America, 1990), 33.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 70.

of the Quartermaster Corps came as a result of failures in the War of 1812.⁷⁶ Sherman had served as a Lieutenant under the command of Zachary Taylor in the Second Seminole War.⁷⁷ However, because Taylor's predecessor Thomas Sidney Jesup developed a decentralized strategy, Sherman was responsible for his isolated outpost. Grant and Sherman's early development in terms of frontier warfare, under the leadership of War of 1812 leaders, recognized and grappled with the environmental challenges of warfare in North America.

It is very important to understand that Grant and Sherman's use of tactics to destroy the environment of the American South occurred in a significant progression. Grant and Sherman first fought conventionally in the western theatre of the Civil War. While the western campaign occurred in a less developed environment, the Union Army still employed conventional strategy at the outset. Grant won acclaim at Fort Donelson by defeating larger entrenched opponents through bold offensive and coordinated naval and ground artillery. The both served under Winfield Scott's command, and after the War of 1812 they saw military action in Mexico and the Seminole Wars in Florida. Sherman fought with the Army of the Potomac and viewed taking supplies from civilians as unprofessional brutality until the Valley Campaign of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Sherman moved to the Western Army with Grant; they both changed their perspectives after the Battle of Shiloh.⁷⁸ In that encounter they saw the resolve of Southerners and

⁷⁶ Letter from Second Lieutenant U. S. Grant to Brevet Major General Thomas Sidney Jesup from Pontia, Illinois, September 6, 1846, Ulysses Grant, John Y. Simon, John F. Marszalek, and Ulysses S. Grant Association, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, Vol. I (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 107-8.

⁷⁷ William Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman* (New York: D. A. Appleton and Company, 1886), 18.

⁷⁸ Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Knopf: Random House, 1991).

called for a peoples' war that could not differentiate threats from military and civilian alike. Sherman described the transition toward a more "Indian" style of war. Both were employing what John Grenier called *The First Way of War*, only against white opponents. Grant and Sherman's tactics did not exist in a vacuum, and they were developed and employed directly under War of 1812 officers with hard-earned experience.

Another U.S. military leader who excelled at *petite guerre* and management of soldier health was the two-time Medal of Honor winner Major General Smedley Butler. During the neocolonial period, Butler fought in nearly every conflict where U.S. troops were engaged. Unlike many iconic military leaders, his *nom de guerre*, "Old Gimlet Eye," referred to jaundice from his repeated bouts of malarial fever.⁷⁹ His experience with warfare in tropical environments translated into managing a staging camp for U.S. soldiers during the First World War. Smedley Butler worked mightily to improve the health and fitness of his soldiers. First, he raided supply warehouses to eliminate the mud that was causing sickness in his camp.⁸⁰ Butler also doubled rations and used patriotic music to improve morale. In fact, because of his increase in available food, Butler "ran one-million dollars over his ration allowance."⁸¹ Butler was nearly punished for overspending. However, his commander advocated for him because the rate of sickness in the camp dropped dramatically. Butler was denied more direct combat experience in World War I because he indispensably improved the health and morale of U.S. soldiers who arrived at a staging camp in France. He received the Army Distinguished Service medal because his hygienic reforms significantly improved the health of soldiers

⁷⁹ Smedley Butler and Lowell Thomas, *Old Gimlet Eye; the Adventures of Smedley D. Butler* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1933), 103.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 160.

throughout the theatre. A lifetime of experience fighting in wilderness environments provided extensive experience on the hygienic requirements of soldiers and marines. Without a post-military career in socialist politics, Smedley Butler would rank in the forefront of celebrated American military heroes, but he achieved much more by keeping his Marines healthy than he did with combat heroics.

Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, is perhaps the best example of a leader that managed sickness and logistics exceptionally during the Napoleonic Wars. Wellesley began his career in the remote frontier in India, where the isolated environment was challenging, but inexpensive labor mitigated those challenges.⁸² In Portugal and Spain, the British Army struggled significantly with contracted logistics provided by civilian merchants, and Wellesley made one of his most capable generals his Quartermaster General.⁸³ In the Peninsular War, Wellesley was known widely for always winning in the

⁸² One aspect of soldier health that is valuable in this dissertation was the use of India Pale Ale. The British Army associated the beer ration as superior to a whiskey ration because it provided the same morale enhancement without as much negative health implications. Indian Pale Ales supplemented calories and served as morale enhancement without the excessive drunkenness caused by liquor rations. The India Pale Ale, a popular and common drink today, used higher alcohol content and hop quantities so that the beer kept on the long voyage to India. Alcohol moderation, even in rations that are currently defined as alcoholism, was central to both the management of morale and soldier health. See Mitch Steele, *IPA: Brewing Techniques, Recipes and the Evolution of India Pale Ale* (Boulder, CO: Brewers Association 2012), 22-26. The paper that advances this concept is a medical history of British cultural imperialism by an Air War college student. See Lieutenant Colonel Elizabeth Somsel, "Tropical Medicine as Cultural Imperialism," (Unpublished Paper) Air War College, September 2017.

⁸³ There is an interesting progression in Wellesley's dispatches from 1809-1810, where he describes higher rates of sickness due to poor provisioning then to battlefield success largely because of provisioning. In late September of 1810 Wellesley cited the success of his Commissariat and Quartermaster General in operations near Cadiz. "Accordingly, all operations have been carried on with ease; the soldiers have suffered no privations, have undergone no unnecessary fatigue, there has been no loss of stores, and the army is in high spirits." Prior to this many of his soldiers suffered high rates of sickness attributed to poor rations. In late August 1809 his soldiers and officers were suffering from a lack of supplies: "The sickness of the army, from the same cause (previously describing the death of horses) has increased considerably; particularly among the officers, who have fared no better than the soldiers; and have had nothing but water to drink, and frequently nothing but meat without salt to eat, and seldom any bread...the whole lie out, and nothing can be got for them." Wellesley did not accept the environmental realities fatalistically, he developed a capable Commissariat and placed excellent officers in the Quartermaster corps. Wellesley was extremely capable in battle, but he was an even better logistician who outlasted the French in the Peninsula largely because he had a better supply system, which led to better soldier health and morale. See Arthur

defensive. Wellesley never outstretched his difficult supply lines, and local allies supported the British Army with the constant harassment of the French lines of communication and supply. Wellesley's tactics relied on a core of well-drilled British regiments holding the line, with black-coated riflemen serving as skirmishers to limit the effectiveness of French assaults. Wellesley mastered the combination of skilled and professional formations assisted by units that excelled in *petite guerre*, and Butler matched his efficiency in battle with his capacity as a logistician that kept his troops healthy and well-fed.

This dissertation employs five case studies that use American, Canadian, and British sources; two are narrative and three are oriented around topics. One chapter explores the British 104th Regiment of Foot, while a second concentrates on a company in the U.S. 21st Infantry Regiment. A third analyzes the public health innovations of the U.S. commanders who gained experience as frontier militia leaders before being elevated to generals in the federal army. Two case studies employ a theme-based transnational approach, the first focusing on the use of alcohol as medicine and the second focusing on logistics and malnutrition. While this dissertation explores sources from the entire conflict, most of the chapters focus on the campaign of 1814. Documentary records are more complete in 1814, the year with the largest volume of soldiers and fighting, and the period with numerous commanders who were skilled at managing the daily health of their soldiers. American commanders before 1814 won few victories, and it is important to understand that even the limited success gained in 1814 would have been impossible

Wellesley Wellington and Charles Esdaile, *The Duke of Wellington: Military Dispatches* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014). The quotations can be found on pages 290 and 226.

without the reform led by officers with high rates of experience fighting in the frontier. These case studies argue the methodological value of focusing on the daily management of health. This dissertation maintains that the largest challenge in the conflict was not battle; rather, it was managing the environment and the health of soldiers. There are cases where military units won battles but gained nothing because of the environmental challenges of the War of 1812. Additionally, there is a striking correlation between commanders who won on the battlefield and their efforts to halt sickness. Military leadership in battle is often privileged over the challenges of daily morale, rations, cleanliness, and compassion. Nonetheless, the unromantic elements of war remain the most important, just as they were during the War of 1812.

From a more explicit methodological perspective, this dissertation employs a wider array of sources than typically found in the classic historiography of the War of 1812. It combines the correspondence of officers – which is common in operational military history – with the diaries, courts-martial, and order books that are often used in social history. As a work within the wider theme of the “experience of war,” this dissertation is unique for its more explicit connection between soldier experience and operation and strategic outcomes. The merger of social and operational military historical approaches is sorely needed in the field of military history. The large volume of bottom-up sources in this dissertation is not separate from questions of the broader results; situating the experience of soldiers within operational outcomes is pivotal in gaining a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the War of 1812. Multi-disciplinary approaches to the social science of violence, environmental history, and “New Military

History” are combined with source work that employs the types of documents that are common in both operational and social military history.

The first body chapter, “Managing the Sick List,” focuses solely on U.S. Army records relating to managing the health of soldiers. It explores how the most successful U.S. Army officers developed first as militia officers in frontier regions. A focus on military professionalism with clear delineation of militia and regular status overlooks the way that combat experience before the War of 1812 occurred in isolated frontier regions. With combat experience on the frontier, commanders developed skills in managing the health of their soldiers. Leaders with frontier experience developed hygienic measures such as management of human and food waste, the removal of stagnant pools of water, and quarantine measures. “Filth trenches” rarely make history, but efforts to preserve the numbers of fit-for-duty soldiers were fundamental to the success of operations in the Canadian frontier. Officers like James Miller, William Henry Harrison, and Jacob Brown all began their careers as frontier militia officers, and there is a key correlation between officers who excelled at public health measures and those who succeeded on the battlefield. The relationship between frontier public health measures and successful *petite guerre* tactics was significant because leaders gained environmental knowledge through experience. An additional measure that was important to the success of commanders on both sides was the use and control of alcohol to manage morale.

The next chapter, “The War for Calories,” explores the campaign of 1814 based upon an understanding of food and logistics. Armies that won battles could not gain strategic results because the environment in the Upper Canadian frontier made it impossible to provide sustenance for soldiers. The Americans in 1814 reformed their

army and won every major battle, but a contract logistics system with no accountability made it impossible to continue their invasion of Canada. The British Army, on the other hand, was at its largest size in 1814 with significant reinforcements following the British victory in the Peninsular Campaign. Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond accepted the weakness of his command on an isolated frontier, and he elected to minimize his forces on the frontier to create a realistic logistics plan. The British innovation on the frontier created strategic gains in tactical defeats, yet commanders abandoned their gains due to an institutional fixation on the purchase system in Crimea. Significantly, American officers from the 1814 campaign reformed the military's logistics system; this led to more professionalization and facilitated the mass mobilization of the U.S. Civil War later in the century.

“Liquor and Soldier Motivation,” the following chapter, focuses solely on the use of alcohol to manage the morale of soldiers. Alcohol was employed to control combat and sustain soldier motivation; indeed, it served as a measure of military professionalism. The typical half-pint daily ration of whiskey or rum was used to fortify the bodies of soldiers in a harsh environment and to maintain the sustained motivation needed to manage the drudgery of military campaigning. Before engagements, the ration was typically a pint of spirits for each soldier. Given that musket fire was inaccurate and much of the fighting in the War of 1812 was hand to hand, intoxication was not as inhibiting as it is in modern combat. While soldiers were supplied with enough alcohol to be constantly intoxicated, they were not allowed to share alcohol or purchase alcohol locally, because officers sought to control drunkenness. Importantly, alcohol was the medicine of morale but served as an important insulator from actual medical treatment.

The fact that military units were full of soldiers that were essentially functional alcoholics was problematic, but that was not as challenging as the prospect of troops being treated by physicians who only offered opioids and purgatives that did more harm than good. The War of 1812 did not have perfect solutions; rather, commanders and soldiers sought the least bad options. Alcohol represented an imperfect way to manage soldier morale that was better than any other alternatives. Lastly, the chapter explores the way that alcohol was used to solidify similarities of white soldiers on both sides but differences with Native American combatants. Native Americans consumed alcohol in much the same way that white soldiers did, but the ubiquitous fear of drunken Native Americans perpetuated racialized ideas regarding the animal nature of North American indigenous peoples. Alcohol also served as a supplement to calorie loss on a frontier that posed significant logistical challenges.

Through a series of events and controversies, Captain Joseph Treat led the most well-documented U.S. infantry company in the War of 1812. Treat's experiences are the subject of the next chapter that explores "War at the Company Level." This unit provides the focus of the third chapter. What is most interesting in his records is how traditional combat leadership in battle was considered a reward for the daily suffering in camp. Treat fought in the 21st Infantry Regiment for most of the War of 1812, yet he was denied command of his company at the battles of Chippewa and Lundy's Lane because of lackluster performance in picket duties. Treat suffered sickness and still joined his regiment but was denied service in his company's most significant victories. Remarkably, Treat and his peer company commanders maintained the most thorough fit-for-duty rosters and ration records in the U.S. Army during the war. The records from the 21st

infantry connect the highest rates of illness to low rations of food and liquor, and *petite guerre* actions.

The last body chapter, “Wasted Opportunities and the 104th Regiment of Foot,” is a case study of the only British Regiment of Foot recruited in North America during the War of 1812. This dissertation argues that British military leaders managed the health of soldiers better than their American counterparts in most instances. However, the relegation of the New Brunswick-raised 104th Regiment of Foot to garrison duties illustrates how the hierarchical structure of the British Army failed to utilize the fittest regiment for the environment of Upper Canada for most of the conflict. The 104th Regiment of Foot was raised from the New Brunswick Fencibles, and, as from its beginnings, it excelled at the light infantry tactics most applicable to the War of 1812. However, in its transition from Fencible to British Regiment of Foot, the 104th was filled with officers who could purchase commissions but who were too ill for active service. Minus one small detachment, the 104th remained in the Maritime provinces in garrison duties until 1814. When it was mobilized, the 104th excelled in the light infantry role of a flank company. In a war where a couple of small British regiments carried the balance of the fighting for two years, the 104th Regiment of Foot sat idle in garrison until 1814. In that year the British Army was at its zenith in North America, following Wellington’s victories in Spain and Portugal. The 104th Regiment of Foot was, therefore, a wasted opportunity and is best compared to “foreign” Swiss regiments. The Swiss-raised regiments were filled with Swiss German officers and with soldiers who hailed from many locations in Europe, primarily Spain and Portugal. The Canadian-raised regiment

may have been a British regiment in name, but its marginal provincial status kept it out of the fighting for most of the War of 1812.

Human beings do not construct monuments to the daily grind like they do to heroes on battlefields. As the concluding chapter maintains, battle-focused approaches to combat and military history will never grasp the challenges that soldiers face each day. The relentless challenges of staying fed, clean and healthy, however, played significant roles on the outcomes of battles. A focus on the daily experience of soldiers is not just an exercise in social history; it is essential to understanding operational history as well. The best military commanders know that keeping soldiers fit-for-duty is the most significant aspect of leadership, yet the routine efforts to keep soldiers healthy go largely unremembered. The fact that combat and battlefield victories generate more compelling stories that reach wider audiences does not make campaigns and commanders' tactics more significant to the results of operational history. Officers and soldiers who took charge of their health and morale performed better both in combat and in the daily effort required to stay fit-for-duty. The public health decisions of commanders were more far consequential than the noble efforts of medical professionals. Moreover, effective public health and logistical policies created the more lasting outcomes, independent of victories and losses in pitched battle. The unglamorous management of the harsh experiences that soldiers faced in the camp and on the march crucially shaped the War of 1812's outcome.

CHAPTER 1

MANAGING THE SICK LIST

*“This little army, worn down by fatigue, by sickness, by wounds and deaths”*¹

It is first essential to identify what soldiers and commanders did to stay healthy and keep them on the fit-for-duty roster. While environmental sickness is undeniable, the actions of leaders mattered, and the best leaders gained experience with service in the frontier militia. Alan Taylor’s two recent books on the War of 1812 were the first major accounts of the war that emphasize the role of the environment and sickness on the outcome of the conflict.² Taylor unequivocally stated that he is a social historian with sensitivities to environmental history, so he has only begun a process of environmental interpretation of the War of 1812. Taylor’s books described how the climate of Upper Canada, specifically the narrow fighting season and high rates of malaria, prevented the U.S. Army’s ability to occupy Upper Canada. His approach, while not entirely environmentally determinate, ignores how the British implemented major institutional changes to absorb invalids, and how much easier it was for Canadian militiamen to convalesce at home. Also, Taylor’s valuable shift towards environmental attention did not fully grapple with how the most successful American commanders, such as Winfield Scott, Duncan McArthur,

¹ Letter from William Hull to Secretary of War William Eustace, Fort George, 26 August 1812, in John Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, During the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15 : With Some Additional Letters and Documents Elucidating the History of That Period* (Washington City: Printed by Way & Gideon, for the editor, 1823), 48.

² Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Random House, 2010), and *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and the War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

William Henry Harrison, and Jacob Brown, implemented hygienic policies that safeguarded the health of the men under their command. Sickness was central to the outcome of the war. However, individuals were often able to overcome their illness, and successful officers often managed illness with forward-thinking public health safeguards. Discipline and cleanliness were synonymous, and serviceable uniforms were fundamental to preventing disease-carrying mosquito bites.

From social scientific and conceptual historiographical perspectives, the adaptive frontier officers confirm the ideas of psychologist Salvatore Maddi and historian Kathryn Meier. Maddi's work on "hardiness" has evolved into the concept of resilience; "hardiness" and an individual's sense of control of his health played a significant result in a positive health outcome.³ Likewise, Meier focuses on "self-care" where soldiers took charge of their health through occasionally straggling to secure rest, better food, and hygienic bathing. Too often, historians interpret the experience of war by soldiers as solely pernicious, and soldiers lose agency. In the study of veterans' experiences, Tim O'Brien has been outspoken about the problem of the "old and terrible lie" in which any effort to find a moral story in an individual's struggle in war continually fed into romantic notions of combat.⁴ While romantic accounts can be uncritical and problematic, most soldiers overcome the harsh physical and psychological cost of conflict. The work of Maddi and Meier contradict O'Brien's claim that true war stories never have a moral lesson because most veterans

³ Kathryn Meier, *Nature's Civil War: Common Soldiers and the Environment in 1862 Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); and Salvatore Maddi. "On Hardiness and Other Pathways to Resilience." *American Psychologist* 60, no. 3 (April 2005): 261-62.

⁴ Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried: A Work of Fiction* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), 76.

survive and adapt to their situations.⁵ The memoir of E. B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, concluded that he would not end his story with a romantic description of the beauty of the South Pacific. He noted instead that war was a waste of human beings, land, and society, yet democracy could not survive without a willingness for service in combat.⁶ Sledge's perspective on the wastage and value of military service in a democracy offers valuable insight beyond World War II. The health situation in the War of 1812 was, in many ways, hopeless and largely influenced by forces outside the control of commanders. The commanders that chose to accept responsibility and exert control over health and the environment outperformed their peers, however, thereby confirming the work of Salvatore Maddi long before the development of professional psychology.

Through the exploration of three themes, it will become clear that the management of sick soldiers was central to success in the War of 1812. The three themes are so significantly intertwined that a chronological narrative will be the best approach to this chapter. The first theme that emerges is how soldiers linked honor to service while ill or injured. Officers gained accolades and reputation by serving despite wounds and illness. To date, scholars have linked honor to duels and poor professionalism in the American Army, but just as often honor encouraged officers to serve while injured or sick.⁷ The second theme emerges from regimental level

⁵ Another exceptional historical approach to hardiness is found in the work of Earl Hess. He outlined the horrors of war for Civil War Soldiers, including injury, killing, and suicide, but he argued that the community of soldiers, built largely by fighting "shoulder to shoulder," helped most soldiers overcome their wartime experiences. See Earl Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997).

⁶ E. B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Presidio Press, 2010).

⁷ This specifically refers to Alan Taylor who has moved the field forward in terms of social and environmental history, but he discounts the role of honor. In his account honor led only to dueling and

hygiene and health policies. Military histories to date have primarily ignored hygienic procedures, save for criticism of the lack of professionalism of the U.S. Army. The most overarching theme in the literature is the ways that frontier militia leaders were far better at managing and taking responsibility of the health of soldiers, and therefore the militia rather than the regular Army had the best public health policies.

In most cases, scholars connect all professionalism to the reforms of regular officers like Winfield Scott. However, Scott was an outlier, and frontier militia officers more often advocated these policies after they received federal acceptance of their rank. Most generals in the War of 1812 gained a reputation in the militia and then were made regular officers later. The final sections explore how the culture of honor and privation merged with the Revolutionary tradition. The British system of logistics outpaced the fledgling U.S. system, and as such, prevented a significant number of desertions, as well as freeing up healthy soldiers for combat duties. Officers who excelled at managing sickness were also effective in managing morale because the combat motivation and health management were one-in-the-same. Honor has been used to criticize the U.S. Army, militia, and volunteers when it was a significant factor in transcending disabilities to fight. And this dynamic occurred on both sides of the conflict. In Salvatore Maddi's language, hardiness is impressive but

fractional disputes amongst officers. Likewise, J. C. A. Stagg recently discounted honor as positive attribute of 1812 era officership. Honor has therefore been often understood as a liability, yet it is difficult to find a modern professional military establishment that does not still prize honor. There are far more incidents of courage under extreme duress than there are accounts of dueling officers in the conflict. An important author on the issue of honor in the Early Republic is Joanne Freeman, largely because her work is a more nuanced understanding of dueling. In most cases dueling did not result in violence, and restored relationships in a way that both parties saved face. See Joanne Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), and J. C. A. Stagg, "United States Army Officers in the War of 1812: A Statistical and Behavioral Portrait." *Journal of Military History* 76, no. 4 (October 2012): 1001-34.

suffering for its own sake reflects poor leadership and strategy. Militia officers with forward-thinking health policies were the only American commanders to achieve success, so any study of health management calls to questions criticism of citizen soldiers.

General William Hull's surrender of Fort Detroit ranks as one of the most embarrassing defeats in U.S. military history. Historians such as Stephen Rauch and Alec Gilpin have defended Hull because of high rates of illness inside his army.⁸ Rauch and Gilpin support Hull's justification of his surrender because "This little army, [was] worn down by fatigue, by sickness, by wounds and deaths."⁹ However, this argument problematically views illness as a static concept. They argued that soldiers were either sick or healthy, and that the sick could not serve in combat. Gilpin and Rauch's arguments are significantly contradicted by what Hull's officers and soldiers believed that about fighting while ill or injured in the most dramatic moment of Hull's court-martial, he questioned Brigadier General James Miller about his unit's fitness. After a battle to restore Hull's supply lines, a storm battered Miller's regiment and most of his force became ill. When asked if, despite his sickness, he should have returned to Fort Detroit, Miller stated: "Neither myself nor men were in as good a situation as we [could have] been in; but we were able to proceed, and should have proceeded, if we were not ordered back."¹⁰ The memoir of

⁸ Stephen Rauch, "A Stain Upon the Nation? A Review of the Detroit Campaign of 1812 in United States Military History," *Michigan Historical Review* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 129-53; and Alec Gilpin, *The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2012)

⁹ Letter from William Hull to William Eustice from Fort Malden, 26 August 1812, in John Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 48.

¹⁰ James G. Forbes, United States. Army. Court-martial (Hull: 1814), and Miscellaneous Pamphlet Collection (Library of Congress). *Report of the Trial of Brig. General William Hull, Commanding the North-Western Army of the United States: By a Court Martial Held at Albany on Monday, 3d January,*

an Ohio militiaman supported Miller's testimony. According to the author, "The wounded leaped at the idea that they would soon have an opportunity of avenging their wrongs, and besought the surgeons to report them fit for duty."¹¹ A key motivation for soldiers was the identity and status they gained through suffering and succeeding. The surrender denied the soldiers and men the honor of fighting while sick, and Hull denied them the opportunity to demonstrate their hardiness. Hull used sickness like a fixed concept and therefore overlooked incidents when sick soldiers fought off major attacks – especially inside of fortifications.

During Hull's court-martial no one failed to recognize that many in the fort were sick, yet he was still publicly shamed and identified as a coward because of his surrender. Hull asked a direct question about cowardice and his surrender of Fort Detroit. With little hesitation, James Miller stated, "Yes! Such an immediate surrender I think was an indication of a want of courage."¹² No one disagreed with Hull, because testimony confirmed that ill soldiers filled Fort Detroit. However, his surrender was unjustified because ill soldiers often defended fortifications in the war. His daughter later observed the following:

All outward disgrace seemed to have fallen upon his head, yet all were borne with cheerful equanimity. A soldier, he had been branded as a coward; a patriot, he was esteemed a traitor; loving the approbation of his fellow men, he was an object of universal censure; naturally fond of public life, and

1814 and Succeeding Days (New York: Eastburn, Kirk, and Co., 1814), 117. Hereafter, *Trial of Brig. Gen. Hull*.

¹¹ Vercheres de Boucherville, Rene Thomas, James Foster, and Milo Milton Quaife, *War on the Detroit; the Chronicles of Thomas Verchères De Boucherville and the Capitulation, by an Ohio Volunteer. The Lakeside Classics* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1940), 277.

¹² Forbes, *Trial of Brig. Gen. Hull*, 117.

ambitious of public usefulness, he was under a sentence of irrevocable ostracism.¹³

James Miller became a lifelong invalid because of the ague, most likely malaria, which he contracted before Tippecanoe. He fought at Brownstown, Chippewa, Bridgewater, and Fort Erie. Miller was initially a New Hampshire militia officer, who excelled at managing health on the frontier. According to Adam Walker, “Every precaution possible by the humane and generous Col. Miller to preserve the health of the regiment; himself waded the river, as well as every officer; in many instances performing the duties of the common soldier.”¹⁴ His example, combined with generous rations of spirits, ensured high morale and combat effectiveness in the 4th Infantry Regiment.¹⁵ Miller, unlike Hull, recognized that morale and health were linked and there was no more competent officer under fire in the regular army.¹⁶

The defense of Fort Harrison from an assault by Native Americans could not have better represented the expectations made by soldiers and commanders. Zachary

¹³ Maria Campbell, *Revolutionary Services and Civil Life of General William Hull* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1848), 297.

¹⁴ Adam Walker, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U. S. Infantry in the Michigan and Indiana Territories Under the Command of Col. John P. Boyd and Lt. Col. James Miller, During the Years 1811 & 12* (Keene, N.H.: Printed at the Sentinel press by the author, 1816), 11. Hereafter, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment*.

¹⁵ Walker, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment*, 11-12

¹⁶ As a Major in the militia Lewis Bond was the only supporter of Hull’s argument about sickness. It is important to note that Bond’s bias was significantly impacted by his experiences. Bond was not a British prisoner until the aftermath of Detroit meant that American towns were burned, and his life was continually in jeopardy, and he went to Camp Malden in order to preserve his life from Native American raids (most likely Potawatomi). In captivity he updated his initial writing. After his miserable experiences Bond described how “the situation of his Army much reduced by casualties, the hospital’s filled with sick.” His account actively took hyperbolic liberties, specifically citing cannibalism, and it is tempered by the writing of leaders like Harrison, Miller, and Lewis Cass, all of whom cited tribal atrocities and sickness without claiming to be so woefully incapable of prevailing. See Lewis Bond Journal, Library of Congress, 13.

Taylor's defense of an isolated and heavily outnumbered Fort Harrison, with a large party of non-combatants, was remarkably like Hull's surrender at Detroit. Taylor claimed that "indeed there were not more than 10 or 15 men able to do a great deal, the others being sick, or convalescent, and to add to our misfortunes, two of the stoutest men in the fort, and that I had every confidence in, jumped the picket and left us."¹⁷ Captain Zachary Taylor, who would later command a larger force in Mexico and become the President of the United States, stated that he did not feel capable of defending the fort. Before the siege Taylor was unable to post guard due to the "unhealthiness of the company," nor was he able to see to his duties at night because he "had just recovered from a severe attack of the fever."¹⁸ Native Americans pierced Taylor's perimeter and set fire to a blockhouse. The camp was filled with the screams of the attackers and frightened civilians. Taylor's "men were very slow in executing [his] orders," because of "debility."¹⁹ He managed to maintain his "presence of mind" and rally the weakened soldiers to use the damaged building as a temporary breast work.²⁰ Taylor, with no initial hope of success, refused to surrender and allowed his volunteer soldiers to demonstrate their honor. In his words, "never did men act with more firmness or desperation."²¹ The contemporary language regarding firmness or infirmity illustrates the individual differences between an individual's recovery, in

¹⁷ Zachary Taylor to William Harrison from Fort Harrison 16 September 1812, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States*, 62.

¹⁸ Zachary Taylor to William Harrison from Fort Harrison, 16 September 1812, 61.

¹⁹ Zachary Taylor to William Harrison from Fort Harrison, 16 September 1812, 62.

²⁰ His writing style was interesting because the young Captain described events as if he was outside of himself and was in many ways surprised by his poise. The impossible nature of his fort's defense created a surreal prose during a time when most accounts were romantic and formulaic accounts of battles.

²¹ Zachary Taylor to William Harrison from Fort Harrison 16 September 1812, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States*, 62.

remarkable similarity to current definitions of hardiness and resilience. The militia was a significant force on the frontier, and leaders understood that the will and honor of soldiers could be employed to counteract infirmity.

Colonel Solomon Rensselaer presided over the initial assault across the Niagara River at the Battle of Queenston Heights and, unlike Hull, he would fail in the right way. During the period before the battle Rensselaer, like many other soldiers, described the necessity of working while “suffering under the effects of a fever.”²² Major Morrison was one of the few officers willing to lead troops across the Niagara. However, Morrison “suddenly found himself taken too unwell for the duty.”²³ Rensselaer continued to lead while wounded until he succumbed to blood loss. He described his experience as follows: “Finding myself very much crippled now, by a number of wounds, and by the loss of blood unable to proceed.”²⁴ As a Federalist politician Rensselaer’s sense of honor was based largely in the political feuding criticized by Joanna Freeman, but honor was not just about duels.²⁵ Honor caused problems, but it also pushed officers to fight when wounded and ill. And while Queenston was not a victory, Rensselaer preserved his reputation because he continued to serve while sick and injured. Failing the right way meant that officers fought until they could no longer stand, and even in defeat, officers knew that their honor would have to survive scrutiny. War itself is never ideal, so maximizing the

²² Solomon Van Rensselaer, *A Narrative of the Affair of Queenstown: In the War of 1812* (New York: Leavitt Crocker & Brewster, 1836), 29. Interestingly enough, Solomon remained in the regular forces because he was injured in a 1794 campaign with General James Wilkinson. He received a bullet through his lungs, yet he somehow recovered due to his “youth and strong constitution.”

²³ Van Rensselaer, *A Narrative of the Affair of Queenstown*, 29.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

²⁵ Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*.

positive role of honor, within certain shortcomings, was necessary to inspire soldiers and officers to acts of courage despite their poor health.

William Henry Harrison grasped the relationship between the frontier and illness. Until the United States controlled Lake Erie, Harrison's troops would suffer. But by retaining Northern Ohio garrisons, the Northwest Army would be able to exploit a U.S. naval victory. Harrison wrote:

I hope that the period will soon arrive when we shall transfer the *Labouring oar* to the enemy, and oblige him to encounter some of the difficulties of labours and difficulties which we have undergone in waging a defensive warfare, and protecting our extensive frontier (sic).²⁶

The campaign in the Old Northwest was plagued with sickness, suffering, and fatigue. United States operations were limited in the winter but did not stop. Ohio Militia operating out of Fort Harrison went on an offensive to destroy the Prophet's town and conducted several *petite guerre* style ambushes.²⁷ Like at Detroit and Queenston the weather became a hindrance, rains created swollen rivers, and a brutal winter storm slowed their march. Despite leaving Fort Harrison with soldiers "all unfit for duty," the offensive was successful. Samuel Hopkins praised his men who had covered over 100 miles "with a naked army of infantry aided only by about fifty rangers, and spies: all of this done in twenty days – no sigh, no murmur, no complaint."²⁸ The militia on the frontier often not only held its own with regulars;

²⁶ William Harrison to John Armstrong from Seneca Town, 4 August 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 184.

²⁷ The Prophet Tenskwatawa was the brother of Tecumseh, and religious leader for the Shawnee Confederation.

²⁸ Samuel Hopkins to Governor Isaac Shelby, From Wabash, Near the Mount of Pine-Creek, 27 November 1812, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 97.

instead, it outperformed regulars principally by its ability to function while ill, without supplies, and exposed to terrible weather. Service on the American frontier gave officers like Harrison the right experiences to command in Upper Canada.

Soldiers at the lower echelons of command were also aware of the inadequate supply problems and their influence on health. Kentucky militiaman William Atherton's *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat of the North-Western Army Under General Winchester* grasped the problems of frontier supplies as well as leaders like Harrison. He consistently complained of being forced to eat unsalted meats because "the roads were almost impassable."²⁹ The great effort to bring supplies meant that soldiers were on reduced rations from September until December, and when the men could secure beef they were "entirely without salt, which has been much against the health of the men."³⁰ Atherton observed, "Butchers got to a beef and kill it, when lying down and could not get out of the way. This kind of beef, and hickory roots, was our principal subsistence for a length of time."³¹ Because of the lack of salt, the soldiers had to slaughter cows without being able to preserve the meat, and soldiers like Atherton believed that fresh meat was less healthy than salted meats. The danger of Native American assaults also exacerbated the lack of food supplies during the collecting of local foodstuff. Atherton observed that "Shortly after Our arrival at Fort Defiance, five of our men who had been gathering plums, were found scalped."³² After the salt supplies ran out, the soldiers could hunt and eat fresh meat, but the

²⁹ William Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat of the North-Western Army under General Winchester: Massacre of the Prisoners: Sixteen Months Imprisonment of the Writer and Others with the Indians and British* (Frankfort, KY: Printed for the author by A.G. Hodges, 1842), 18.

³⁰ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 14.

³¹ Ibid. 19.

³² Ibid., 10.

squirrel population quickly diminished.³³ By December the men were eating pork without salt, and Atherton noted that "Many of the men were sick and that sickness occasioned by being compelled to eat fresh pork without bread and salt, and from being exposed to cold and wet."³⁴ Poor roads led to low supplies, and when soldiers secured fresh meat, their health declined. Both sides influenced the health of their enemies through *petite guerre* tactics that cut off supplies, impaired communication, and made subsistence very dangerous. Nonetheless, Atherton's account of suffering was something he discussed with pride because of its connection with the traditions of the Revolutionary Army.

What made Atherton especially interesting was that he, unlike many historians, did not blame his leadership. For Atherton, "It seemed that the very elements fought against us."³⁵ He was also proud to have suffered for his country. Forced to retreat because of low supplies from Camp Three to the camp on Raisin River, Winchester's Army's suffering exceeded Atherton's power of description: "To give a detailed account of individual suffering during this march, from camp No. 3 to the Rapids, would swell this sketch beyond its intended limits."³⁶ Still, Atherton was proud of the sufferings he experienced in serving his country. He described how "the reader can form but little idea unless he had been on the spot, and seen and felt what we saw and felt."³⁷

³³ Ibid., 19.

³⁴ Ibid., 25.

³⁵ Ibid., 27.

³⁶ Ibid., 28.

³⁷ Ibid., 27.

Atherton's suffering separated him from non-veterans while connecting his force to the Revolutionary Army. Even when provided the information, nonveterans would not comprehend the suffering: "Perhaps facts would be related which the present generation, who has but little knowledge of things only from report, would scarcely believe."³⁸ In the early portions of Atherton's memoir, the enemy was a scarce actor, and his sufferings against nature was a badge of honor that he displayed by language that separated himself from his readers. It is no wonder that because he was a prisoner after the Raisin River Massacre his determination to continue while wounded saved him from the tomahawk. Atherton was wounded and marched by his captors "starving and sick, but he kept on as fast and as far as he could, and when he could go no farther he laid upon the ground and told them to kill him...but when they saw his resolution they became attached to him."³⁹ To still be on his feet, slogging through snow, after four months of eating unsalted meat, was an achievement that Atherton used to define his character because to overcome fatigue and illness was the best example of his virtue. His resolution was not only the best example of his character; it also saved his life. Soldiers could not control the weather, or whether they lived or died, but they could control their response to adverse conditions.

Alexander Smythe was a regular army commander who took over the Niagara region during the winter of 1812-13. Smythe favored regular units while recognizing that professional soldiers had more significant problems with illness. The summer campaign season meant that all active service occurred at a heightened risk of

³⁸ Ibid., 28.

³⁹ Ibid., 50-51.

malaria, while in the winter contagious illness proliferated in cramped winter quarters. While laboring outdoors in the summer weakened Rensselaer's force in Niagara through mosquito-carried illness, Smyth's soldiers succumbed to "measles and other diseases" because "they were now in tents, in the month of December."⁴⁰ His orders were to invade Canada with 3,000 troops, but illness prevented an effective marshaling of forces. He was only able to assemble 1,500 troops, and his intelligence sources indicated that the British issued 2,314 rations to frontier troops.⁴¹ Most significant to Smyth was the fact that he "saw that the number of regular troops was declining rapidly. I knew that on them chiefly I was to depend."⁴² Some of the advantages of the militia were demographic rather than experiential. Typically, militia units were composed of soldiers drawn from the same region they fought in.⁴³ Therefore, the composition of militia units better prepared them for the environmental caused illnesses as well as infectious diseases from proximity in camps.⁴⁴ Smyth noted that in both instances when he gathered forces for the ordered invasion that "the regular troops were men in bad health, who could not have stood one day's march."⁴⁵ Still, Smyth recorded that by the industry of officers that the sick men were willing

⁴⁰ Alexander Smyth to a Committee of Patriotic Citizens of the Western Counties of New York, from a camp near Buffalo, 3 December 1812, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 103.

⁴¹ Alexander Smyth to a Committee of Patriotic Citizens of the Western Counties of New York, from a camp near Buffalo, 3 December 1812, 104.

⁴² Alexander Smyth to a Committee of Patriotic Citizens of the Western Counties of New York, from a camp near Buffalo, 3 December 1812, 103.

⁴³ Militia soldiers were also drawn from the same communities and would have already have a developed immune relationship helping with common communicable camp diseases.

⁴⁴ Also important was the role of friendship and lifelong connections on the health of militia soldiers. John Resch has argued that militia soldiers fared much better after the Revolution because their maintained their connections with their community. Having friends and family to care for militia on campaign was also a significant factor in their better performance regarding hardiness. See John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

⁴⁵ Alexander Smyth to a Committee of Patriotic Citizens of the Western Counties of New York, from a camp near Buffalo, 3 December 1812, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 103.

even if the officers ultimately decided that an invasion would be folly. Illness was the chief force that prevented a winter invasion of Canada, and one of Smythe's chief problems was an unwillingness to rely on militia units that demography and experience on the frontier made healthier. The regular units recruited from diverse locations were far more susceptible to illness.⁴⁶

At Fort Meigs in northern Ohio, the 19th Infantry Regiment was struggling with illness at the height of the summer of 1813. At the beginning of July, the post commander's adjutant Captain Chums reported eight sick privates with no sick officers or leaders.⁴⁷ As the season progressed, illness doubled. A list dated on 31 July 1813 cited one Lieutenant, two Sergeants, one Corporal and twenty Privates on the sick list.⁴⁸ General Green Clay commanded the post and was incapacitated, forcing subordinates to take charge. Like Zachary Taylor, Green Clay was a leader in the Kentucky Militia, and he was also Revolutionary War veteran. Clay was ill during a siege, but unlike Taylor, sickness incapacitated Clay. Clay recognized that subordinates would have to rise to the challenge, stating "the Genl (sic) feels that he will receive & support of the officers which his ill health may require."⁴⁹ The siege occurred on 11 July, and increased sickness represents both the duration of the inclement season as well as the influence that siege warfare had on an isolated garrison. Authors like John Grenier have claimed that *The First Way of War* evolved

⁴⁶ Letter from LTC John Campbell to William Harrison, from Fort Greenville, 25 December 1812, *Official Letters*, 117.

⁴⁷ General Orders 1 July 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Duncan McArthur Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁸ General Orders 31 July 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Duncan McArthur Papers, Library of Congress.

⁴⁹ General G. Clay, General Orders 11 July 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Duncan McArthur Papers, Library of Congress.

from experiences with Native Americans, but the War of 1812 illustrates the continuation of European siege warfare in much smaller scale battles at remote posts.⁵⁰ Sieges almost always resulted in high rates of sickness.

Fort Meigs was in danger based on high rates of sickness and injuries, yet soldiers and officers still chose to fight. Clay, despite his illness, described surrender as a massacre and to fight as honorable. On 24 July when sickness rates were increasing, Clay stated that “to fight is to conquer, to abandon posts is to suffer disgrace in the most shocking Massacre.”⁵¹ Although the British were in Malden, their control of the lakes meant that “a few hours of fair wind” could bring a British attacking force to Meigs.⁵² Despite significant cases of illness in the fort, including his own, Clay allowed his army to fight and offered them nothing but praise for their honor and firmness. Clay described his army as follows:

The (G)eneral witnessed an animated zeal in all to discharge their duty if any testimony were wanted in favor of the soldier like feelings which persuaded...the wounded and the sick, both officers and men throwing aside their crutches, and advancing boats to post of danger the general cannot but express his grateful feelings and thanks to those officers.⁵³

When United States soldiers could cast off their infirmities, they rose to the challenge and at the siege of Meigs, like that of Fort Harrison, they fought capably while ill.

American War of 1812 soldiers inherited the Revolutionary ideal of fighting in the

⁵⁰ David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing: Pivotal Moments in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 377.

⁵¹ General G. Clay, General Orders 24 July 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Duncan McArthur Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵¹ General G. Clay, General Orders 24 July 1813.

⁵² General G. Clay, General Orders 31 July 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Duncan McArthur Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵³ General G. Clay, General Orders 31 July 1813.

most austere conditions and under the duress of high rates of illness. The sieges at Fort Harrison and Meigs illustrate that illness did not eliminate sick soldiers from serving under fire.

The 19th Infantry Regiment's Order Book continued to illustrate how commanders were taking charge of their soldiers' health. The day after Green Clay praised his soldiers for enduring their illnesses to save Fort Meigs, 8 July, he issued an order that would help prevent disease. Clay commanded officers to inspect the cleanliness of the soldiers and the hospitals. The order stated that the "Cleanliness of the camp as the only possible way in which the health of the troops can be Restored and when Restored ~~Preserved~~ Preserved."⁵⁴ The order also mandated that "officers will pay particular attention to the clothing of the men their mend cause them to wash their clothes and shave twice a week."⁵⁵ Before germ theory, U.S. commanders were calling for cleanliness, and clothing covering the whole body remained the most effective prevention of malaria until the latter half of the twentieth century. Hygienic measures were then and are now the best method to avoid illness. Soldiers and officers could not always control the factors that led to sickness, however, but the perception of control was extremely important. Importantly, hygienic measures occurred in tandem with orders for the serviceability of weapons.⁵⁶ To frontier leaders, the health of soldiers was as important as functioning weapons. The 8 July order is exceptional because it called post commanders to "cause the stagnated water

⁵⁴ General G. Clay, General Orders 8 July 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Duncan McArthur Papers, Library of Congress. The author chose to leave the corrected grammar. Captain Chum was the Adjutant, but this correction illustrates how a superior reviewed and corrected the document.

⁵⁵ General G. Clay, General Orders 8 July 1813.

⁵⁶ General G. Clay, General Orders 8 July 1813.

in the ditches to be immediately drained.”⁵⁷ While the 19th Infantry was a federal regiment the regional commanders consisted of Green Clay, Duncan McArthur, and William Henry Harrison; all were promoted as federal commanders after successes in leading Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana militia units. In the Old Northwest and Upper Canada, the fighting season was also the inclement season so clean uniforms, and filth sinks (trenches to store waste) were as crucial as functioning cannon. Filth sinks and hygiene policies rarely make it into military histories, but the storied battlefield commanders of the War of 1812 valued them as much as serviceable weapons.

The frontier militia leader William Henry Harrison also had a challenging job regarding the sick during his invasion of Upper Canada, following his federal appointment to Major General. In a letter dated 1 October 1813 the commander of the 1st Kentucky Volunteer Infantry complained: “the volunteers of my regiment who were sick – could not be attended to in the manner – which humanity in other circumstances would require.”⁵⁸ He described how thirty-five soldiers from his and Colonel John Donaldson’s regiment of Kentucky Militia were ordered to Detroit, and “have been quartered in Gen^l Hulls house.”⁵⁹ Donaldson’s militia served with regulars, but the surgeon assigned to the regulars failed to treat ill militia soldiers. As such, he had to request Harrison’s orders for his soldiers to receive medical care. Donaldson’s regiment and the regulars at Detroit were in a position to protect lines of supply and communications. These soldiers were securing the same blockhouses and small fortifications, but the regular surgeon’s refusal to treat ill militia illustrated

⁵⁷ General G. Clay, General Orders 8 July 1813.

⁵⁸ Letter from Commander of the 1st Kentucky Mounted Militia, to Major General William Harrison from Sandwich 1 October 1813, In the William Henry Harrison Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁹ Letter from Commander of the 1st Kentucky Mounted Militia.

some of the inherent tensions between citizen and professional soldiers. Even when two major theatre commanders, Brigadier Duncan McArthur and Major General William Harrison, began the war leading militia units, animosity still existed between regular and volunteer units over issues as inoffensive as caring for each other's wounded. Much of the irregular fighting required mixed detachments, and rivalries had the potential to hinder overall health. It is also important to note that the denial of care to Donaldson's militia regiment represents unprofessionalism amongst professional soldiers; unfortunately, much of the worst military professionalism came out of the regular Army.

Another fall 1813 account, in William Henry Harrison's Papers, included one of the most concise but revealing documents about honor and infirmity during the war. A report made by Captain Samuel Hopkins of the 2nd Light Dragoons illustrated the willingness of regular Army officers to allow service from soldiers that today would be considered unfit for service. Hopkins described how, because of his ailments, he was not fit for a commission in the infantry, but he could serve in a mounted unit. At the time, his cavalry force was being shifted into an infantry brigade, which compelled Hopkins "to perform duties for which [he was] physically unfit."⁶⁰ The Army immediately granted Hopkins a Captain's commission at the beginning of the war. However, Hopkins observed that "knowing my incompetency, from constitutional infirmity, to undergo the fatigues incident upon a long and arduous march I resolved not to accept it."⁶¹ Hopkins may not have been fit enough

⁶⁰ Letter from Captain S G Hopkins to Major General William Henry Harrison, 2 October 1813, William Henry Harrison Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶¹ Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

for the infantry, but he was still willing to serve in combat, and he was “delighted” to receive a commission in the cavalry.⁶² Serving on horseback was “a better situation,” and he was wisely ordered into recruiting duties when his cavalry unit transitioned to light infantry.⁶³ It was often impossible for him to serve because his mounted unit regularly served as light infantry and Hopkins commanded the guard, fatigue (parties), and police duties of the camp.⁶⁴ He was able to cross into Canada mounted, but the unit again diverted to un-mounted infantry following the capture of Sandwich.⁶⁵ Hopkins became a liability in combat, so he requested to return to his duties as a recruiter. He wanted to serve in “some service where I can be more useful.”⁶⁶ At the beginning of the war his “friends in Washington” believed that a constitutionally weak man, with character, could serve in the cavalry, later during the conflict his service remanded to outpost duties, and in the end, he desired to serve as a recruiter to be more useful.⁶⁷ Hopkins received no battle honors, but it is clear that his unheralded service was helpful and that his character was respected. This illustrates that the Army was a place where the infirm could find an important role. Hopkins’s brief accounts reveal that successful officers and soldiers strived to maximize their service in the War of 1812, based on the realities of their health, and they expended a great deal of effort to prove their moral hardiness.

William Harrison’s leadership was amplified by the actions of lessor understood militia officers like Lewis Cass and Duncan McArthur. These frontier

⁶² Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

⁶³ Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

⁶⁴ Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

⁶⁵ Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

⁶⁶ Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

⁶⁷ Hopkins to Harrison, 2 October 1813.

Militia officers would win significant victories and secure esteemed reputations. Additionally, Isaac Shelby, a commander in his sixties and participating in his third war, demonstrated unbelievable endurance during extremely difficult marches. Shelby's Kentucky militia would stand by his "zeal, and that of his men enabled them to keep up with the cavalry."⁶⁸ Later, at the Battle of Thames, "The venerable governor of Kentucky was posted, who, at the age of sixty-six, preserves all the rigor of youth, the ardent zeal, which distinguished him in the revolutionary war, and the undaunted bravery which manifested at King's Mountain."⁶⁹ Shelby's age and vigor add complexity to the surrender of William Hull at Detroit, as would Hull's family's portrayal of him in later life. Hull took solace in laboring on his farm, and veterans in the early republic often led vigorous lives well into old age. Shelby, who took no prisoners at the Battle of Kings Mountain, also represented the ruthlessness and vigor necessary to prevail on the United States southern frontier. The militia may not have always looked the part of regular soldiers, but militia drawn from the frontier could march and endure hardships at an equal or greater rate than the regular and volunteer regiments.

The mixed composition of Harrison's army often made it hard for contingents of forces to maintain surgeons on the March. On the same day that Harrison praised Colonel John Miller, Commander of the 19th Infantry, Miller was afraid that his orders to move out of Detroit meant that he would not have a surgeon to care for "my

⁶⁸ William Harrison to Governor Return J. Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 235.

⁶⁹ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813.

sick at the present.”⁷⁰ At Fort Detroit, the artillery unit defending Detroit’s surgeon cared for Colonel Miller’s infantrymen. John Miller praised the surgeon’s mate Morrison because he was “very attentive to the sick.”⁷¹ However, Morrison was forced to offer his resignation because of an unspecified conflict with his supervising physician.⁷² John Miller still implored Harrison to allow him to retain Morrison, who he believed would be capable of his regiment’s fast-approaching march into Upper Canada. In a time when the medical profession was in its infancy, the value judgment of officers was more important than the recommendations of surgeons. A key aspect of emotional hardiness is accepting responsibility for health, and officers took as much or more responsibility for the health of their soldiers than the surgeons and surgeon’s mates. Constant marching and the necessity of securing outposts stretched the small numbers of medical professionals in the Northwestern Army to the point where John Miller wanted to retain capable surgeon’s mates, regardless of the recommendation of his supervising surgeon. Keeping men fit for the march was more critical than standard medical procedures; it was the responsibility of every field commander.

During Harrison’s 1813 invasion of Upper Canada, Duncan McArthur was left to defend Fort Detroit and Sandwich. Like the previous United States surrender of the fort, many of the soldiers left in garrison were soldiers unfit for the march into the

⁷⁰ LTC John Miller to Harrison, 9 October 1813, in the William Henry Harrison Papers, Library of Congress.

⁷¹ LTC John Miller to Harrison, 9 October 1813.

⁷² LTC John Miller to Harrison, 9 October 1813. Morrison’s first name is listed but the document is damaged with multiple smudges and it is illegible. The supervising Surgeon’s name is also listed but is covered with a large stain.

Niagara. He was given “700 effectives” to defend as well as all of the sick.⁷³ Harrison would later describe how “Illness deprive(d) me of the talents of my adjutant general colonel Gaines, who was left at Sandwich.”⁷⁴ Harrison’s victory at Thames and his capability led to a major shift in tribal loyalty. McArthur observed that the Ottawa, Potawatomi, Miami, and Kickapoo tribal leaders all agreed “to hold the same tomahawk with us.”⁷⁵

Most importantly, this illustrates how *petite guerre* tactics meant that ill soldiers were left in blockhouses to enable the impressive marches, like that of Shelby’s troops, as well as to serve as a supplemental force in a desperate siege. The infirm were not solely a liability, and the sick list was a dynamic changing document. Rested soldiers could enable a direct victory like the one at the Battle of Thames. Managing the sick list could also reduce the medical discharges that could occur without convalescence, or like Zachary Taylor’s victory at Fort Harrison, infirm soldiers could rise to the occasion during a defensive action.

Harrison’s previously described observations about labor and the naval victory of Perry occurred at the Battle of Lake Erie. Harrison left sick troops in rear fortifications that would have slowed their movement, but they also had ready access to their supplies without major physical effort. Harrison described the holding at Lake Erie as follows: “The baggage of the army was brought from Detroit in boats protected by three gun-boats.”⁷⁶ The River Thames was on the mouth with tributary

⁷³ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 232.

⁷⁴ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 238.

⁷⁵ Duncan McArthur to John Armstrong, from Detroit, 6 August 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 230.

⁷⁶ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 234.

streams, and the naval support could cover and supply the movement of Harrison's troops inland.⁷⁷ Harrison also listed the mills, which were powered by hydrology and had standing ponds; this illustrates how the hydrology of the Niagara was ideal for the malaria-carrying mosquitos. Harrison offered the following description of the battlefield: "From two to three hundred yards from the river a swamp extends parallel."⁷⁸ He also described local farms, which had animals that could serve as carriers, thus making the area a vector for the disease. In the passage of rivers and tributaries, Native Americans would cover the British retreat "to dispute our passage."⁷⁹ The Thames River was an ideal place for soldiers to succumb to illness, yet the seasoned militia soldiers from Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky were no strangers to fatiguing illness and participating in "ranging" patrols during the inclement seasons. They had to take hygienic measures into their own hands to minimize the negative influences of the environment.

Harrison's subordinate, Duncan McArthur, received a federal commission as a Brigadier General after serving as Ohio Militia Colonel in William Hull's failed invasion. He had some of the most insightful policies about the management of illness. The Regimental order book of the 19th Infantry regiment was preserved; it recorded McArthur's policies about field sanitation and discipline. An order dated 1 August 1813 called for "a sufficient number of sinks to be dug for the use of their troops out of the garrison, and at least one hundred and fifty yards from the picketings

⁷⁷ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813.

⁷⁸ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813, 235.

⁷⁹ Harrison to Meigs, from Detroit, 9 October 1813, 234.

the filth collected in the garrison must be emptied...at least once a day.”⁸⁰ The August order principally regulated the cleanliness and health inside United States camps and fortifications. While the duty of emptying the filth was significant for health, it also served as a punishment. Soldiers who failed to care for their cleanliness were “made to the duty of camp colourman and employed in removing the filth for one week.”⁸¹ Soldiers who did not attend to their healthiness performed the duties as punishment. While cleanliness was again synonymous with discipline, it was also compatible with discipline with weapons and tactics. Frontier-schooled militia leaders best understood the unhealthiness of the border region between Northern Ohio and Upper Canada. Successful leaders were proactive and took great measures to safeguard the health of their soldiers.

Duncan McArthur not only called for the removal of trash and excrement, he also sought to eliminate all standing water and venereal threats to the soldiers under his command. McArthur also ordered the removal of standing water: “By the order of the commander in chief this will also cause the stagnated water in the ditches to be immediately drained.”⁸² This was issued long before stagnated water was associated with mosquito-carried illnesses. However, humoral theory believed that unhealthy vapor came from dead plant matter. The policy accidentally eliminated mosquitos. Through trial and error, the frontier militia identified successful measures. The same order that removed stagnate water also mandated that unused cannons be returned and

⁸⁰ General Orders 19th Infantry Regiment 1 August 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Library of Congress.

⁸¹ General Orders 19th Infantry Regiment 1 August 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Library of Congress.

⁸² General Orders 19th Infantry Regiment 1 August 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Library of Congress.

cleaned, but hygiene came before clean and serviceable cannon. Cleaning duties in the camps have received little attention in military history, but in a war where sickness reined as the most significant source of casualties, those policies were central to success and most often developed by frontier militia officers that were elevated to regular Army general commissions.

The final section of McArthur's order focused on health, discipline, and the regulation of camp women. Without any significant descriptions of the rationale for such an order, McArthur mandated that "any married woman who has abandoned her husband and be found strolling about the camp or lodging in the tents of other men shall be drummed out of camp."⁸³ This punishment was typically the public shaming common in soldiers unfit for duty, and it was a rarity for a general to threaten civilian members of the camp, save for a few cases of espionage. McArthur's emphasis on the health and cleanliness as well as sexual activities of soldiers' wives illustrate how the 19th Infantry Regiment was also initiating a measure to prevent venereal diseases. Women in the camps were linked to disease, rather than promiscuous soldiers, and the subtle language removing women and filth from the camp was an inexplicit but obvious measure to limit disease.⁸⁴

While Harrison's army managed to achieve success north of Lake Erie without tents and the reports from Fort George were mostly positive, General James Wilkinson's force was struggling. Persistent rain became a more significant

⁸³ General Orders 19th Infantry Regiment 1 August 1813, 19th Infantry Regiment Order Book, Library of Congress.

⁸⁴ Philippa Levine's work on the British Army's use management of prostitution is still the definitive military history on the military management of venereal disease. See Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

impediment. “The inexorable winds and rains continue to oppose and embarrass our movements,” Wilkinson noted, because his troops typically embarked from ships. Harrison, on the other hand, used ships in support while his men marched light and fast. The shores became quagmires, and British accounts reveal that the roads were just as bad. General William Slim, in his book *Defeat Into Victory*, explicitly linked over-reliance on the road to both poor asymmetric strategy and the elevation of health problems, because casualties exponentially increased traffic on limited roads.⁸⁵ More significantly, Wilkinson’s struggles with the rainy weather did not only hinder movement and logistics; it also made it difficult to maintain his ranks of effective fighters. According to Wilkinson, “We have such a fluctuation of sick and well, between this place (Grenadier Island New York) and Sackett’s Harbor that it is impossible to say what force we shall move.”⁸⁶ His soldiers likely suffered from a combination of malaria and communicable sicknesses driven by tight quarters, as well as pervasive seasickness among ground soldiers who were unaccustomed to sailing in rough weather. As the season was closing and Harrison was garrisoning Detroit, Wilkinson was not even sure if his subordinate Winfield Scott could “be up in season.”⁸⁷ One force could operate off roads, and one could not, and Harrison’s emphasis on irregular *petite guerre* tactics also helped significantly in reducing rates of illness. Regulars might have been the best-trained troops, but they also relied on

⁸⁵ Becoming less reliant on roads was also a key reason why General William Slim’s transition from defeat into victory in the China Burma Campaign of World War II. See William Joseph Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press: Distributed by National Book Network, 2000), 142-43.

⁸⁶ James Wilkinson to John Armstrong, from Grenadier Island, 28 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 248.

⁸⁷ James Wilkinson to John Armstrong, from Grenadier Island, 28 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 248.

roads more than the militia. The season forced Wilkinson into a fight where regulars were more likely to succumb to illness.

The army left soldiers behind to convalesce, but those soldiers ultimately returned to the ranks. In a 17 October 1813 letter, Colonel William P. Anderson described the value of leaving soldiers behind to recover. He stated that the seventy soldiers left at Put in Bay and the eighty-six left at Fort Meigs “are all now well and able to march.”⁸⁸ The use of soldiers to defend rear positions had now increased the ranks of the 24th Infantry Regiment, and Anderson would request that more officers be allowed to recuperate at home, especially to protect their homes. Captains Gerry and Campbell, along with Lieutenant Allison, were all too sick to be effective, and the commander requested their return home.

Moreover, if sent home they could prevent the enemy from being “able to Plunder their country” because they would be able to protect their property.⁸⁹ Plunder is an overstatement of the common practice of armies subsisting on local crops. When sent home these soldiers would not be fit to march for “4 months to come” and thus they could perform more valuable service at home.⁹⁰ Given the threats to their homes and families, they were “all too anxious to be dispatched the soonest practicable.”⁹¹ Convalescing at home or in rear positions released logistical burdens of forward-deployed units, as well as providing replacements. Moreover, sometimes soldiers

⁸⁸ Colonel William P. Anderson to Harrison from Detroit, 17 October 1813, William Henry Harrison papers Library of Congress, 893.

⁸⁹ Anderson to Harrison from Detroit, 17 December 1813, 893.

⁹⁰ Anderson to Harrison from Detroit, 17 December 1813, 893.

⁹¹ Anderson to Harrison from Detroit, 17 December 1813, 893.

convalescing at home could protect their crops from opponents seeking subsistence, thereby denying supplies to the enemy.

Weather in Niagara was terrible during the fall of 1813 and compounded the narrow window that the seasonality of malaria fevers provided. Brigadier General John Armstrong described how difficult it was to move in Niagara. Stating that he should have already united his force with Wilkinson, he noted that “bad roads, worse weather and a considerable degree of illness, admonished me against receding further from a point where my engagements call me.”⁹² The same would be true of Isaac Shelby’s foot cavalry. The ever-virile sixty-six-year-old frontiersman and his soldiers could endure much, but the rain was intolerable. Shelby told his wife that “the weather is so rack and the roads so deep we cannot travel more than 20 miles a day.”⁹³ Frontier leadership was superior in leading seasoning soldiers, but there were limits for even the best of troops. Shelby further told his wife “the Army owing to the (illegible word) hardiness all have undergone had become very sickly. They dying more or less, every (wary) day on the march. We have but hardly been supplied.”⁹⁴ While rain on the campaign is was always distressing for soldiers, the fall of 1813 was unique with not “one clear day—for more than a month which has worn down the Army.”⁹⁵ Bad weather meant fatigue and sickness and could pull the most seasoned formation out of the field. Shelby’s force succumbed long after the regulars

⁹² John Armstrong to James Wilkinson, from Washington D.C., 30 October 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 248

⁹³ Isaac Shelby to wife Susan Shelby, from Franklinton, 28 October 1813, in the “Shelby Family Papers,” 1652

⁹⁴ Isaac Shelby to wife Susan Shelby, from Franklinton, 28 October 1813, in this passage the word every is looks close to wary, and it appears that he intended to say, “every wary day.”

⁹⁵ Isaac Shelby to wife Susan Shelby, from Franklinton, 28 October 1813.

did because as frontier units they were far more accustomed to operating in inclement regions. The worst performing officers of the war, William Hull and James Winchester, both failed to adopt effective public health tactics. Conversely, officers from the frontier excelled.

Major General Wade Hampton's 8 November 1813 letter to Wilkinson catalogues numerous environmental challenges and illnesses. Men had to carry supplies in the winter weather physically because horses could no longer support logistics. His subordinate Colonel, Henry Atkinson, was sent forth from the central supply depot and could "explain the reasons that would have rendered it impossible for me to have brought more than each man could have carried on his back."⁹⁶ Hampton's force would have been "throwing myself on your scanty means," therefore "weakening you in your most vulnerable point."⁹⁷ Hampton noted that roads prevented "wheeled carriages during winters but by the employment of pack horses, if I am not overpowered, I hope to be able to keep you from starving."⁹⁸ Harrison's force embraced light infantry packhorse logistics that did not require roads, but Wilkinson and Hampton were reactive to conditions rather than adaptive to predictable problems. East of Niagara in 1813 would not be a campaign where the Americans could subsist off of the countryside because Hampton "ascertained and witnessed the plan of the enemy to burn and destroy everything in our advance."⁹⁹ Wilkinson's men, cut off from supplies, were in a dire situation because Hampton's

⁹⁶ Major General Wade Hampton to Wilkinson from Four Corners 8 November 1813, in Brannan (Ed.). *Official Letters*, 259.

⁹⁷ Hampton to Wilkinson, 8 November 1813.

⁹⁸ Hampton to Wilkinson, 8 November 1813.

⁹⁹ Hampton to Wilkinson, 8 November 1813.

force at a supply depot was highly fatigued and demoralized. Hampton reported that “Besides the Rawness and sickliness they have endured fatigues equal to a winter campaign, in the late snows and bad weather, and are sadly dispirited and fallen off.”¹⁰⁰ The environment, weather, and fatigue linked illness and poor morale into a condition as close to battle fatigue as it was to malarial fevers. The reliance on roads and traditional infantry tactics were Wilkinson and Hampton’s greatest problems.

Major General Jacob Brown’s report on the Battle of Bridgewater, more commonly known as the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, recorded the honor of serving while ill and injured. Brown, although recognized for his professionalization of the Northern Army, started his service in the War of 1812 as General in the Pennsylvania Militia. By the time of his promotion to a federal Major General, he had extensive experience on the Buffalo and Niagara frontier. It is problematic that his emphasis on discipline and subsequent career in the Army overshadow his rise to federal rank from his service in the militia. Citizen soldiers could be disciplined and well trained. Three figures merit mentioning. The first was Colonel James Miller, a man that would become a life-long invalid due to exposure to the Canadian frontier. Miller’s actions at Lundy’s Lane led to the capture of British cannon and immortalized him as a congressional Gold Medal winner. However, James Miller constantly struggled with an intermittent fever. He was called upon to seize the British battery, and his attack lost the support of the regiment assigned to “menace and amuse” the British infantry.¹⁰¹ According to Jacob Brown, “In the meantime, colonel Miller, without

¹⁰⁰ Hampton to Wilkinson, 8 November 1813.

¹⁰¹ Letter from Major General Jacob Brown to John Armstrong, Undated report on the Battle of Bridgewater, in William Charles Henry Wood, *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*, Vol. 3 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1920), 159.

regard to this occurrence, advanced steadily and gallantly to his object, and carried the height and the cannon.”¹⁰² Likewise, Captains Biddle and Ritchie were singled out for gallantry because they “were both wounded early in the action, but refused to quit the field.”¹⁰³ Brown described how Ritchie “declared he would never leave his piece; and true to his engagement, fell by its side, covered with wounds.”¹⁰⁴ Immediately after describing the service of two wounded officers, Brown praised his Adjutant General, colonel Gardner for his “peculiar merit and distinction” for serving while sick.¹⁰⁵ Gardner, “though ill, was on horseback, and did all in his power.”¹⁰⁶ To serve while ill was synonymous with serving while injured, and honor and gallantry was self-possession regardless of an individual’s health. Miller provides perhaps the best example because his service, despite persistent illness, corresponded with his consistent heroism. Also, Miller’s lifelong convalescence illustrated his ability to overcome disabling illness during battle.

At the outset of the campaign of 1814, officers sought a campaign that would defend the character of the U.S. Army. Major General Brown said that “if we gained nothing else” in an invasion of Canada but “restore the tarnished military character of the country,” through the reform of the Northern Army.¹⁰⁷ Thomas Sidney Jesup, Major of the 25th Infantry and chief of Army logistics during the Mexican American War, observed Brown’s emphasis on honor and character about the environment.

¹⁰² Brown to Armstrong, report on the Battle of Bridgewater, 159.

¹⁰³ Brown to Armstrong, report on the Battle of Bridgewater, 162.

¹⁰⁴ Brown to Armstrong, report on the Battle of Bridgewater, 169.

¹⁰⁵ Brown to Armstrong, report on the Battle of Bridgewater, 169.

¹⁰⁶ Brown to Armstrong, report on the Battle of Bridgewater, 169.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Sidney Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814*, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress, 2.

According to Jesup, Brown “added most emphatically ‘we go’ – ‘nothing but the elements shall stop us,’” because illness and the environment was the most challenging opponent on the Upper Canadian frontier.¹⁰⁸ Jesup described how essential character and firmness were in combat at the Battle of Chippewa: “Relying on the firmness and excellent discipline of his troops, the Major determined to advance and try the effect of the Bayonet.”¹⁰⁹ Jesup began to inject his character into the story but omitted his place in the battle by slashing through his initial text, to emphasize the courage of American soldiers: “~~The Major put himself in front and the charge made, but~~ the enemy general did not wait and receive the bayonet.”¹¹⁰ Character and firmness were the keys to success, even if a military victory was impossible because of Upper Canada’s environment.

While Jesup would become better known for his work as Quartermaster General, his service as the commander of an infantry regiment was significant. At the Battle of Bridgewater Jesup was incapacitated for a time, but he quickly returned to duty. In his description of the injury, he exhibited a significant shift to the third person, which is common in trauma writing: “Major Jesup soon after (Winfield Scott was wounded) Received a violent contusion on the great by a piece of shell, or perhaps the stock of a Musket, which brought him to the ground.”¹¹¹ With courage and necessity, Jesup regained his consciousness and continued leading: “In a few moments however he rose and returned to his command, which had temporarily

¹⁰⁸ Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* Jesup wrote and revised this passage and his editing is revealing. His message is also clearer with the omitted text.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

devolved on Captain Murdock.”¹¹² The battle raged for hours with repeated British efforts to overtake the American position, and that took a toll on the injured Jesup. “The Major though suffering severely from his wound joined his (General Ripley's) line,” and after removing the wounded they retired to the camp at Chippewa.¹¹³ Jesup began the war as a Lieutenant, and by his actions while wounded at Bridgewater he gained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The Battle of Lundy’s Lane would not be the last time Jesup continued serving while injured. During siege warfare and battles following Bridgewater Jesup had two “horses shot under him” and received as many as three wounds.¹¹⁴ Jesup recorded his march from Buffalo to Fort Erie as follows: “Major Jesup was at this time suffering severely from his wounds: but the movement he was able to leave, he had volunteered for such duties as possess the physical capacity to perform.”¹¹⁵ He would be wounded again only to return to Fort Erie where he continued to fight and lead troops. Jesup described his efforts despite “having three wounds open and his right arm in a sling, and being in consequence unable to perform active duty yet believing his presence with his corps would have a good effect upon the service, he volunteered to join the Army at Fort Erie.”¹¹⁶ Jesup’s actions underpinned Jacob Brown’s observation that the campaign of 1814 was about regaining the honor of the U.S. Army, and his repeated efforts to return to duty despite wounds illustrate how individuals demonstrated their character by fighting in spite of injury or health problems.

¹¹² Ibid., 11.

¹¹³ Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 15.

Brown's emphasis on honorable performance and extensive drilling of his soldiers occurred in concert with measures ensuring good hygiene. In the company records of Charles Proctor's unit, orders called for cleanliness and personal hygiene. Like the innovations of the forces in Harrison's Army, Jacob Brown's Northern Army adopted strict hygiene policies. The letters of general officers are available, but there are few records from general orders to junior officers. Charles Proctor's company order book is rare because, in addition to the personnel tracking and muster records common in company-level documents, he also recorded lower-level orders. Proctor's order book illustrates that from the very beginning of Jacob Brown's command, he worked to preserve the health of his men. In a 23 January 1814 order Brown emphasized that "more attention to the health & comfort of the soldiers will be expected from many Gentlemen who have the honor of Caring. Our ranks must not be thinned in camp or Quarters the Gallant Soldiers must not perish ingloriously in filth & wretchedness."¹¹⁷ Proctor's book also recorded Winfield Scott's calls for the reading and implementation of the drill book of Baron Von Steuben, and hygiene was an extension of soldierly discipline, even if cleaning of filth and policing the camp has never influenced the war's historiography.¹¹⁸

Following the campaign of 1814, Proctor recorded the most in-depth coverage of the scale of efforts taken to maintain order and cleanliness because those policies were particularly effective in the tight winter quarters. A platoon-sized force, which

¹¹⁷ Charles Proctor, Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815, 21st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Washington DC, Entry 238. There are no page numbers for the section that recorded regimental orders.

¹¹⁸ Winfield Scott, General orders for the 21st Infantry Regiment, in 21st Infantry Regiment, Entry 238.

was at the time comparable for to an entire company's fit-for-duty roster, comprised of "A Sergeant, a Corpl & 20 Privates [who]will be detailed for the police."¹¹⁹ While poor weather and other broader environmental factors were the cause of the high rates of sickness, officers in Brown's Army were expected to preserve the health of their men via attention to cleanliness and discipline. Proctor's order book further recorded that "it will be the duty of their officers indefatigably to attend to the preservation & Cleanliness & order throughout the cantonment & its vicinity."¹²⁰ These hygienic regulations in the winter occurred in concert with uniform serviceability during the inclement season, and with a more general movement towards discipline. Excellent drill and tactics were worthless when illness claimed the lives of soldiers, and it is important to note that the campaign that brought U.S. victories at Chippewa, Bridgewater, and Fort Erie occurred simultaneously with an emphasis on better hygienic standards. Leaders who excelled on the battlefield also excelled at managing illness and valued both roles equally.

Major General Jacob Brown is well known for his reliance on Winfield Scott for discipline and tactics. However, Brown also entrusted Brigadier General Scott to care for the health of the soldiers on a challenging frontier. In a carefully crafted letter with several corrections in prose, Brown outlined his expectations on Scott: "The particular command up this Frontier devolves upon you, during my absence. Assumed it unnecessary, to give you detailed instructions, as well understand the

¹¹⁹ Major S. W. Pressman, Brigade Major General Order, 27 November 1814, in 21st Infantry Regiment,

¹²⁰ Major S. W. Pressman, Brigade Major General Order, 27 November 1814.

situation of the country, in which you are placed.”¹²¹ The situation of the country was what Brown articulated as the key challenge to his most trusted subordinate during his absence: “Without ~~in which placed will & with~~ will do every thing for that country, & for the health & honor of the forces placed under your command, that can reasonably be expected of an officer with the means you have in your power.”¹²² Health and honor were preserved in unity because the frontier border region between the United States and British North America offered significant obstacles to the health of armies. However, the best commanders believed that they could influence the health of their men, and these officers typically gained experience with soldiers’ health by serving in frontier-based militias.

At the close of military operations in the war, Major General Brown resented that the efforts of his men to survive combat and the elements with honor received a lack of support and recognition. Brown reminded Secretary of War John Armstrong that the soldier’s life was characterized by of “privation, hardship, & danger,” yet the Northern Army’s sufferings were not acknowledged.¹²³ The army was failing because they could not be adequately supplied. For Brown, “Honor & rewards must follow distinguished gallantry & good conduct, or the nation will command the military men she breeds, & her wealth & population will avail her but little, against a foe so well understands this subject.”¹²⁴ Brown’s Army overcame both the enemy and the inclement climate of the Niagara frontier but suffered the most by the lack of support

¹²¹ Letter from Jacob Brown to Winfield Scott from Williamsville, 20 April 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, Library of Congress, 10.

¹²² Letter from Brown to Scott, 20 April 1814.

¹²³ Letter from Brown to Armstrong, 10 July 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, Library of Congress, 121.

¹²⁴ Letter from Brown to Armstrong, 10 July 1814.

from their countrymen. In a letter to the Governor of New York, Brown made it clear that his forces had overcome illness and danger only to suffer from a lack of supplies: “My gallant little Army has so far done its duty and been blest with the smiles of Providence; but unless it can receive efficient aid, there is cause to be alarmed for its ultimate safety.”¹²⁵ The bitterness that his officers felt came from their ability to overcome illness, injury, and death on the battlefield, only to have their campaign limited by a lack of support. Jesup captured their frustration best with his criticism of the military’s logistics: “It is madness in the extreme to attempt to carry on war with such a system.”¹²⁶ Brown was succeeding in an unwinnable campaign in an inclement region, yet without adequate support, his years of experiences on the frontier were for naught.

Conclusion: A Problematic Revolutionary Heritage

A great deal of scholarship has cataloged the U.S. Army’s failings in the War of 1812, yet few historians recognize that the failures of 1812 were also the result of embedded mores that related to America's revolutionary experiences. These mores are still celebrated extensively regarding the American Revolution. Suffering privations and wearing the clothing off the backs of soldiers was embedded into the culture of the Army during the early national period. However, invading and occupying Canada was different than outlasting the British Army during the Revolution. The assumption that privations were the quintessential military experience during the war, rather than

¹²⁵ Brown to Tompkins from Canandaigua, 21 Aug 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, Library of Congress, 157.

¹²⁶ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup to an Unnamed Lieutenant colonel in Ohio from Buffalo, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress, 220.

a problem to overcome through logistical competence, limited the operational capacity of the American Army. Focus on a lack of professionalism, including a forced reliance on less disciplined militia, ignores the fact that frontier militia officers rose to the highest ranks in the regular army, primarily because they possessed greater talents regarding logistics and public health. In the backwoods of Upper Canada discipline learned on parade grounds was less valuable than frontier experience and *petite guerre* tactics. Frontier sufferings did not have to be significantly worse due to poor logistics. The War of 1812 was most often waged for the loyalty of borderlanders and late loyalists of questionable resolve, and preserving the health of soldiers was central to morale.

The Revolutionary comparison also existed in memoirs of private soldiers like William Atherton and Adam Walker. The theme of nakedness and hunger linked the lives of soldiers to their Revolutionary forefathers. When cut off from supplies at Fort Defiance, for example, William Atherton described the privations of the early national army on a rugged frontier: “We now saw nothing but hunger, and cold, and nakedness, staring us in the face.”¹²⁷ Atherton poignantly described his sufferings: “Though many years have rolled by since the events transpired, the impression they made upon my mind is almost as fresh as ever.” His privations were not only traumatic – they also connected him explicitly to the sufferings of the Revolutionary Army.¹²⁸ Adam Walker described the lack of provisions for five days following the wounded at the Battle of Tippecanoe: “The weather was freezing cold, and our

¹²⁷ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat*, 19.

¹²⁸ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat*, 103.

wounds which had been not been dressed for two days past, became stiff and extremely painful.”¹²⁹ Descriptions of traumatic injuries, hunger, and exposure to the elements were both the cathartic processing of trauma in third-person writing, but also served as a badge of honor. Atherton’s determination saved his life, even in the face of unspeakable atrocities. He “was starving and sick (and shot in the shoulder), but he kept on as fast and as far as he could, and when he could go no farther he laid down upon the ground and told them to kill him...when they saw his resolution they became attached to him.” Remarkably, he survived.¹³⁰ Atherton’s preface clearly states the objective of his narrative: “it is hoped that what has been said will be sufficient to give the youthful reader some idea of what that ‘Spartan band’ were called to endure. To the old Men of our country these things, perhaps will not be new.”¹³¹ The experiences of illness, privation, and wounds were badges of honor, even if they did not represent the most viable military strategies.

Isaac Shelby, who commanded a contingent of Kentucky backwoodsmen, was perhaps the best example of how privation and suffering linked War of 1812 soldiers to a cherished revolutionary experience. Early in an un-dated address to “Friends and fellow citizens,” Governor Shelby described how he and they were “schooled in the rough school of the revolution.”¹³² As an older man in Kentucky whose papers had several newspaper circulars cut out for anti-bilious remedies, service in the war seemed to aid Shelby’s health. In his description of the march to Ohio, he asked William Powell to tell his wife “let her know that I am quite hearty. – I never enjoyed

¹²⁹ Walker, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U. S.*, 37.

¹³⁰ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat*, 49-50.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³² Isaac Shelby, Shelby Family Papers, Library of Congress, entry 1607.

better health – and the arduous duties that incessantly press upon me, regain all my energies.”¹³³ As a French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, and War of 1812 veteran, he described a kind of happiness that came with suffering for one’s country: “I am in good health. The duties I have to perform requires my whole exertions I sometimes am greatly fatigued, nothing but the affection of serving my beloved could bear me up under the task I have to perform.”¹³⁴ Hardiness and endurance was an acculturated aspect of serving on the frontier. As he noted, “The weather is so rack and the roads so deep we cannot travel more than 20 miles a day.”¹³⁵ His men – suffering by exposure to adverse weather conditions and mosquito-carried illnesses – were still marching as hard and as far as horses. To suffer and endure were in keeping with the Revolutionary tradition, yet in an invasion, even Shelby’s hardy men succumbed to illness and weather.

Frontier-based militia leaders may have been the best officers regarding managing sickness, fatigue and behaving honorably under duress. However, the Revolutionary tradition of suffering and endurance predisposed the American Army to suffer far more than necessary in the context of a poor logistical system. Scholars to date study honor as a force that trumped professionalism when serving in the face of illness and a harsh environment was perhaps the best feature of the early national United States armed forces. This tendency to suffer privations with pride also sapped combat efficiency that could have been improved by systematic efforts for

¹³³ Isaac Shelby to William Powell from Newport, 1 September 1813, Shelby Family Papers, entry 1643.

¹³⁴ Isaac Shelby "To Son" Thomas Shelby, 10 September 1813, Shelby Family Papers, entry 1645.

¹³⁵ Isaac Shelby to Susan Shelby from Franklinton, 28 October 1813, Shelby Family Papers, Library of Congress, Entry 1652.

professional logistics. In many ways, the War of 1812 is another case in a long story of an army carrying the lessons from a previous conflict into a less suitable stage. Outlasting an opponent by bearing hardship and adversity may have worked in the Revolution, but it was a flawed mentality to shape the invasion and occupation of an isolated frontier.

Sickness illustrates how the day-to-day slog of soldiering and fighting on an isolated frontier more resembled the harsh combat and ironies of twentieth-century warfare. A strong sense of honor and the quest to burnish their reputations meant that soldiers remembered the war differently. Men like William Henry Harrison, James Miller, Jacob Brown, and Winfield Scott all emerged as American heroes because of their battlefield exploits, yet their hygienic policies were as essential as courage under fire for battlefield success. Even the brash Indian fighter Andrew Jackson's hygienic policies have been praised by the U.S. Army's medical command's official history as more forward-thinking than medical professionals such as Benjamin Rush.¹³⁶ Recovering the mundane consistency of preserving health and enduring illness better captures the nature of the War of 1812 than the battle and campaign case studies that have dominated historical memory. The digging of filth trenches and episodes of soldiers marching hard despite injury and illness need to be remembered. The young Captain Zachary Taylor, who would later become an American president, defended a fort when he could barely perform his duties. That demonstrates an unromantic, uncelebrated, and ordinary sort of courage that is in many ways more remarkable than

¹³⁶ Anderson, Robert S, ed. "History of Preventive Medicine in the United States Army in World War II." Office of Medical History, 1968. <https://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/misc/evprev/ch4.htm>.

studies of battles. One of the most significant changes in contemporary analyses of warfare, often shaped by the soldiers themselves, is the way in which war is defined by small moments of courage. These were often permeated by boredom and drudgery, and in many instances were perceived as worse than combat. A study of illness reveals that the War of 1812 was as monotonous and frustrating as any modern conflict; it illustrates that ordinary courage was defined by men marching in storms, suffering from fevers, and fighting while ill or injured for honor and survival. The next chapter continues an approach to survival through the supply of calories and logistics. It focuses on the 1814 campaigns, during which Jacob Brown's reforms of the U.S. Army were unsuccessful because of poor logistics and the British traded combat power for a feasible supply system. British commanders gained more in battlefield losses because they limited the size of their army, and therefore they could supply more calories to their soldiers. They lost the battles but won the war for calories.

CHAPTER 2

THE WAR FOR CALORIES

*“It is madness in the extreme to attempt to carry on war with such a system”*¹

The previous chapter emphasized the entire War of 1812 from the perspectives of American commanders, with a heavier concentration on the first two years. This chapter will focus on the last year of the conflict: 1814. It was a year of significant transition in the war, and oddly enough it is year most remembered for the burning of Washington. While “The Star-Spangled Banner” emphasizes American spirit in the face of losses incurred during the British offensive in the Chesapeake, in the Upper Canada the U.S. Northern Army won every major engagement. The principal confrontations started with a minor engagement at the Chippewa and a major battle at Lundy’s Lane. Both were fought in the summer, near the falls at Niagara, and both were U.S. victories. However, the Americans were unable to press the advantage of their victories with a firm presence in Upper Canada. After Lundy’s Lane the Americans defended their gains in the British siege of Fort Erie, and the siege at Plattsburgh occurred in the fall of 1814. The Americans were able to defeat the British in battle during the summer and hold them off in the fall. The British had the advantage in troops, but the reinforcements came from combat weary Napoleonic War veterans who struggled in the rough frontier border region. This chapter seeks to answer why the American victories ultimately gained very little in the final year of

¹ Letter from Major Thomas Sidney Jesup to Major James L. Swearingen from Cincinnati 20 May 1813, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress. Hereafter Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers.

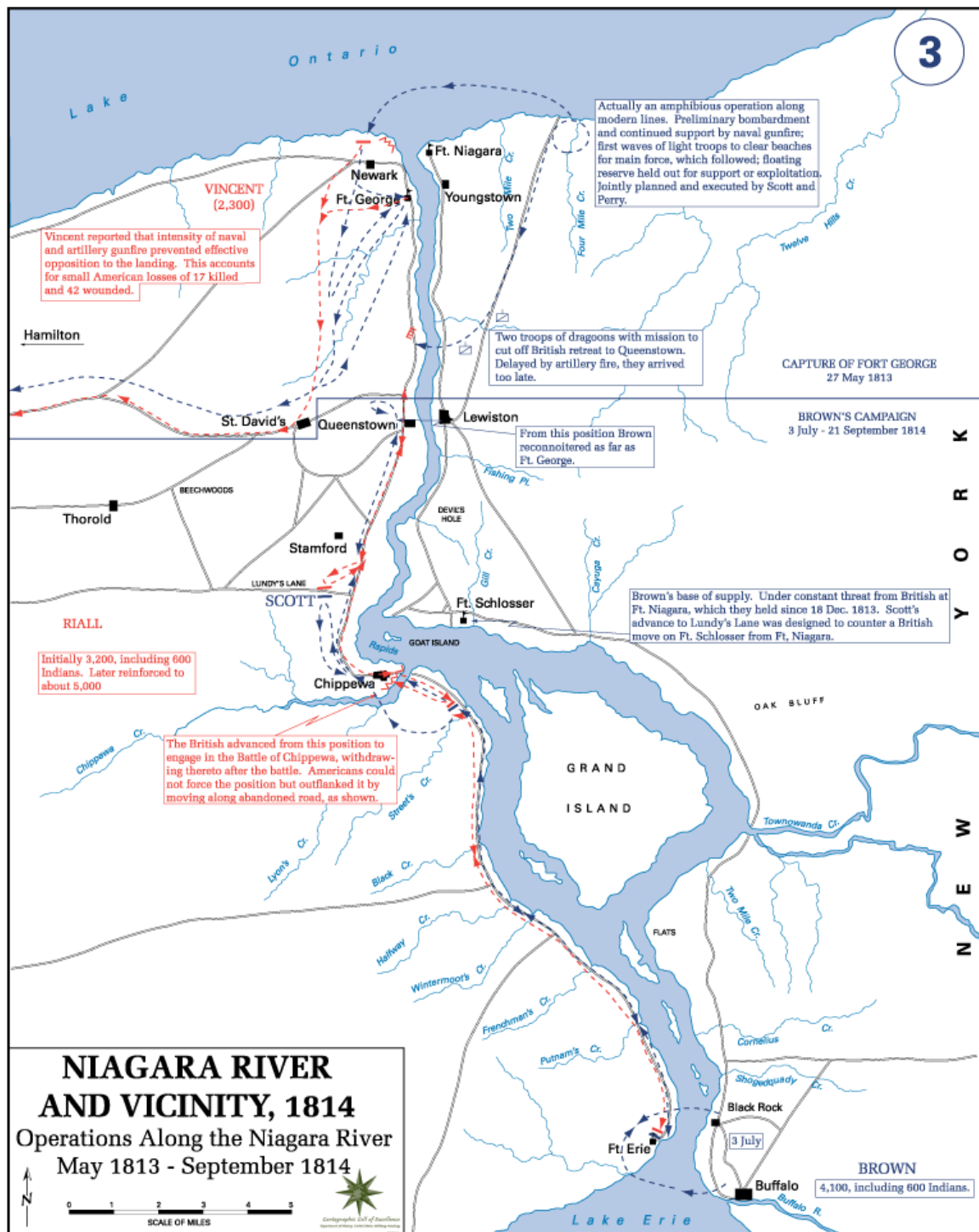


Figure 1 Used with the permission of the West Point History Department
https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/War%20of%201812/OperationsNiagara.gif

the conflict; it concludes that they won the battles but lost the war for calories, and thus gained little from their victories.

After the Niagara Campaign of 1814, victories at Bridgewater, Chippewa, and Fort Erie strengthened the poor reputation of the U.S. Army. Following the War of 1812, American commanders remained embittered by the lack of support they received during their only successful invasion of Canada. The title quote from Thomas Sidney Jesup, an officer who was a junior Lieutenant at the beginning of the war, but who would go on to lead a regiment at Bridgewater (Lundy's Lane), represented the Northern Army's chief concern. The quote cited the madness of having control of provisions in the hands of private contractors: "Either the contractors should be dismissed, or they should be made amenable to military tribunals."² The American regular Army redeemed itself regarding tactical competence and courage under fire, but it suffered after its victories. The commanding officer of the Northern Army, Major General Jacob Brown, and the force's most decorated officer, Brigadier General James Miller, exchanged letters that described the neglected Army for years. While they highlighted deficiencies regarding material support, they also lamented the country's lack of awareness of the American Army's victory at Bridgewater – the British claimed victory at Lundy's Lane after sleeping on the field.³ The U.S. forces drove the British from the field and covered their officers in the glory they all romantically sought. However, provisions, wounded and ill soldiers, and a lack of naval support forced them to pull back to Fort

² Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup to an unidentified Lieutenant Colonel in Ohio, from Camp Buffalo 8 September 1814, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers.

³ James Miller Papers, Library of Congress; Jon Latimer, *Niagara 1814: The Final Invasion* (New York: Osprey Pub., 2009) 59.

Erie. The Army suffered more deaths from lack of support and illness than it did under fire. The only force in the northern theatre that brought glory and honor to the U.S. deprived those courageous soldiers of their lives and their health, and the commanding officers expressed bitterness about their lack of support.

While the Americans saw only their problems, Lieutenant-General Gordon Drummond also struggled in 1814. Following Wellington's victories in Spain, the British Army finally had a large corps of regular British Regiments of Foot; yet Drummond could not supply his growing force on the Upper Canadian frontier. Although Drummond had the forces necessary to gain the upper hand, he could not provide provisions enough to maintain his force's health: "Although I should have wished it, I am apprehensive I shall not have it in my power to forward any further reinforcements to the Right Division."⁴ Drummond had enough troops to defeat the Americans on the Upper Canadian frontier. However, he could not feed them, "for the inability of the Commissariat to supply Provisions."⁵ Furthermore, Drummond "dread[ed] their failing in due supplies to those already ordered there."⁶ However, while Americans felt betrayed by their people because of smuggling, the British failed to make moral judgments, and instead grasped the way that the environment limited armies on such a remote frontier. While Lisa Brady's groundbreaking work on the American Civil War recognized how generals Ulysses Grant and William Sherman targeted the agro-ecological system of the south, British generals in the War

⁴ Letter from Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond to Lieutenant George Prevost from Kingston 15 July 1814 in, William Wood, *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*, Vol III, Part 1 (Toronto: Champlain Historical Society, 1920), 131. Hereafter *Select British Documents*.

⁵ Letter from Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond to Lieutenant George Prevost from Kingston 15 July 1814 in, Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 131.

⁶ Letter from Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond to Lieutenant George Prevost from Kingston 15 July 1814 in, Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 131.

of 1812 already knew the inherent weaknesses of commanding armies in such remote environs.⁷

Americans finally achieved tactical victories in pitched battles, but the British employed *petit guerre* light infantry tactics against the U.S. Army to separate the Americans from their supplies and disrupt their communications. In a letter from Major General Phineas Riall to Drummond, Riall described how winning the unsung small fight to hinder supply lines secured victory for the British by separating the Americans from their sustenance: “I propose tomorrow to take up a more advanced Position at the 12 Mile Creek, for the purpose of favoring some Parties of Militia & Indians.”⁸ The British used local fighters, who were masters of irregular tactics, to harass the supplies and communications of their opponents. The force of militia and Native American allies separated the U.S. Army from its supplies by being “pushed forward with a view to gain information of the enemys (sic) movements & prevent his receiving supplies from the country.”⁹ General Riall’s discussion of denying the American army subsistence from the countryside recognized that the crops grown in the summer of 1814 would aid the American advance into Upper Canada. The British finally had a larger force of regular regiments than the Americans. But recognizing that the region was too hard to supply, they cleverly reduced the size of their force and instead allowed the Americans to be the aggressors while they targeted their supply lines. In short, the British lost the battles but won the campaign by winning the

⁷ Lisa Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

⁸ Major General Phineas Riall to Drummond from 20 Mile Creek 16 July 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part, 137.

⁹ Riall to Drummond from 20 Mile Creek 16 July 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 137.

small fights. They hindered American supply lines and thereby forced U.S. withdrawals after victories in battle.

Major General Jacob Brown used moving language to describe how sickness deprived his army of the gains they earned through blood and honor. Describing his force's rehabilitation of the American army's reputation, he stated; "They had often bled and triumphed, and he believed that they would prefer to die in the blaze of their glory than live dishonored by captivity or defeat."¹⁰ Despite his victories at Chippewa and Bridgewater, as well as a later triumph at Fort Erie, his army still faded away because of illness in such a harsh and isolated climate. He noted:

As the daily casualties were thinning the ranks, and the constant fatigues and exposure inflicting those that escape the fire of the enemy, the commanding General determined without loss of time to make one great effort to save the suffering remains of a force, that appeared to be neglected by a country for which it had devoted itself.¹¹

Brown could not understand how his men, who had proved their honor on the field of battle, could be lost to illness from a lack of adequate logistical support. In fact, the angst regarding the contradiction between the Northern Army's performance in the field and their lack of enough support, and the subsequent higher losses to illness, were believed to occur as the result of a conspiracy. Brown stated the following in his narrative: "It should not be concealed that it appeared at this period to the army of Niagara and its commander that, there was a conspiracy planned for its destruction, and that this opinion, however, uninformed, tended to render it more desperate."¹²

¹⁰ Jacob Brown, A Narrative of the Niagara Campaign written during his convalescence from Wounds Received at Bridgewater. Jacob Brown Papers. Library of Congress, 61. Hereafter Brown, A Narrative of the Niagara Campaign.

¹¹ Brown, A Narrative of the Niagara Campaign, 62.

¹² Brown, A Narrative of the Niagara Campaign, 61.

With such poor support for their honorable service, many of the men who were not sick deserted, and the battlefield gains were lost to illness and a stressful environment. Brown's language represented the moral perspective of U.S. Army officers who failed to grasp how they could influence their environment and exploit the supply weaknesses of their enemy. While the British had to rely on local allies to perform *petite guerre* tactics, the Americans used North American soldiers as regulars. They excelled on the battlefield but were not effective at isolating their opponents from their supply lines.

A great irony of the campaign on the Niagara in 1814 was that of the officer who, uninjured and in outstanding health, nevertheless became a lifelong invalid. James Miller described his almost miraculous lack of wounds during the duration of the war. His letter from Fort Erie after earning his fourth Congressional Gold Medal for destroying the British siege batteries states, "I escaped again unhurt."¹³ Miller's lack of injuries was no small matter – during the campaign very few officers to escaped either ill health or injury. He observed, "I can say that every Major save one, every Lt. Col, every Colonel who was here when I came and has remained here, has been killed or wounded, and I am now the only general officer, out of seven that has escaped."¹⁴ But Miller's service in a poorly supplied Army was ultimately more detrimental to his health. Survival and being unwounded was often more harmful to health; James Miller was unhurt, yet he became a permanent invalid after the war was over. Coping with a paucity of supplies and exposure to enemy attacks from all

¹³ Letter from James Miller to Ruth Miller from Fort Erie 19 September 1814. In the Bentham-McNeil Family Papers. Library of Congress.

¹⁴ James Miller to Ruth Miller from Fort Erie 19 September 1814. In the Bentham-McNeil Family Papers. Library of Congress.

directions meant that Miller was consistently exposed to stress, camp illness, and seasonal fevers. In 1814, Miller led bayonet charges at Chippewa and Lundy's Lane. He also destroyed the powder magazine at the siege of Fort Erie, yet the British use of *petite guerre* likely was more detrimental to his health than any wounds than he might have received in combat. The American army would win the Battle of Lundy's Lane, by bold action seizing British guns, then repeatedly holding off charges by British Regulars. However, they had to give up the classic military tactic of holding the field of battle because militia and Native Americans cut off their food supplies.

The Battle of Lundy's Lane

Major Sidney Jesup described his service despite wounds received at Bridgewater (Lundy's Lane) and the Siege of Fort Erie. Jesup penned his unpublished memoir during his subsequent convalescence. During the battle, Jesup was knocked out after receiving "a violent contusion" from an unknown source.¹⁵ Jesup was hit "by a piece of shell, or perhaps the stock of a Musket, which brought him to the ground."¹⁶ Left on the ground for dead, Jesup revived and continued to repulse British assaults on the American position, an action that brought a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel.¹⁷ He remained in a sick bed until his regiment moved to secure Fort Erie. In September, despite his wounds, Jesup moved to Fort Erie to motivate his soldiers. Using the third-person voice, he stated that "Major Jesup was at this time suffering severely from his wounds: but the movement he was able to leave, he had

¹⁵ Thomas Sidney Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814*, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, Library of Congress, 11. Hereafter Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*.

¹⁶ Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*, 11.

¹⁷ Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*, 11. Find his promotion in Brown's papers.

volunteered for such duties as possess the physical capacity to perform.”¹⁸ The loss of officers and men was already so severe that a wounded officer was frequently used to preside over a sieged garrison. But it would only get worse. Jessup was wounded again in the siege, but he returned because of the soldiers’ moral and high rates of sickness. He stated that “Major Jesup having three wounds open and his right arm in a sling, and being in consequence unable to perform active duty yet believing his presence with his corps would have a good effect upon the service, he volunteered to join the Army at Fort Erie.”¹⁹ Jesup was unable to perform his duties; nonetheless, he became a symbol of resilience by coping with increasingly unmotivated and ill soldiers. The character of the Americans often resulted in battlefield victories, but this dynamic could not overcome the environmental challenges.

¹⁸ Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*, 15.

¹⁹ Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*, 15.

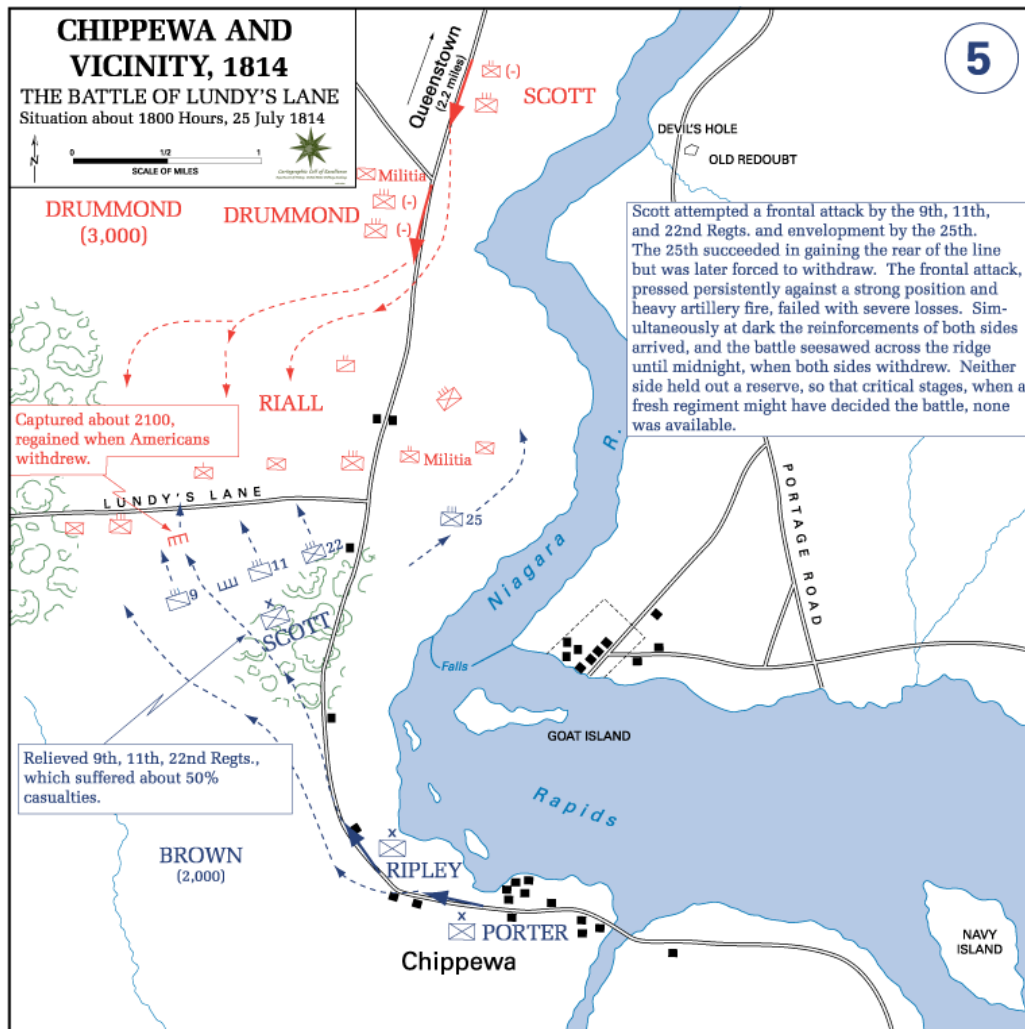


Figure 2 Used with permission of the West Point History Department
https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/War%20of%201812/LundysLaneBattle.gif

While the American Army emphasized virtue, the British Army emphasized tactics and structural changes. Major General Riall recognized the non-linear aspect of the war and adjusted his operational approach appropriately. He noted: "If I advance from this I leave the Country in my rear perfectly exposed to the enemys

(sic) advance from Queenston”²⁰ The British again sacrificed the pitched battle to win the small war, light infantry fight of controlling supply lines and provisioning their force. Riall would later secure a decisive battle at Lundy’s Lane, but he recognized the most dangerous of possible actions would be the enemy disrupting his lines of supply and communications. The 1814 campaign was a war for calories, one in which the U.S. won battles because the British had to check their aggressiveness and limit their forces to maintain supply lines. While American initiative created tactical battlefield victories, those victories achieved very little to shape decisive and meaningful strategic gains because of the difficulty of supplying troops that operated in the captured territory.

Lieutenant General Drummond reduced his force significantly preceding the Battle of Lundy’s Lane, and that reduction was fundamental to him achieving a better result in defeat than the Americans gained in victory. Drummond was forced to order all the camp women out of his forward locations. Such action significantly increased illnesses – women served as nurses, but they also mended uniforms, and damaged uniforms meant exposed skin, which in turn led to mosquito bites.²¹

More directly associated with combat power, Drummond also had to release militiamen to secure the harvest. Drummond praised the militia as follows: “I have the honor to transmit the enclosed Representation relative to the necessity of the Sedentary Militia being permitted to return home to save their produce from being

²⁰ Letter from Riall to Drummond from 12 Mile Creek, 20 July 1814 in, Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 139-40.

²¹ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from York 23 July 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 142.

totally lost to the country.”²² His release of the militia to their homes just days before the Battle of Lundy’s Lane could have been disastrous. However, they secured their crops and rushed to the fight. According to Drummond, “The zeal, loyalty, and bravery with which the Militia of this part of the Province have come forward to cooperate with his Majesty’s Troops in the expulsion of the Enemy, and their conspicuous gallantry, in this, and in the Action of the 5th Instant (the Battle of Chippewa), claim my warmest thanks.”²³ The British technically lost in regard to tactical victory but won the light infantry long game of cutting off their enemy’s supply lines with a militia that gladly returned to the fight after being released to their homes. The Americans gained a moral victory, yet they were forced to withdraw.

Major General Brown was helpless. It took him some time to return to duty after Bridgewater, and he was absent while his army slowly disintegrated due to a lack of support. Brown had to seek a pass from the hospital because its proximity to the front made it impossible for him to exercise. He stated: “Having been almost recovered from my wounds, and being considerably unwell, and somewhat reduced by confinement, and the want of exercise.”²⁴ Personal inactivity and the suffering of his force weighed heavily on Brown, who observed: “My gallant little Army has so far done its duty and been blest with the smiles of Providence; but unless it can receive efficient aid, there is cause to be alarmed for its ultimate safety.”²⁵ Jesup made clear Brown’s intentions. Major General Brown said that “if we gained nothing

²² Drummond to Prevost York 24 July 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 143.

²³ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from Lundy’s Lane 27 July 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 150.

²⁴ Letter from Major General Jacob Brown John Armstrong from Big-Tree Genesee River 19 August 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 153.

²⁵ Letter from Jacob Brown to Governor Daniel Tompkins from Canandaigua 21 August 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 157.

else” in an invasion of Canada, then Brown’s army “restore(d) the tarnished military character of the country. “²⁶ The soldiers and officers were acting honorably, but the force was already succumbing to the environment when British reinforcements arrived. Brown described British reinforcements: “I can but be very anxious for the ultimate fate of this Army...the (British) Reinforcements arriving from Europe will I fear give them the means” to destroy his force that “left by that country to Struggle alone within sight and within hearing.”²⁷ Brown’s command won all their battles but could not keep the soldiers and officers from the sickness that usurped their honorable conduct under fire. The fighting in Upper Canada during 1814 was a campaign of passion versus system. And while passion carried the field, system prevailed in all the longer-term objectives.

Food supplies and weather, in addition to British reinforcements, prevented the Americans from moving on Montreal. Secretary Armstrong recognized that the chief obstacle towards defeating the British in their center was provision. Armstrong stated, “I believe too, that if you are not in condition to eat your way to Montreal directly, the better policy for us will be to carry the war westward.”²⁸ The U.S. Army’s official history still criticizes American officers for not capturing Montreal because they lacked an understanding of the parsimonious frontier that made supplying armies extremely difficult.²⁹

²⁶ Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*, 2.

²⁷ Letter from Major General Jacob Brown John Armstrong from Big-Tree Genesee River 19 August 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 154.

²⁸ Armstrong to Brown from Washington DC 16 August 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 160.

²⁹ Richard Steward ed., and Center of Military History *American Military History: The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation 1775-1917* Vol. 1, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005). <https://history.army.mil/books/AMH-V1/index.htm>

To make the difficult environment worse, the weather deteriorated dramatically in the fall of 1814. This prevented naval support from the U.S. Navy, and it provided the environment for the spread of illness in the ranks on both sides of the conflict. Brown wrote the Secretary of War, "As Genl Gaines informed me that the Commodore was confined to his bed with a fever, and as he did not know when the fleet would sail."³⁰ Chauncey's fever never made it onto the recent bicentennial banners on Wellington Street in Ottawa, but it saved the British at the same time that Brown's force won their most significant victory at Bridgewater. Nor has the light infantry "side" battle that cut U.S. soldiers from their supply lines been adequately recognized. This loss of naval support and constant harassment of their rear meant that Major General Brown had to focus on the western frontier. As Brown observed, "I have thought it proper to change my position, with a view to other objects."³¹ However, severe weather at Fort Erie provided the Americans an opportunity for victory. British strategy exploited the weather, while Americans basically believed virtue could overcome any obstacle. After Lundy's Lane, the British laid siege to the American Northern army at Fort Erie, but the tactical reforms of Jacob Brown continued to result in U.S. victories. The British lost the *petite guerre* raids that preceded the siege, but the streamline army of Gordon Drummond maintained his strategic advantages.

³⁰ Brown to Armstrong from Chippewa 25 July 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 116.

³¹ Brown to Armstrong from Chippewa 25 July 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 116.

Fort Erie

The British Army's attempt to retake Fort Erie faltered despite its best efforts to destroy American sources of supply. American tactical acumen gained more in this campaign than at Lundy's Lane, but mainly because their supply lines were more secure. Drummond first tried to destroy depots at Black Rock and Buffalo. Low calories could have trumped patriotism if the U.S. lost its supply depots. According to Drummond, "had this Service been Effectuated as I sanguinely expected the Enemy's Force shut up in Fort Erie would have compelled by want to Provisions, either to come out and fight the Division under my Command or have surrendered to it."³² The British attempted to separate the U.S. fort from its source of nutrition, but could not succeed in their siege after losing the light infantry fight. Drummond better recognized the weaknesses in his force as a result of exposure to a harsh environment.

Like General Brown's force, General Drummond's army was struggling more with illness than battlefield losses. Drummond stated that his force "has a very formidable appearance on Paper."³³ While the British went on the offensive in the 1814 campaign, they struggled to keep soldiers fit for duty. They managed the high incidence of illness by shifting their regiments from combat to garrison duties. As Drummond described the health of his regulars, "I regret however to be obliged to observe that the inefficient State & composition of many of the Regiments are such as to detract greatly from the confidence which their numbers might otherwise

³² Letter from Drummond to Prevost from the Camp near Fort Erie 4 August 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 168.

³³ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from the Camp near Fort Erie 4 August 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 169.

inspire.”³⁴ Combat experience in the harsh frontier environment produced veterans, but also significantly diminished the health of his force.

The British excelled at shifting troops to keep regiments with high rates of sickness in garrison roles. Drummond described his relocation of forces: “It is my intention to write what I have leisure more fully on this Subject & also as soon as circumstances will permit to send down to Kingston Several Corps at present on this Frontier & which are wholly unfit for Service in the Field.”³⁵ The early American republic maintained many regiments in the South on garrison duty to defend against potential attacks and slave uprisings. Southern regiments could have traded their garrison roles with American regiments with extensive combat duty. The British Army shifted its troops around and utilized Veterans’ Battalions that were composed primarily of invalids. The fact that long-serving regiments struggled to maintain their force fit for duty meant that Drummond’s high rates of reinforcements from the Peninsular War were not necessarily an increase in his combat power.³⁶ He could not relocate the forces fast enough to influence the outcome at Fort Erie.

As stated previously, the weather was limiting the health of American units so significantly that officers like Jesup had to serve while injured. The British, in bivouac and far from their supply lines, suffered more. Izard noted that “We have received but five shots or shells from the Enemy within then (sic) last two days. Many

³⁴ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from the Camp near Fort Erie 4 August 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 169-70.

³⁵ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from the Camp near Fort Erie 4 August 1814 in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 170.

³⁶ The Peninsular War was the fighting that occurred in Spain and Portugal between the British and France during the Napoleonic Wars. While the Battle of Waterloo occurred afterwards it did so after Napoleon escaped captivity. Many British regiments shifted towards America after the fighting in Spain. While the invasion of the Chesapeake and Louisiana benefitted from this shift, significant reinforcements were sent to the Upper Canadian frontier.

deserters come in, who state that they expect that the enemys (sic) supply is exhausted, but they expect to be supplied within a short time.”³⁷ However, the supply problems only worsened. Izard indicated that “The Weather with us has been very tempestuous & rainy, for some days. Knowing that the Enemy were without tents, or covering of any kind to shield them from the wet & learning from the Deserters that came in, that they suffered much.”³⁸ Despite a long siege that wounded most of the officers, and the illnesses that ran rampant in the miserable weather, the U.S. Northern Army regarded the poor weather as an opportunity. Izard employed *petite guerre* harassing raids to “trouble their camp.”³⁹ Izard’s objective was to worsen the morale caused by low supplies and poor weather, and he measured his success by an increase in the rate of British deserters. Izard celebrated his harassing attacks as follows: “We effected our object, kept the enemy up all night, killed & wounded several of them, & obtained twenty deserters.”⁴⁰ These deserters pushed for further offensive actions.

The foul weather cut both ways, but most often hurt the bivouacking soldiers on the offensive more than sheltered soldiers engaged in defending fortifications. Izard’s harassing attack produced deserters that encouraged him to order more aggressive action.⁴¹ The weather was not something the young U.S. Army could control, but it was something that commanders could and often did exploit. At first the American force delayed the attack due to “The extreme badness of the weather.”⁴²

³⁷ Major General George Izard to Major General Brown from Fort Erie 11 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 182.

³⁸ Izard to Brown from Fort Erie 14 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 183-84.

³⁹ Izard to Brown from Fort Erie 14 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 183-4.

⁴⁰ Izard to Brown from Fort Erie 14 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 183-4.

⁴¹ Izard to Brown from Fort Erie 14 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 183-4.

⁴² Izard to Brown from Sackets Harbor 14 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 199.

The endeavor to destroy the batteries would be one of the most impressive actions of the campaign, with Miller yet again remaining the uninjured hero of another battlefield. The high casualties among officers meant that it took time for the recovering Brown to realize that Miller had still led the principal action, as well as to appreciate the significance of the victory.⁴³ Miller's force led the siege, and "they did not lose less than a thousand men."⁴⁴ However, this was a bloody battle that cost them the life of General Davis and disabled General Porter, who was "Highly wounded in the hand."⁴⁵ The weather and environment that limited the American advance to Niagara – rather than north to Lake Champlain on the Richelieu River – were also devastating to the newly reinforced British army.

Even the victory at Fort Erie would have been impossible without the reinforcement of General Izard's contingent that had previously focused on Lower Canada. On 10 September 1814, Brown described how his force had become smaller. Brown observed that "My total effective force does not much exceed two thousand men; perhaps I may be able to fight, in position, twenty-five hundred."⁴⁶ A quarter of his force at Fort Erie was made up of invalids who could only secure the fortress, but Brown used every available soldier. Both armies were much more formidable on paper, and the Americans had the advantage of defense of garrison, where their spirited approach could push soldiers to endure solitary engagements. When General

⁴³ Brown to Secretary of War James Monroe from Fort Erie 1 December 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 214.

⁴⁴ Brown to Izard from Fort Erie 23 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 200.

⁴⁵ Brown to Governor Tompkins from Fort Erie 20 September 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, 203.

⁴⁶ Brown to Izard from Fort Erie 10 September 1814, George Izard, *Official Correspondence with the Department of War, Relative to the Military Operations of the American Army under the Command of Major General Izard, on the Northern Frontier of the United States in the Years 1814 and 1815* (Philadelphia: Published by Thomas Dobson, at the Stone House, no. 41 South Second Street. William Fry, printer, 1816), 86. Hereafter Izard Correspondence.

Brown ordered the attack on the enemy, Jesup led the garrison. Jesup's command consisted of "with the 25th about one hundred and fifty strong, and the artillery and invalids," whose orders were, "to protect the fort and camp, and cover the retreat of the army should it be repulsed."⁴⁷ General Brown's force in Niagara had won honors and high accolades because they maximized the use of ill soldiers, but this still could only keep a fraction of soldiers in the ranks.

Brown's force could win battles, but they could not secure consistent supplies of provisions. Thomas Sidney Jesup provided the best account of this lack of support. A subsequent review of company order books proves that high incidents of illness correlated with periods of low rations. The officers complained about a system of logistics in a war where disease, brought on by fatigue and malnutrition, took more soldiers out of the field than the enemy, yet that system was entirely outside the authority and chain of command of military officers. Jesup knew this system well before his command of a regiment in Niagara; he had previously spent his own money to secure clothing for recently acquired prisoners of General Henry Proctor because they were "literally naked."⁴⁸ When Jesup acted principally as a quartermaster as he awaited his release back to the line via a prisoner exchange, he would do anything in his power to support soldiers. However, the victors of Chippewa and Bridgewater did not receive adequate provisions. For Jesup, a lack of provisions made it impossible for the Northern Army to remain on the offensive after their victories. Jesup stated that "It is madness in the extreme to attempt to carry on

⁴⁷ Thomas Sidney Jesup, *Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara*, 15.

⁴⁸ Letter from Major Thomas Sidney Jesup to Major James L. Swearingen from Cincinnati 20 May 1813, *Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers*, 150.

war with such a system. either the contractors should be dismissed, or they should be made amenable to military tribunals.”⁴⁹ This condemnation recognized how Brown’s army remained supreme on the battlefield while being crippled by contract logisticians who were under no formal military authority. Jesup wanted to engage every logistical contractor from the “humblest Bullock driver or salesmen” to “the agent who accompanies the army,” and in general to subject every camp follower from “the whole tribe from the principal, wheresoever (sic) he may reside” to military legal authority.⁵⁰ Still, Jesup was a man of honor who, while seeing the future in bleak terms due to a lack of support, would return to duty despite injuries. Jesup wrote that “Our little band still holds out at Fort Erie: I shall join them tomorrow, though my right arm is still in a sling.”⁵¹

The command of General Izard experienced fewer battles and is far more informative to the nature of a conflict whose isolated frontier was more formidable than the enemy. Izard’s campaign must be taken more seriously because it challenges a significant theme within command and control military historiography. Historians from Wesley Turner to Richard V. Barbuto have argued that the United States should have focused on capturing the Canadian capital at Montreal.⁵² The object of Brown’s campaign was to destroy forts in the rear of such a campaign and then to support

⁴⁹ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup to an Unnamed Lieutenant colonel in Ohio from Buffalo, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, 220.

⁵⁰ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup to an Unnamed Lieutenant colonel in Ohio from Buffalo, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, 220.

⁵¹ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup to an Unnamed Lieutenant colonel in Ohio from Buffalo, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, 2.

⁵² Barbuto is the only champion of the Quebec City Argument, but any cursory exploration of Arnold’s failed campaign illustrates how the logistically incapable US Army would not have succeeded in the only wilderness more formidable than Upper and Lower Canada. *The Canadian Theater, 1814*. (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2014), 56.

Izard's effort to achieve those results. However, it was not logistically feasible. John Armstrong and Izard recognized the impossibility of carrying a successful campaign along the Champlain River. Armstrong observed that "on the project of taking post on the St. Lawrence, there is a great drawback, from the difficulty we shall find in subsisting, and if occasion should arise, in supporting it."⁵³ The U.S. Army's chief desire was to capture Montreal; however, the environment was forcing them to consolidate their gains on the Niagara peninsula. Secretary of War John Armstrong bluntly wrote the following to General Izard: "It is very distinctly my opinion, that it has become good policy on our part, to carry the war as far to the westward as possible, particularly while we have an ascendancy on the lakes."⁵⁴ Victories could be won, but the parsimonious frontier meant that they could not be held, and Americans were struggling to use the light infantry tactic of targeting enemy supply lines that the British employed. The American army would cling to moral pronouncements regarding the cause of their logistical woes, while the British were better at recognizing how frontier isolation influenced the outcome.

General Drummond recognized he could not always gain long-term results because of environmental restrictions. Major General Brown's victory at Fort Erie ultimately required an evacuation – because of the weather, not because of the light infantry targeting his lines of supply and communications. Drummond noted the "*precipitation* with which it has been marked, such as Provisions left on the ground, some Camp Equipage burnt (for which I consider they had not carriage)."⁵⁵ This

⁵³ Armstrong to Izard from Washington 12 August 1814, Izard Correspondence, 70.

⁵⁴ Armstrong to Izard from Washington 12 August 1814, Izard Correspondence, 70.

⁵⁵ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from Niagara 18 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 219.

retreat became a significant source of British supplies by capturing a ship that “contained fresh meat, Bread, and Spirits for at least a Brigade—.”⁵⁶ The abject retreat after victory occurred because of muddy roads rather than a British attack. Drummond recognized the environmental cause of the American withdrawal, and Brown’s “feeling the difficulties of his situation, and the impossibility of the even the Common Wagon of the country much less *Guns* through such Roads.”⁵⁷ The Americans could not supply a fort in Upper Canada once the roads became muddy and wagons could no longer use the roads. In addition to recognizing environmental restrictions, Drummond also connected low supplies of food to high rates of illness in his most isolated fortifications.

The same muddy roads made it impossible to supply positions west of Niagara, and whole regiments were taken out solely by illness following low supplies. Today, non-battle losses are still higher than combat losses, but soldiers have far lower rates of loss to sickness. Modern medicine received far too much credit because it is widely known that contemporary combat arms soldiers avoid medical care; therefore, it is most likely that today’s American soldier rarely succumbs to illness simply because they are well fed. Regiments became less effective the farther they were from their supply lines. Drummond stated that “There is so much disease in the 103^d and that Corps is in every other respect so useless and inefficient.”⁵⁸ The frontier was a more significant challenge for General Drummond, and regiments in the wrong

⁵⁶ Letter from Drummond to Prevost from Niagara 18 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 220.

⁵⁷ Letter from Drummond to Prevost From Niagara 20 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 222.

⁵⁸ Letter from Drummond to Prevost From Niagara 23 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 228.

location became sickly because of roads that were “Impassible” for logistics.⁵⁹ The loss of the 103rd Regiment of Foot had little to do with enemy action; they simply occupied an outpost that was too difficult to provision adequately in a parsimonious place. However, while the British struggled to supply their troops and suffered similar privations, all the Americans could observe were the supplies provided to the British by their countrymen.⁶⁰

To make matters worse for the Americans, New England was the chief supplier of provisions to the British Army in Lower Canada. The Northern Army’s muster rolls illustrate that although New England opposed the war, its private soldiers were almost exclusively from New England. Smuggling supplies from New England to the British Army was a particularly onerous betrayal.⁶¹ Jacob Brown and Jesup’s

⁵⁹ Letter from Drummond to Prevost From Niagara 23 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 228.

⁶⁰ This is a unique claim of this dissertation; however, the careful regimentally oriented work of John Grodzinski verifies the logistical struggles of the British to supply line infantry units. Additionally Alan Taylor points to General Izard as a source of the problem in stating that “smuggling doubly dammed the American war effort,” in *The Civil War of 1812*, but his work on the *Internal Enemy* later identified that most U.S. troops in the northern campaign were from New England where smuggling was prevalent. See John Grodzinski, *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot in the War of 1812* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2014); Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Random House, 2010), 277; and *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and the War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

⁶¹ Most of the company order books preserved for the northern campaign list soldiers from New England. The American Southern states typically fought with Andrew Jackson’s force but also had to maintain troops at home to prevent potential slave uprising. Also, there are few company-level records, and among the short serving and less politically connected junior officers, it is possible that New Englanders were merely more literate. For example, the Order book of Captain Byrd C. Williams has the least information found in company records. Only a clothing record included information on death and discharges. The shared record book for Captains John McRae and John Standard’s company also have very few reports, and the Virginian accounts of junior officers are the sparsest records; this should not discount the performance of New Englanders. Specifically, the town of Hillsborough, New Hampshire was home to so many of the war’s top performing officers. The following account from a letter from Benjamin Price to Major John McNeil illustrates the contradictions between campaign principally fought by New Englanders and mainly opposed politically by New Englanders: “You were fortunate in having the command of the 11th Regt. – Capt. Crooked has dutifully upheld himself & also the brave Col. Miller – you are all from the county of Hillsborough.” See Byrd C. Williams, Company order book for the Company of Captain Byrd C. Williams, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army commands, 1784-1821, Infantry, 1789-1815 20th Infantry

accounts level indirect criticisms, but Izard's proximity to the Saint Lawrence River where most smuggling occurred allowed him to describe the Northern army's betrayal. Izard maintained that "From the St. Lawrence to the ocean an open disregard prevails for the laws prohibiting intercourse with the enemy."⁶² He described the specifics of U.S. supplies that helped the British: "The road to St. Regis is covered with droves of cattle, and the river with rafts, destined for the enemy."⁶³ Worse, the American revenue officers were aware but did nothing to prevent the smuggling.⁶⁴ Neither the Americans nor the British could subsist on the frontier without significant logistical support, and according to American officers, smugglers were outperforming the fledgling U.S. logistical system. Izard maintained that "Were it not for these supplies, the British forces in Canada would soon be suffering from famine, or their government be subjected to enormous expense for their maintenance."⁶⁵ Izard was first to occupy troops with harassing the British supply lines as well as cordoning off American smuggling routes, though without success. Every resource mattered, and the British were significantly hindered by the length of their supply lines. Smuggling was thus not a benign activity; it was fundamental to

Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration Washington D.C., Entry 232; John McRae and John Standard, The Company order book for the Company of Captains John McRae and John Standard, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army commands, 1784-1821, Records of units, Infantry, 1789-1815 20th Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration Washington D.C., Entry 231; and Letter from Benjamin Price to Major John McNeil from Hillsborough New Hampshire 11 August 1814, Bentham-McNeil Family Papers, Library of Congress, 22.

⁶² Letter from Izard to Armstrong from a camp near Plattsburgh 31 July 1814, Izard Correspondence, 57.

⁶³ Letter from Izard to Armstrong from a camp near Plattsburgh 31 July 1814, Izard Correspondence, 57.

⁶⁴ Letter from Izard to Armstrong from a camp near Plattsburgh 31 July 1814, Izard Correspondence, 57.

⁶⁵ Letter from Izard to Armstrong from a camp near Plattsburgh 31 July 1814, Izard Correspondence, 57.

the outcome of the conflict. The New England smugglers made it possible for the British to survive on a frontier that the American Northern Army was forced to abandon.⁶⁶

Izard and Brown were both tasked with leading forces left in ruins by the failures of General Wilkinson. From the beginning of the campaign, the problems were almost solely due to providing provisions. Brown had more success turning green troops into skilled fighters, but he had Winfield Scott, Thomas Jesup, James Miller, and several other regimental commanders who drilled their troops intensely.⁶⁷ The Quartermaster Department was the most significant problem in the force, and while Brown secured battlefield honors, Izard was unable to overcome his logistical issues well enough to even field a fighting force – save for the small action at Sandy Creek – until his reinforcement of Fort Erie. Izard's supply problems are significant because at first the plan centered on capturing Montreal, even though it was impossible to supply his force adequately at French Mills.

After Wilkinson's relief, the Northern Army stationed at French Mills threatened Montreal, but the 1813 campaign had been a failure terminating at Chrysler's Farm, and the army was too large to supply on the frontier. When Izard

⁶⁶ Joshua M. Smith has written extensively on the relationship between borderlands and smuggling; however, smuggling strengthened the concept of the border for soldiers fighting. Witnessing smuggling and having an inability to prevent cross border smuggling created understandable anger. In the future more work needs to be done on how the 1814 experience shaped the post war life of veterans and how this shaped New England. Dr. Micah Pawling has worked on the post war life of Captain Joseph Treat, and future collaboration will add depth to the understand of the way that smuggling both challenged and affirmed understanding of the border between British North America and the United States. See Joshua M. Smith, *Borderland Smuggling: Patriots, Loyalists, and Illicit Trade in the Northeast, 1783-1820* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2006); Micah Pawling, ed., *Wabanaki Homeland and the New State of Maine: The 1820 Journal and Plans of Survey of Joseph Treat* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

⁶⁷ Jon Latimer, *Niagara 1814: The Final Invasion* (New York: Osprey Pub., 2009) 18-19.

took command, he immediately communicated to the Secretary of War that he was “greatly disappointed, both in their number and quality” of his troops.⁶⁸ First, he maintained that he had improperly trained regular troops. Izard wrote that “With very few exceptions (and those confined to companies) they are deficient in all the requisites of regular soldiers.”⁶⁹ Brown had excellent operational commanders, but Izard did not. Even worse, most of his troops were ill due to poor supplies. Izard described the dire situation: “Their clothing and equipment are in a wretched state, – their proficiency in field manoeuvres, and even the rudiments of exercise, is lamentably small, – and an undue proportion of them are on the sick list.”⁷⁰ The most damaging issue was that in addition to the loss of ill-trained soldiers, his veterans were the largest group of indisposed troops. He described his raw recruits as follows: “Of those who appear under arms, a very great number are unfit to take the field, in consequence of indispositions contracted in the last movement to the Lacole.”⁷¹ Izard immediately recognized the alarming dearth of supplies and the lack of discipline among his troops. Even the most well-trained forces would have struggled mightily without supplies and with most of their ranks indisposed by illness. While Izard did not connect this lack of morale and combat readiness to illness and low supplies, the correlation occurred too frequently for that relationship to be insignificant.

⁶⁸ Izard to Armstrong from Northern Army Headquarters Plattsburgh New York, 7 May 1814, Izard correspondence, 2.

⁶⁹ Izard to Armstrong from Northern Army Headquarters Plattsburgh New York, 7 May 1814, Izard correspondence, 2.

⁷⁰ Izard to Armstrong from Northern Army Headquarters Plattsburgh New York, 7 May 1814, Izard correspondence, 2.

⁷¹ Izard to Armstrong from Northern Army Headquarters Plattsburgh New York, 7 May 1814, Izard correspondence, 2.

In two subsequent letters, he recognized the nature of the *petit guerre* conflict, as well as how the poor health policies of Wilkinson had denied him of his best troops. In a 9 May 1814 letter to Secretary Armstrong, he observed how poor supplies of pay and clothing were limiting both his Dragoon Cavalry and Riflemen, two detachments essential to effective small war tactics. The riflemen were without pay and “several desertions have taken place from these two corps since my arrival” while “the dragoons are without clothing; their arms, with scarcely an exception, unfit for use.”⁷² Poor supplies sapped him of superior forces for rapid harassment and fortifying his lines of communications, precisely when the British were implementing measures to secure their own. Armstrong maintained after the British victory, partially won by the excellent light Canadian Voltigeurs, that “he will be compelled to hazard a battle in defence of his communications.”⁷³ However, the difficult operations would have to be spearheaded by new recruits, because poor health policy and low supplies had eliminated a large portion of the seasoned regulars. The Secretary of War replied that “It is matter of serious regret that, in our oldest corps, an attention to police and a knowledge of duty are yet very deficient.”⁷⁴ Izard would have to do more than Wilkinson without his veterans, because most of them remained on the sick list after the Battle of Lacolle Mills.

A series of letters from General Izard and John Armstrong dated 8 May is extremely telling. Armstrong emphatically repeated his concerns about troops lacking proper clothing. Armstrong pointed out that “The report you make of the troops is

⁷² Izard to Armstrong from Plattsburgh 9 May 1814, Izard Correspondence, 4.

⁷³ Armstrong to Izard from DC 28 April 1814, Izard Correspondence, 5.

⁷⁴ Armstrong to Izard from DC 28 April 1814, Izard Correspondence, 6.

painful...Of clothing, there has been the most detestable abuses.”⁷⁵ To make matters worse, Izard’s troops had been exposed to a disease that George Washington’s Continentals took pains to eliminate a generation earlier, and British leaders in the Seven Years War were known to manipulate. Izard reported that “The senior hospital surgeon reported to me yesterday, that a case of small pox has occurred in the cantonment.”⁷⁶ There was no hiding the disdain that Izard felt about a complete lack of preparedness for a disease with a well-known cure. Izard described the efforts to stop the spread: “Every precaution is taking to prevent infection – and there not being any kine (sic) pox matter in this part of the country, an express has been sent to Albany for the purpose of procuring some. It is unfortunate that this was not done by the proper department some weeks ago.”⁷⁷ The Army’s logistics system struggled to provide the supplies to stop the diseases of previous wars, and the bodies of America soldiers suffered. It is not surprising that many soldiers faced courts-martial for desertion to seek care at home, or how the lack of adequate medical supplies, clothes, and food made Izard’s force inactive for most of 1814.⁷⁸

While the Americans felt betrayed by their people, the British viewed their problems as driven by the harsh environment. Although Upper Canada was a distant campaign of the Napoleonic Wars, this was still the Army of Wellington, and as such it exploited the light infantry tactics that excelled at management of isolated frontier

⁷⁵ Armstrong to Izard from DC 18 May 1814, Izard Correspondence, 20.

⁷⁶ Izard to Armstrong from Plattsburgh 1 June 1814, Izard Correspondence, 22.

⁷⁷ Izard to Armstrong from Plattsburgh 1 June 1814, Izard Correspondence, 22

⁷⁸ Court Martial of James Gaff, Case File A-3; Court Martial of John Rabdy, Case File A-11; Court Martial Of William Sage, Case File A-17; Court Martial of Markus Remmee, Case File A-17; Court Martial of Nathan Stone, Case File A-17; Court Martial of Richard Gould, Case File A-17; Court Martial of Nathaniel Eaton, Case File A-17; Court Martial of William Wickings, Case File 17; Court Martial of William Bach: Case File A-17; Court Martial James Hyatt, Case File A17; Court Martial Proceedings, National Archives and Records Administration Washington DC.

supply lines. Light infantry is often understood in terms of the soldier's load, but it emerged as a force that excelled at foraging and being supplied solely by pack horses. The frontier militia on both sides of the conflict were the forces that excelled the most at light infantry tactics, and while they rarely received laurels, such tactics often had the most impact on the outcome. The early American army's institutional culture, however, emphasized character and patriotism. And while that did much to inspire soldiers during battle, it achieved fewer results in sustained motivation during long-term privation. The American philosophy on nature was based on morality, and in crisis, soldiers could endure much. Yet over time that motivation diminished. The British approached nature more pragmatically and were thus able to achieve much with fewer direct military engagements. The practical, light infantry-based operational strategy was able to achieve more through a sustained system than the Americans could achieve through impressive performance in combat.

The 1814 campaign should also illustrate how military tactics are a representation of practical natural philosophy that is often divergent among elite intellectuals, best outlined in the work of William Cronon.⁷⁹ Likewise, ideas like natural philosophy or moral patriotism were met with real-world circumstances. Nationalism in American units helped to win battles, but the system that embraced environmental realities nullified their gains. The environment, like most of the geographical and environmental histories of Canada, was "parsimonious," and that meant that smaller lighter forces were the best troops for long-term gains. The critical action at Lundy's Lane was won on the field, yet the campaign was abandoned

⁷⁹ William Cronon "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.

because militia cut the Americans off from their supply lines. The British also had the wisdom to release their militia to their homes in order to simplify supply challenges, only to have those militiamen return when needed most. Drummond accepted a smaller force that he could supply rather than fully employing his large contingent of reinforcements. The Americans achieved what they sought to do at the outset of the campaign: increase the reputation of the American Army through courage in battle. However, the U.S. Army's inability to gain lasting advantage from their victories, and the simultaneous attack on Washington D.C., led to little collective understanding of their achievements. The British commanders are often seen in history as conventional thinkers who overemphasized heavy infantry in pitched battles, but during the summer of 1814 they more readily embraced a light infantry approach. The Americans, on the other hand, focused on carrying fields of action.

Ironically, the British Army of the free-thinking Duke of Wellington returned to a system with ill-trained aristocratic officers with enough wealth to purchase their commissions and learned very little from the conflict.⁸⁰ The adaptive light infantry of the War of 1812 and of the Peninsular War would primarily be abandoned for parade soldiers and inexperienced officers. In America, conversely, a veteran of the 1814 campaign, Winfield Scott, would reform the army officer's corps and make West Point into a first-class merit-based institution.⁸¹ The less well-studied father of American army logistics, Thomas Sidney Jesup, leveraged his frustrations during the

⁸⁰ The best example of this is a book on the charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War. The legacy of Wellington is that his success further justified the British system of purchased commissions. See Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Reason Why* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954).

⁸¹ Samuel Watson has written the definitive series on early U.S. Army officer development, and the second book in the series catalogues this period of Winfield Scott's reform. See *Peacekeepers and Conquerors: The Army Officer Corps on the American Frontier, 1821-1846* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

1814 campaign into his development of a capable logistical system. The American Army would later dominate a much more significant Mexican force, mainly because of the experience that officers such as Scott and Jesup gained in Upper Canada. On the opposing side, however, the British victory would lead to the famous charge of the light brigade in 1854 during the Crimean War. Jesup's environmental lessons were transferred to the generals that excelled in the U.S. Civil War. The next chapter explores the role of liquor on combat motivation. Soldiers needed alcohol to fortify them for both combat and the experience of harsh nature. Morale in the War of 1812 was about ideas, but it was also about what filled the stomachs of soldiers.

CHAPTER 3

LIQUOR AND SOLDIER MOTIVATION

*“But fighting is not the part of a soldier’s life”*¹

Exceptional scholarly works by early American historians on the War of 1812 have recently emerged. As previously discussed, Nicole Eustace and Alan Taylor’s books have covered the issues of patriotism and soldier motivation as well as military professionalism.² Nicole Eustace’s intellectual approach to the history of emotion and patriotism does much to capture what elite print cultural sources believed about patriotism.³ Nationalism dominates the Canadian interpretation morale during the War of 1812, both in the work of scholars like Donald Graves who glorify British victories.⁴ Also Canadian nationalism complicates interpretation because the defense of the border was fundamental to creating a Canadian nation-state. The defense of Canada from a larger American Army in the War of 1812 has, from the inception of the Canadian national Confederation, has been central to Canadian patriotic identity.⁵

¹ Isaac Roach, “Journal of Major Isaac Roach 1812-1824” (CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series = CIHM/ICMH Collection De Microfiches. S.L.: S.N., 1893), Microform, 22.

² Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2014); *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010); “Unnatural Inequalities: Social and Environmental Histories.” *Environmental History* Vol 1(1996): 6-19.

³ Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

⁴ Donald E. Graves, *Where Right and Glory Lead!: The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 1814*. (Toronto: Robin Brass, 1997), *Field of Glory: The Battle of Crysler's Farm 1813*. (Toronto: R. Brass Studio, 1999).

⁵ Many of the War of 1812’s first-hand accounts from the perspectives of British Officers who settled in Canada and Canadian Militia were key aspects of the movement towards Confederation. The writing of William Merritt and John Richardson are the best examples. John Richardson, and Alexander Clark Casselman, *Richardson's War of 1812; with Notes and a Life of the Author* (Toronto: Historical publishing co., 1902), and William Hamilton Merritt, William Claus, Matthew Elliott, John Norton, E. A. Cruikshank, and Niagara Historical Society, *Campaigns of 1812-14: Contemporary Narratives by Captain W.H. Merritt, Colonel William Claus, Lieut.-Colonel Matthew Elliott, and Captain John Norton* (Niagara, Ont.: Niagara Historical Society, 1902).

Canadian technical military historians from the time of C. P. Stacey repeatedly reemphasize the challenge of defending the border between American and Canada and the competence of British and Canadian military leaders.⁶ This heroic memory of the defense rarely recognizes a key feature of that defense. Much of Canada was an extremely inhospitable place in environmental terms, even if parsimony has been a central theme in the historical-geographical studies of the country.⁷ In reality, soldiers on both sides required stiff drinks to cope with the emotional challenges presented by the frontier border region of Upper Canada. A close study of the whiskey ration during the War of 1812 will illustrate that patriotism may have influenced the minds of elites, but it also occurred in the stomachs of soldiers, whose officers often excelled at inspiring their soldiers through raised rations. Liquor was not always a source of poor professionalism because the use of alcohol encouraged patriotism and soldier motivation.

An examination of the use of alcohol helps to merge the historiography of the War of 1812 with John Keegan's paradigm-shifting *The Face of Battle*, as well as to

⁶ Ernest Cruikshank, *The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 25th July, 1814: A Historical Study* (Welland, Ont.: Printed at the Tribune Office, 1893), John Grodzinski, *Defender of Canada: Sir George Prevost and the War of 1812* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), J. Mackay Hitsman, *Safeguarding Canada, 1763-1871* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), C. P. Stacey, *The Military Problems of Canada; a Survey of Defence Policies and Strategic Conditions Past and Present* (Toronto,: Issued for the Canadian institute of international affairs by the Ryerson press, 1940), Wesley B. Turner, *British Generals in the War of 1812: High Command in the Canadas* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), *The Astonishing General: The Life and Legacy of Sir Isaac Brock* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2011).

⁷ For classic Staples theory see, Harold A. Innis, and Daniel Drache, *Staples, Markets, and Cultural Change: Selected Essays*, Harold A. Innis (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), Innis, *The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), *The Fur Trade in Canada; an Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956). For an analysis of parsimony see, Cole Harris, *The Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environment in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).

add nuance to the arguments of Taylor and Eustace.⁸ John Keegan's work challenged the idea of understanding warfare purely logically by exploring the emotional experiences of soldiers and the fog of war. Fatigue was the chief complaint of soldiers fighting in the War of 1812, and increased liquor rations were the best remedy. Rather than Keegan's emphasis on alcohol consumption before battles, something unique was happening in North America where alcohol served as protection from nature and fatigue. Proper alcohol use was not a form of drunkenness; instead it was a remedy. The use of a depressant to treat fatigue offers many insights into the soldiers' experience of war in the Early Republic and casts light on psychological conditions like shell shock, Battle Fatigue, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Additionally, by recognizing the environmental struggle and adaptation of the British Army and Canadian Militia, the War of 1812 can be better connected to a Canadian national identity based upon overcoming a harsh, parsimonious environment.⁹ Most importantly, examining the use of whiskey elucidates the experience of morale and patriotism among ordinary soldiers.

John Lynn best describes service motivation in terms of three key themes: motivation to join the military, sustained motivation, and combat motivation.¹⁰ White and Native American alcohol use was one tool to manage both sustained and combat motivation. Sustained motivation applies to the difficulties of managing camp life, as well as marching and exposure to the elements. Combat motivation pertains to

⁸ John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988).

⁹ Harris, *The Reluctant Land*.

¹⁰ John Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

discipline under fire, including the horrors of battle. Native American use of alcohol to manage motivation was used rhetorically to dehumanize them.¹¹ The daily liquor ration for whites was thought to be helpful to improve their health. However, Native American alcohol use was considered detrimental to their health. White soldiers typically received a pint of liquor before a battle to manage their morale, yet for white observers, Native Americans were not capable of handling their animal lust when drinking alcohol during a battle.¹² Officers were only criticized for alcohol use if it affected their performance, while the white soldier drunken escapades were considered “frolics.”¹³ Alcohol was considered a tool managed by whites, but something that unleashed the purported animal tendencies in Native Americans.¹⁴ The brutality of the conflict would, therefore, be profoundly shaped by the use of alcohol. While historians often criticize U.S. Army officers for unprofessionalism, their use of the liquor ration often showed their capability of managing sustained motivation.

The best War of 1812 example of a leader with exceptional performance who motivated soldiers with alcohol was James Miller. Miller, who rose from the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to Brigadier General and received four Congressional Gold Medals for heroism, also excelled at managing the morale and inspiring patriotism in

¹¹ David Livingstone Smith, *Less than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, Exterminate Others* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011).

¹² Letter from LTC William Hamilton Merritt, Journal of Events Principally on the Detroit and Niagara Frontiers During the War of 1812, CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series = CIHM/ICMH Collection De Microfiches (St. Catharines, C.W. Ont.: Historical Society, B.N.A., 1863), Microform, 21. Edward Dewar to Colonel Henry Proctor from Amherstberg in E. A. Cruikshank, ed., Documents Relating to the Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812 (Publications of the Canadian Archives. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1913), 174.

¹³ Court-Martial of Private William Harris, Detroit, 13 October 1813, in Regimental order book of the 19th Regiment of Infantry, Library of Congress, The Court Martial of Private William Brown. Court Martial Records, United States National Archives, Washington, D.C., I-16, 9, The Court Martial of Thomas. Perkins. Court Martial Records, United States National Archives, Washington, D.C., A27, 27.

¹⁴ [need information on alcohol and Native Americans here]

his soldiers.¹⁵ For the soldiers of the Fourth Infantry Regiment, merely arriving at the battlefields of Northern Ohio, Michigan Territory, and Upper Canada represented the most significant challenge. Serving as a private, Adam Walker described ascending the Wabash River. “We daily obliged (sic) to wade the river, and haul the boats after us over the rapids,” he noted, and the force was quickly stricken with “the fever, and ague.”¹⁶ The morale could have dropped significantly if not for “the humane and generous Col. Miller” who “in many instances perform(ed) the duties of the common soldier.”¹⁷ Walker praised the inspirational leader’s example, but also illustrated how central whiskey was to the maintenance of troop morale. He wrote that the soldiers of the Fourth Infantry Regiment gained “an evening’s respite” through “an extra glass of whiskey, bestowed by the liberality of our commander.” After the generous ration, Walker described how alcohol helped improve the regiment’s sustained motivation: “the unmost harmony and good humor prevailed—no contention—no murmuring—all cheerfully performed their duty.”¹⁸ While the frontier environment may cripple a unit through sickness, whiskey served as a method to maintain the spirits of soldiers. Miller was also generous after battles. His detachment received 2,000 rations following a battle at the village of Maguaga (the United States called this the Battle of Brownstown), and he returned to Fort Detroit with 896 rations of whiskey.¹⁹ This

¹⁵ Cal Ledbetter, “General James Miller: Hawthorne’s Hero in Arkansas.” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 47, no.2 (1988): 99–105, and Lonnie J. White, “James Miller: Arkansas’ First Territorial Governor.” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 19, no.1 (1960): 12–20.

¹⁶ Adam Walker, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U.S. Infantry, in the Michigan and Indiana Territories, Under the Command of Col. John P. Boyd, and Lt. Col. James Miller, During the Years of 1811 & 12* (Keene, NH: 1816), 11.

¹⁷ Walker, *A Journal*, 11.

¹⁸ Walker, *A Journal*, 12.

¹⁹ James Grant Forbes. *Report of the Trial of Brig. General William Hull* (Washington: U.S. Army, 1824), 154.

supplement was necessary after a battle and a storm that debilitated and “fatigued” his soldiers.²⁰ Miller understood the role of alcohol for both the sustained and combat motivation of his soldiers.

British officers also recognized the need for liquor rations on the frontier. In a brigade order that limited liquor rations for soldiers placed in barracks during the winter, the order also called for distributing rum to active soldiers. In an adjutant order, Edward Baynes described the need for alcohol in frontier posts. Soldiers “occupying Frontier Piquets(sic), and such detachments as may occupy posts of Observation, and Stations not affording the Comfort and accommodation of Regular Barracks, or be employed in the charge of Convoy of Stores, who are to continue to receive Rum.”²¹ Even efforts to limit drunkenness had to incorporate the value of liquor rations for active frontier service. The King’s Regiment, 2nd Battalion 8th Regiment of Foot, justified the loss of two elite grenadiers to desertion, by noting an increased alcohol ration to raise morale. Phineas Riall described their sickness because of the hardships with the frontier environment. Riall connected sickness to place and environment in a March 1814 letter to Gordon Drummond: “The Men are Sick of the Place, tired & disgusted with the constant labor to which they see no end & have got sulky and dissatisfied.”²² Because of their presence “in that cursed fort” at Niagara, the soldiers “receive a Ration of Spirits which the others do not,” yet desertions and high illness rates were still problems. Both sides of the conflict sought

²⁰ Forbes, *Report on the Trial of Hull*, 117.

²¹ Lieutenant Colonel Edward Baynes, “Adjutant General’s Orders,” Montreal 27 November 1813, in William Wood, *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*, Vol II (Toronto: Champlain Historical Society, 1920), 461.

²² Letter from Major General Phineas Riall to Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond, from Niagara 15 March 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, Part 1, 98.

to sustain morale and fortify the constitutions of soldiers using distilled spirits; at the same time, they tried to limit intoxication. While the King's 8th Regiment struggled despite receiving a liquor ration, other accounts demonstrate increased combat effectiveness attributed to a well-timed liquor ration.

In another account, the lack of whiskey corresponded with high rates of illness. Thomas G. Ridout described many incapacitated soldiers at Saint David's, Near Montreal, in October 1813. The force in garrison guard duties at Saint David's was "ruined by petty affairs."²³ In an August 1813 letter to a family member, Ridout described a rise of illness due to low alcohol rations: "The Army have been these two days out of whiskey. There is great deal of ague among the men."²⁴ Low coat supplies were a problem but not an immediate one in August, but the most pressing supply issue was the lack of liquor. In John Lynn's classification, alcohol was a vital aspect of maintaining both sustained and combat motivation. Double rations of alcohol were typically issued in combat, but Ridout's letter indicates how daily rations managed the health and sustained the motivation of soldiers for all daily duties.²⁵

In 1814 the rum ration was again employed to manage the sustained motivations of soldiers isolated in the frontier environment. Returning to the subject of the King's Regiment's struggles, Major General Gordon Drummond made it very clear that it was the result of environmental challenges. Storms kept Drummond away

²³ Letter from Thomas G. Ridout to Thomas Ridout from St. David's, 30 August 1813, in Earnest A. Cruikshank, ed. *The Documentary History of the Campaign Upon the Niagara Frontier in the Year 1813, Part 3* (Welland: Tribune Office, 1905), 87. Short citation: Cruikshank, *Campaign upon the Niagara 1813*.

²⁴ Cruikshank, *Campaign upon the Niagara 1813*, 87.

²⁵ Lynn, *Bayonets of the Republic*.

from forward positions, via the Royal Navy transport, so the 8th Regiment suffered severely because of “excessively severe” weather. The lack of good weather removed eliminated supplies and led to sickness. Gordon Drummond forwarded the recommendation of the regimental surgeon, to remove the King’s Regiment, to George Prevost: “I am sorry to report to Your Excellency, that sickness is prevalent in the King’s regiment, principally ague and dysentery; and the Senior Medical Officer of the Regiment recommends their immediate removal from Niagara.”²⁶ In addition to the King’s Regiment, sickness also incapacitated the 103rd Regiment of Foot. In 1814 Drummond stated that “There is so much disease in the 103rd, and that corps is in every other respect useless and inefficient, and there is so much occasion of an efficient Regiment in the neighborhood of Burlington.”²⁷ However, in 1814, the naturally poor weather also hindered the American advance. Drummond may have struggled on the frontier, but he understood that the environment hindered the U.S. Army as well. In a letter to George Prevost, Drummond stated that “The Weather being uncommonly Severe, and not being in possession of any information relative to the situation of the Enemy’s Main Body...It is evident that he has abandoned all ideas of offensive operations against this frontier.”²⁸ Alcohol was the mechanism to manage sustained motivation, but the environment overwhelmed the ability of both forces to keep soldiers in the field. However, in 1814 Drummond and the British

²⁶ From major General Gordon Drummond to Major General George Prevost from York, 13 March 1814, in William Charles Henry Wood, ed. *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812* Vol III, Part 1 (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1926) 96.

²⁷ Drummond to Prevost, from Niagara, 23 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, 228.

²⁸ Drummond to Prevost, from Niagara, 23 October 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, 227.

Army seemed to grasp these challenges better than their opponents in the American Army.

Spirits on the American frontier helped soldiers endure the environment at a time when nature was considered dangerous, rather than restorative.²⁹ Generous whiskey rations often made a difference in the outcome of battles and coincided with John Lynn's definition of combat motivation. When leaving an untenable fortification, Major G. D. Young had to attack an enemy position via a night march. Recognizing the need to fortify his soldier for the evening march, Young "ordered the men to be furnished with two days rations of provisions with double rations of whiskey."³⁰ Twentieth-century ideals of sober military professionalism may dismiss such rations before a major operation. However, Young's force achieved great success. Young described the effective night maneuver in a brief narrative of the "Affair at Saint Regis" as follows: "At 11 at night, we marched with the utmost silence, that we might give little alarm as possible."³¹ A double ration of whiskey was a full pint a day, but a silent night movement could not have demonstrated more poise. Young described how "we entered the place without even being heard by the Indians' dogs."³² For the British, the only difference was the favoring of rum over frontier whiskey, save for when they had captured American stores. On the march to Queenston Heights, Private Byfield Shadrach nonchalantly described the issue of

²⁹ See Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁰ Major G. D. Young, "Affair and St. Regis October 24th, 1812" in John Brannan, ed., *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, During the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, & 15* (Washington, DC: Way & Gideon, 1823), 86.

³¹ Letter from Major G. D. Young to Brigadier General Joseph Bloomfield from French Mills, 24 October 1812, in Brannan, *Official Letters*, 86.

³² Letter from Young to Bloomfield, in Brannan, *Official Letters*, 87.

rum: "A noggin of rum was given to each man. We then move on for the field of action."³³ In a time when nature and frontiers were frightening, alcohol could serve as an essential source of liquid courage. Moreover, drinking alcohol rather than pursuing sobriety facilitated poise. When circumstances prevented the distribution of whiskey, commanders could justify their losses on the field of battle honorably.

After the British defeat at the Battle of Lake Erie, Captain Robert Heriot's Court-Martial revealed a low rate of spirits in his force, as well as the value of the liquor ration during a battle on the remote frontier lake. Lieutenant Thomas Clark revealed that Captain Barclay's flagship went without liquor for two weeks before the battle. At Barclay's Court Martial Clark testified that "We might have had a Weeks at half Allowance of Provisions but not of Spirits they were preserved for the Action, and all consumed that day, we had none served out for several days before."³⁴ Even after the judicious retention of liquor for combat, the lack of a provision of spirits before the action contributed to the outcome. Barclay lost the battle but fought bravely and used alcohol the right way to preserve morale. After a defeat on a movement from Fort George to Beaver Dams, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Boerstler justified his failure because an attack on his supply wagons separated his men from their whiskey. His soldiers "had marched eleven miles that morning without refreshment; they had fought three hours, the weather very warm, and consequently the troops were much exhausted."³⁵ He described mounting casualties by "skulking"

³³ Byfield Shadrach and Nathan Goold, *A Narrative of a Light Company Soldier's Service in the Forty-First Regiment of Foot (1807-1814)* (New York: Reprinted, W. Abbatt, 1910), 48.

³⁴ Court Martial of Captain Heriot Barclay, statement of Lieutenant Thomas Stokes, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol II, 312.

³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Charles Boerstler, "Narrative of the Expedition from Fort George to Beaver Dams, U. C.," in Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, ed., *The Documentary History of the Campaign Upon*

Native Americans, yet the capture of whiskey was their most significant loss.³⁶ Boerstler's narrative described his willingness to fight, but not against intoxicated Native Americans. As he noted, "The commanding officer thought of ordering them a ration of whiskey, but some Indians getting in our rear and commencing a fire there was not time."³⁷ With high casualties and low morale, Boerstler was forced to surrender his force. Boerstler led a small detachment, but his defeat coincided with other losses and led to the resignation of Henry Dearborn and transition to the inept commander Major James Wilkinson. Without alcohol, it was challenging to maintain combat motivation over the long battle at Beaver Dams. The loss of Boerstler's force was a part of a series of actions in 1813 that led to a near nervous breakdown of Major General Henry Dearborn and was one of many unsuccessful battles in the Niagara region.³⁸

The Battle of Lundy's Lane, near Niagara Falls, was the most significant American victory in the northern theater of the War of 1812. Yet it went mostly uncelebrated. The American forces returned to their camp, rather than retaining the field of battle, so both sides claimed victory. The U.S. Army maintained their positions and captured the British guns, in the face of repeated charges from the British Army, which had been strengthened by veteran regiment arriving in North America from the Peninsular Campaign against Napoleon. The attacks were so severe that James Miller and Eleazer Ripley were the only general officers still standing.

the Niagara Frontier: In 1812-14 Part II (1813) (Welland, Ontario: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1908) 133. Hereafter cited as *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part II.

³⁶ Boerstler, "Narrative to Beaver Dams," Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813* Part II, 133.

³⁷ Boerstler, "Narrative to Beaver Dams," Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813* Part II, 133.

³⁸ Winfield Scott, Winfield, and Timothy D. Johnson (Ed.) *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Winfield Scott. Voices of the Civil War* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2015),

Afterward, General Ripley was subject to a Court of Inquiry. The court represented a formal challenge to his reputation because he ordered his army to withdraw to their camp. General Ripley had to retire his force because they had fought all day without anything to drink. Ripley described the need to leave the field for sustenance: “An interval not to exceed three-quarters of an hour, ensued; during which, all was darkness and silence; scarce interrupted by a breath of air. The men had neither water nor whiskey to refresh themselves, after the fatigue they endured.”³⁹ While it is not wise to dismiss dehydration, the whiskey ration was more consistently employed to prevent fatigued soldiers from breakdown during and after combat. Again, the British use of Native Americans with the addition of light infantry-style militiamen stopped the issue of a whiskey ration at a critical moment in the outcome of the battle. All sides understood the value of the whiskey ration, but the British commanders’ use of *petite guerre* tactics gave them a significant military advantage because they consistently separated the Americans from their liquor.

Colonel Henry Leavenworth took command of his regiment after the injury of Winfield Scott At Lundy’s Lane. Leavenworth described how issuing rations were outside of Ripley’s control: “To refresh the men on the field would be hazardous in the extreme, and we were liable to be flanked on our left, and cut off from our camp at Chippewa.”⁴⁰ While holding a field was no longer necessary to claim victory, the U.S. Army’s landmark victory in Niagara was tarnished by a movement back to camp to refresh soldiers. While these soldiers received meals, water, and whiskey in camp,

³⁹ Eleazer Wheelock Ripley, *Facts Relative to the Campaign on the Niagara in 1814* (Boston: Patriot office, 1815), 14-15.

⁴⁰ Ripley, *Facts Relative*, 24.

drinking alcohol was most commonly linked to combat motivation. Holding the field would not have been useful if the Army's morale collapsed.

The connection between the lack of whiskey and poor performance on the battlefield is significant. However, some of the most compelling accounts of whiskey and the War of 1812 were the moments when sharing spirits transcended the conflict and created friendship amongst opponents. Soldiers from differing sides periodically commiserated with one another through the medium of shared spirits. When Byfield Shadrach came across a barefoot and frostbitten American soldier, he elected to provide "some rum" and a pair of shoes. The unnamed prisoner "said he did not expect to be so treated, if he was taken prisoner, and wept."⁴¹ Rum served a medium to help the U.S. soldier recover from his mistreatment by other British troops and exposure to the elements because both sides contended with the same harsh environment. During the British raid at Black Rock, in Buffalo New York, alcohol rapidly transitioned from a tense standoff into drinks amongst friends. U.S. Private James Sloan later wrote that "being unwell I stayed at Dr. Hawley's tavern all night," and his interaction with British soldiers was initially very tense.⁴² Sloan noted that "Sergeant Kelly now spoke to me in kinder tone and asked for liquor. I presented him with a demi-john of excellent cherry bounce."⁴³ The mixture of fruit and liquor not

⁴¹ Shadrach, *Narrative of a Light Company Soldier*, 40.

⁴² Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part II, 228.

⁴³ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part II, 229. Cherry bounce is interesting because it was typically made in the home and would have been the perfect spirit to create a positive relationship between enemies. Interestingly it was also considered a particularly healthy drink. The combination of fruit and alcohol made the drink both familiar and medicinal. George Washington was known to carry a canteen full of Cherry bounce on surveying trips and it was served daily at Mount Vernon. See "Cherry Bounce." George Washington's Mount Vernon. Accessed September 18, 2019. <https://www.mountvernon.org/inn/recipes/article/cherry-bounce/>.

only eased the tensions, but it also served as a mental break for men that typically tried to kill one another. It was also a drink that required a fusion of fruit with liquor and spices and would have created a far more familiar representation of home and family. Sloan described the generous sharing of alcohol as follows: “After filling their canteens and taking a few hearty swigs, in which I joined them, we were now on the best of terms, and it was agreed I should remain and go to bed again as the most secure place.”⁴⁴ When Kelly died of minor wounds on a march from Amherstburg, Sloan memorialized his new friend: “His wound done bad on the road, and poor Kelley was laid in the dust.”⁴⁵ Cherry bounce or rum could also serve as a kind offer from one opponent to another, in a war where both capitals of Washington and York were destroyed in anger. Compassionately sharing liquor reveals how soldiers on both sides suffered in much the same ways and were willing to see similarities in their opponents. It shows that the management of sustained combat motivation through alcohol transcended the sides of the conflict; however, later analyses will illustrate how this compassion did not transcend race.

Perhaps the best lens to understand how British and U.S. commanders defined the professional use of alcohol to combat a brutal wilderness were instances of misuse of alcohol. Most accounts describe the abuse of alcohol by Native Americans and serve as accounts illustrating difference and otherness. These descriptions are less valuable as historical observation of lived experiences, and more as the definition of what fell out of the realm of proper use of alcohol. This next section will first

⁴⁴ James Sloan, “Recollections of the Attack on Black Rock, 11th of July 1813,” in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part II, 229.

⁴⁵ Sloan, “Recollections,” in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part 2, 230.

describe the few documented instances of alcohol abuse by white soldiers, then catalog how the definition of tribal drinking enhanced the sense of otherness in a progressively brutal conflict. The accounts of improper alcohol use did not advocate for abstinence, or even what today would be considered sobriety. Alcohol was a tool for the management of health and morale, but the same drinking was considered misuse when Native Americans were concerned.

The abuse of alcohol was described as childish only when attributed to white soldiers. Frolics were punishable but in ways harmless events that received punishment without the high moral judgment reserved for others. Private William Harris was charged and convicted for “Rioting” for striking a fellow soldier and breaking “the window of a citizen.”⁴⁶ Private William Brown was guilty of desertion because during a frolic, but faced lenient punishment because “he is very fond of liquor which is his only flaw.”⁴⁷ Instead of being punished for desertion, Brown was convicted for Absence Without Leave (AWOL), because he was a great soldier when not intoxicated. Thomas Perkins was a more significant case that was dealt with as a hilarious drunken escapade because of his combat record. Perkins went “crazy” and drank too much following combat service as a gunboat commander on Lake Erie. When asked “whether Perkins is man apt to frolic?” Reuben Merrill answered as follows: “He drinks a great deal and appears kind of crazy.” Perkins had twice sounded an alarm in Burlington which resulted in the “seducing two soldiers of the

⁴⁶ Court-Martial of Private William Harris, Detroit, 13 October 1813, in Regimental order book of the 19th Regiment of Infantry, Library of Congress.

⁴⁷ The Court Martial of Private William Brown. Court Martial Records, United States National Archives, Washington, D.C., I-16, 9.

U.S. Army from their duties.”⁴⁸ The serious charge of inducing soldiers to mutiny could have cost him his life, yet Perkins was not executed because of his independent combat action and tendency towards drunken frivolity. Typically, a soldier who was absent without leave and induced other soldiers to desert could be executed. However, the court only denied Perkins access to alcohol by placing him on hard labor without his whiskey ration because it concluded his actions were frivolous. Soldiers abusing alcohol were described in playful terminology, while white authors described Native Americans like animals.

The British likewise dealt with disciplinary problems related to drunkenness as a result of frivolity and mischief. In an 1812 district order Major Thomas Evans restricted soldier’s recreation to eliminate drunken frolics. In his general orders, Evans referred to “the disorderly and intoxicated state of the soldiers of the line during the five last days, he is under the necessity of ordering that except servants no soldier shall, until further orders, be permitted to leave his quarters.”⁴⁹ Soldiers were not expected to regulate their behavior when intoxicated as long as they caused no problems. Soldiers could not purchase spirits from locals, in addition to the generous ration, “so long as the enemy may think proper to threaten the safety of the frontier.”⁵⁰ Soldiers were expected to drink when commanders allowed the alcohol, but citizens were not permitted to provide additional spirits. Evans further described the prohibition on soldiers acquiring their own alcohol: “The Major-General has

⁴⁸ The Court Martial of Thomas. Perkins. Court Martial Records, United States National Archives, Washington, D.C., A27, 27. Emphasis in text.

⁴⁹ Major Thomas Evans,” District General Order Fort George 20 October 1812,” in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part II, 141.

⁵⁰ *Niagara Frontier*, 141.

thought proper to forbid persons on the line of defense between Niagara and Fort Erie from selling Spirits except by license and under such restrictions as may be conducive to the good of His Majesty's service."⁵¹ Officers punished soldiers for purchasing the alcohol; soldiers were expected to drink when provided the means of more spirits through double rations. When a drunken militiaman, listed as Private Chambray, beat up an invalid, he was criticized but unpunished because the officer of the guard was expected to prevent drunk soldiers from rioting. The standard ration was more than four drinks, as defined by the typical alcohol concentration of one beer, and a double ration was eight and a half drinks. Adjutant General Edward Baynes offered a problematic account of drunkenness. Which was "less worthy credit, on the part of Cambray, because it is proved, that he was much in Liquor and the Man with whom he fought, is a Wounded Invalid, deprived of the use of one of his Arms."⁵² Soldiers were expected to have drunken escapades, and since Cambray was on a post, he was criticized and not punished. However, similar behavior by officers was deemed unbecoming, and excessive drinking by Native Americans was synonymous with animal behavior.

Officers drank improperly when observers described their use of alcohol as free or excessive. Alcohol was a tool that was both necessary and could be overused. During the invasion of Lower Canada led by Major General James Wilkinson, contemporaries criticized General Wade Hampton because excessive alcohol use limited his ability. His subordinate, Colonel Robert Purdy, criticized Hampton's

⁵¹ *Niagara Frontier*, 141.

⁵² Edward Baynes "Inspector General's Report, 9 May 1814" in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol III, 19.

performance: “As a reference to the orders issued by him will show, mark very strongly the capriciousness of his conduct and the total want of steadiness in his intentions.”⁵³ Hampton gained his position through previous high performance, yet in 1813 alcohol significantly influenced his performance. Colonel Purdy observed that “Such has been the General’s conduct on some occasions that I have, in common with other officers, been induced to believe that he was under the influence of a too free use of spirituous liquors.”⁵⁴ General Hampton’s poor performance was directly related not to normal alcohol use, but the excessive use of spirits. A gill was a half a pint and was the daily ration, so it would not take much more to lead to poor decisions. Due to different roles, rations useful to manage soldier motivations could significantly affect officers’ decision making.

The divergence of officer and soldier expectations on alcohol use was present in the writing of British Major Thomas Evans. At the Battle of Queenston Heights, Evans resorted to freeing soldiers arrested for behavior caused by drunkenness because of the “imminence and magnitude of the danger.”⁵⁵ Still, Evans was reluctant, but the circumstances of an American invasion meant that soldiers needed to be free from alcohol-related crimes based upon combat necessity. In an October 1812 letter, Evans described his leniency due to combat necessity: “I hesitated not assuming the responsibility of liberating all the 49th prisoners, on the specious plea of their offense proceeding from too free indulgence in drink.”⁵⁶ The soldiers were

⁵³ Lieutenant Colonel Robert Purdy to James Wilkinson Date unrecorded (Late October 1813) in Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part IV, 132.

⁵⁴ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier*, 133.

⁵⁵ Major Thomas Evans to Government House at Fort George 15 October 1812, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol I, 620.

⁵⁶ Wood, *Select British Documents*, 620.

released to the more trying circumstance of battle as “proof of their loyalty and courage, which they were assured would be severely tested.”⁵⁷ The line between legal and criminal drunkenness was situational, and courage under fire could erase the problems associated with the free use of alcohol. Still, the line between the proper and improper use of alcohol had much to do with the individual’s rank because an officer who consumed similar amounts of alcohol delivered to soldiers was prone to poor decision making. Dimming one’s wits was useful before plunging a bayonet into an opponent but was a detriment to skillful command under fire.

Since American alliances with Native Americans rarely occurred during the hostilities, it may follow that the British muted criticism of their Native American allies. However, the British description of the alcohol consumption of their allies was significantly harsh. Lieutenant Colonel J. Harvey, Major General Drummond’s adjutant, gave specific instructions not allowing captured alcohol to fall into the hands of Native Americans. Harvey ordered Major General Phineas Riall to “use your best exertions, and require all under your command to do the same, in restraining the savage propensities of the Indian warriors, and to give protection to the persons and property of such Inhabitants as may remain in their Houses.”⁵⁸ The British, like most Europeans in North America, believed that Native Americans could not contain their savageness, and alcohol made it impossible for less human allies to restrain their passions.⁵⁹ Jon Harvey stated that “All liquors should be destroyed, to prevent its

⁵⁷ Wood, *Select British Documents*, 620.

⁵⁸ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey to Major Phineas Riall from Chippewa 29 December 1812, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol II, 510.

⁵⁹ William Hamilton Merritt, *Journal of Events Principally on the Detroit and Niagara Frontiers During the War of 1812*, CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series = CIHM/ICMH Collection De Microfiches (St.

falling into the hands of the Indians or Troops.”⁶⁰ The denial of captured liquor to troops was used to prevent drunken unprofessionalism amongst white soldiers, but in the case of Native Americans, it was employed to restrain “savage propensities.”

Whites attributed brutality in the conflict to inebriated Native Americans. Major General Gordon Drummond reported that “the Indians who advanced with M General Riall’s force on the Morning of the 18th (December 1813) had committed great excesses (in consequence of intoxication) and had burnt the greatest part of the Houses in Lewiston.”⁶¹ Officers often dismissed the brutality of conflict characterized by growing examples of reciprocal violence because of intoxication. When Shawnee warriors executed wounded U.S. prisoners of war at Raisin River, Captain William Hamilton Merritt attributed the tragic event to intoxicated Native Americans. Merritt stated that “Some of the wounded were left in the house near the action. The Indians are getting drunk and brutally massacred them in cold blood; although the officers of the department exert themselves in an extraordinary manner to prevent it.”⁶² British officers had difficulty “controlling” their allies, yet they found it impossible to restrain the brutality of inebriated tribal allies. American prisoner William Atherton observed, “It has been said, and perhaps with due regard to truth, that many of the

Catharines, C.W. Ont.: Historical Society, B.N.A., 1863), Microform, 21. Drummond to Prevost from Saint David’s 22 December 1813, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol II, 504.

⁶⁰ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey to Major Phineas Riall from Chippewa 29 December 1812, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol II, 510.510.

⁶¹ Drummond to Prevost from Saint David’s 22 December 1813, in Wood, *Select British Documents*, Vol II, 504.

⁶² William Hamilton Merritt, *Journal of Events Principally on the Detroit and Niagara Frontiers During the War of 1812*, CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series = CIHM/ICMH Collection De Microfiches (St. Catharines, C.W. Ont.: Historical Society, B.N.A., 1863), Microform, 21.

Indians engaged in this dreadful havoc, were under the influence of rum.”⁶³ American accounts of the War of 1812 illustrate that the Northwestern Army burned and pillaged multiple tribal villages immediately after the outset of hostilities.⁶⁴ Rather than recognizing the reciprocity of tribal attacks, like at Raisin River, U.S. and British accounts portrayed Native American alcohol use as animal and savage, even though most soldiers were provided liquor before battles and might well have been equally intoxicated.

The Raisin River massacre, in the Michigan Territory, tempered the views of Americans, especially American prisoners of war. When left in the custody of Native Americans, American prisoners had the highest anxiety level when their captors were consuming alcohol. William Atherton’s account of captivity observed the Raisin River Massacre from a wounded prisoner’s perspective. He noted, “They were supplied with it by the British, and when under its influence were more savage than savages.”⁶⁵ Atherton leveled blame on the British officers using the same logic of the British that Native Americans could never contain their savage nature while intoxicated. When captured, Atherton was highly disappointed that he was not held by the British as a prisoner. At Fort Malden, Atherton observed that “I saw that the Indians were drunk. Here my fears were again alarmed—being in the midst of a savage camp.”⁶⁶ After witnessing the Raisin River massacre firsthand, Atherton

⁶³ William Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering & Defeat of the North-Western Army under General Winchester: Massacre of the Prisoners: Sixteen Months Imprisonment of the Writer and Others with the Indians and British* (Frankfort, Ky.: Printed for the author by A.G. Hodges, 1842), 70.

⁶⁴ Lewis Bond, “Lewis Bond Journal, 1812-1813.” Library of Congress, Robert Lucas, *The Robert Lucas Journal of the War of 1812 During the Campaign under General William Hull* (Iowa City: The State Historical Society of Iowa, 1906).

⁶⁵ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 70-71.

⁶⁶ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 71.

arrived in a camp with intoxicated Native Americans heightened his fears, and he further expressed his beliefs on the temperament of inebriated Native Americans. The “lusts” of Native Americans were not containable when under the influence of alcohol; Atherton saw “the blood scores fresh upon them—and under the influence of strong drink! While the Indians kept sober I had some hope of protection.”⁶⁷ From the perspective of the British and American accounts, alcohol use led to courage in battle or dysfunctional frivolity in white soldiers, but alcohol made Native American passions unrestrainable and led to brutal savagery. However, from the American perspective, British Army officers exploited Native American savageness by intentionally providing allies with excessive amounts of spirits. There were proper and improper uses of alcohol by both armies, and Native American use of alcohol served to strengthen ideas about the right and wrong way to consume it.⁶⁸

David Livingston Smith’s recent survey of dehumanization emphasized the role of language used to describe opponents as animals.⁶⁹ Contemporary descriptions of Native American alcohol use often used racially charged animal comparisons. After a drinking “spree,” Atherton’s life was in danger from the supposed unchecked bloodlust of his captors.⁷⁰ As Atherton described his fear, “I now felt myself in

⁶⁷ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 71.

⁶⁸ This section concentrates on white perceptions of alcohol use among Native Americans. There is no verifiable validity to these ideas. These racially based notions demonstrated that false portrayals of animal behavior were used to define the morality of alcohol use. It is also important to identify the hypocrisy of white contemporaries. High rates of alcohol consumption before battle was so common that whites justified surrender without alcohol, yet when Native Americans acted in a similar fashion whites characterized it as bloodlust. Soldiers employed these assumptions about the “animal” nature of Native Americans to justify white brutality. The accounts used in this chapter speak to the perceptions of the authors, not to historical accuracy.

⁶⁹ David Livingstone Smith, *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011).

⁷⁰ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 79.

danger, for one of them attempted to take my life; I escaped because he was drunk and could not get me. That night the squaws hid me out in the woods behind a log in the snow.”⁷¹ Every moment of intoxication was unbearable for Atherton because he believed Native Americans would revert to their animal nature, but he also thought it made it easier to outsmart them. Atherton described his narrow survival: “The Indians were lying about round the fires like hounds after a hard chase; the whiskey was dying in them, and they were sleepy and sick.”⁷² With the help of women he was able to ward off the brutal advances of his captors consistently. The British also believed that Native Americans brutalized American prisoners. As previously mentioned, Byfield Shadrach significantly restored the morale of an American prisoner by providing rum and fresh shoes, but Shadrach was also implored to prevent Native American brutality. After providing rum for the unnamed American prisoner, Shadrach observed the emotional response: “He said he did not expect to be so treated.”⁷³ Americans described British officers who incited the brutality of savages, yet when British men in the ranks captured U.S. soldiers there was more cordiality. U.S. soldiers felt safe with British soldiers as captors; however, when held by Native Americans, they felt imperiled, and the U.S. often linked attacks on prisoners to the orders of British officers.

Some accounts described extraordinary efforts to prevent wounded American soldiers from capture by intoxicated Native Americans. Major Isaac Roach struggled

⁷¹ Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 79.

⁷² Atherton, *Narrative of the Suffering*, 79.

⁷³ Byfield Shadrach, *A Narrative of a Light Company Soldier's Service in the 41st Regiment of Foot, During the Late American War Together with Some Adventures Amongst the Indian Tribes from 1812 to 1814*, CIHM/ICMH Microfiche Series = CIHM/ICMH Collection De Microfiches (Bradford Ont.: J. Bubb, 1840), Microform, 83.

to keep his friend Captain McChesney from bleeding to death while hiding him from Kahnawake warriors. Roach stated that “My time was occupied in attending to my friend McChesney whose wound was very painful, as the ball passed through the wrist joint and cut off the blood vessel, when he was shot being near me.”⁷⁴ Roach’s tourniquet was unable to stop the bleeding, but his most difficult challenge was keeping his dying friend away from drunken Native Americans. Roach “barricaded the door and armed with McChesney’s sword I watched him all night, at one time I expected the Indians to break into our room, as they were in the house.”⁷⁵ His elevated fears of losing McChesney occurred because they “were surrounded by savages intoxicated by the liquor found in our wagons,” therefore, Roach believed that the Native Americans could not restrain their animal tendencies.⁷⁶ Under fire, Roach employed his musicians to carry “the wounded to the rear, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy.”⁷⁷ During the Battle of Beaver dams much effort was made to prevent their execution by Native Americans because they were intoxicated, but despite surrendering to the British, the British transferred Roach’s troops to Native American captors. Despite Roach’s efforts, he stated that “Nearly all of our wounded were killed that night.”⁷⁸ McChesney would fight with Roach in the future. It was thus likely that Native Americans would execute soldiers who could not keep pace on the march. The American fear of Native American atrocity was

⁷⁴ Isaac Roach, “Journal of Major Isaac Roach 1812-1824,” Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier, 1813*, Vol. II, 23.

⁷⁵ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier, 1813*, 61-64.

⁷⁶ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier, 1813*, 61-64.

⁷⁷ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier, 1813*, 61-64.

⁷⁸ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier, 1813*, 61-64.

heightened significantly when Native Americans used intoxication in much the same way white soldiers managed combat and sustained motivation.

While American prisoners had the most to fear, some of the worst descriptions of Native American “savage” behavior came from their allies. In a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Edward Dewar to Colonel Henry Proctor, Dewar described the mistreatment of “A poor Canadian of the name Denault (sic)” whose horse was senselessly killed by Native American allies.⁷⁹ When Denault “found the horse yesterday in the Town mounted by two Indians, he seized it, and they struck him, but procuring assistance, and the Indians finding themselves compell’d(sic) submit, they ran their swords thro’ the Animals body.”⁸⁰ The senseless brutality to a civilian and a defenseless animal had occurred “perhaps forty or fifty” times.⁸¹ Dewar’s description of Native American “brutality” confirmed British expectations because they were intoxicated. Dewar stated that “what aggravates the evil is that liquor is again sold here to Soldiers, from whom the Indians procure it.”⁸² British officers serving with Native Americans worked to limit alcohol use by their allies. The Indian department records repeated requests for Native Americans to use alcohol appropriately, outside of proximity with their opponents. William Claus described a give and take between the Seven Nations and the Indian department. Like white soldiers, “Desiré (of the La Cloche) complains that the change of climate made some sickness and that makes

⁷⁹ Letter from LTC Edward Dewar to Colonel Henry Proctor from Amherstberg in E. A. Cruikshank, ed., *Documents Relating to the Invasion of Canada and the Surrender of Detroit, 1812* (Publications of the Canadian Archives. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1913), 174. Hereafter Cruikshank, *Surrender of Detroit*.

⁸⁰ Cruikshank, *Surrender of Detroit*, 66-68.

⁸¹ Cruikshank, *Surrender of Detroit*, 66-68.

⁸² Cruikshank, *Surrender of Detroit*, 66-68.

them think of going back, not the enemy.”⁸³ The ill Native Americans requested the same medicine that white soldiers used, yet for whites, Native Americans could not contain their lusts near their enemies. Claus responded, “Brothers! I thank you and will tell your father. You still hold him by the hand. The liquor you ask for you shall get, but I hope you will take’t very cautiously so near the enemy.”⁸⁴ Drinking to excess was something that Europeans did before battles, and would do so until the Somme in the First World War, yet the Native American allies were believed not to be able to control themselves when under the influence of strong drink.⁸⁵

William Claus would further illustrate the contradictions between white and Native American drinking. When describing the Chippewa as “Western Indians,” he reflected on their motivations: “A few nights ago they spoke of going, but it appears they did it only as an excuse for asking for some liquor.”⁸⁶ White men drank liquor to help endure combat, the harsh environment, and military camp life. However, whites described Native American alcohol use as an expression of animal lust, thereby reifying existing ideas about difference. Native Americans performed the unheralded light infantry tasks that helped preserve the British North American provinces. However, whenever Native Americans used alcohol in much in the same manner than

⁸³ Claus, William, “Speech of Colonel William Claus to the Indians Cross Roads 21 July 1813,” In Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part II, 260. It is important to doubt the accuracy of white reports of Native American atrocity. The best example was in the account of Lewis Bond. He described a Native American member of the Michigan militia who asked a woman to make him a soup using a human foot. That extreme story is most certainly fabricated and should elicit caution on white perspectives concerning Native American alcohol use. See Lewis Bond, “Lewis Bond Journal, 1812-1813,” 43.

⁸⁴ Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier*, 260.

⁸⁵ John Keegan described the use of Alcohol to keep the ranks in order at the contemporary battle of Waterloo. John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 184.

⁸⁶ Letter from Colonel William Claus to Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey from Cross Roads, August 15th, 1813, In Cruikshank, *Niagara Frontier 1813*, Part III, 23.

British and Americans units, they were considered animals with unrestrainable lusts. The realities of warfare in the early nineteenth century mean that alcohol was necessary for both combat and sustained motivation, yet Native American alcohol use magnified perceived differences between races.

It is most surprising that a thorough review of the War of 1812 alcohol records reveals that alcohol often improved combat effectiveness, probably as a result of a placebo effect. Perhaps soldiers performed better because they believed alcohol helped them, and something like ice cream could have done the same thing to help soldiers manage stress. However, veterans who endure repeated terrible experiences do not seek counseling and group therapy for ice cream addiction, but they struggle significantly with alcoholism. Principally because trauma survivors typically can fall asleep more easily after becoming intoxicated, only the dehydrating effects of alcohol lead to poor overall sleep. Poor sleep, however, is sleep. Alcohol significantly affects the places in the brain influenced by trauma in the short term, while causing systemic and irreversible long-term problems. Judging any soldier's combat experience on the North American frontier from a long-term perspective is problematic, and placing contemporary definitions of drunkenness on them is similarly flawed. John Keegan describes more problems with alcohol use at the Somme in 1917 than at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.⁸⁷ In a preindustrial society soldiers did not operate complex machinery. Sobriety was not required to operate early nineteenth-century weapons, but many soldiers were so malnourished, and any calories were valuable, regardless of long-term problems. If alcoholism prevented medical treatment with purgatives

⁸⁷ Keegan, *The Face of Battle*, 184, 245.

and opiates, then it was ultimately better. The use of alcohol was not the best option, it was not even a good option, but it was an acceptable one. Survival in wilderness warfare during the War of 1812 was not about reaching an ideal solution; it was about the least bad options. Soldiers and officers recognized the least bad outcomes by getting the most out of generous rations of alcohol.

In his famed work, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” William Cronon cataloged the problems of preserving sacred nature versus more ordinary landscapes.⁸⁸ Likewise, scholars like Roderick Nash have elevated ideas about nature posited by intellectual elites, disconnected from day-to-day practical experience in the wilderness.⁸⁹ Soldiers of the War of 1812 experienced the frontier and wilderness environment in a way that challenges such sacrosanct and restorative ideas about nature. The use of whiskey and rum to fortify the bodies of soldiers for fatiguing wilderness marches, the occupation of isolated outposts, and for morale in frontier battles represent critical insights into how early nineteenth-century people were interacting with a wilderness that was far more dangerous than invigorating. The soldier experience with nature in the War of 1812 required the consistent use of alcohol to prevent desertion and preserve morale. Likewise, intellectual studies of war-related trauma indicate that the most significant predictor of PTSD (behind being physically injured), is the perception of being in a dangerous place. As such, the ubiquitous descriptions of fatigue caused by the environment in the War of 1812, as well as the temporary efficacy of alcohol, offer a powerful example in a longer story

⁸⁸ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.

⁸⁹ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973).

about war and psychology. The field of trauma is dominated by work exploring the emotional burden of killing, while soldiers report the challenges of fighting in harsh environments as far more mentally taxing. Examining how the frontier environment affected the health of soldiers opens questions about the emergence of a natural philosophy that worshiped the unspoiled wild. Pragmatic participants in the northern campaign of the War of 1812 required alcohol to endure the ravages of nature. The liquor ration also illustrates how soldiers and officers made the most of their limited resources. Ideas about patriotism were significant but were secondary to material factors such as generous rations of whiskey and rum during the crises of frontier combat and prolonged exposure to a harsh wilderness environment.

Furthermore, alcohol use solidified the sense of racial difference, while sometimes uniting soldiers in a way that transcended the conflict. One of the worst things a contemporary white man could do was allow Native Americans access to large quantities of alcohol. Additionally, soldiers on both sides often bonded with one another by sharing alcohol. For white soldiers, the enemy often suffered the same hardships as themselves, and alcohol was a method of mutual commiseration. This shared humanity, however, was not extended to Native American combatants.

Moreover, when Native Americans used alcohol in the same manner as whites, they were described as animals. During the War of 1812, whites most often attributed atrocities to free use of alcohol by Native Americans. The day-to-day liquor ration has made little impact on the historiography of the War of 1812, but this chapter illustrates just how central it was to the soldier's daily experience, as well as heightening the sense of racial difference. It is easy to assume that the liquor ration

was antithetical to good order and discipline, but it dramatically illustrates just how painful the daily experience of combat was for the common soldier during the War of 1812. It is easier to condescend rather than understand why soldiers consumed half a pint of whiskey once a day, but the liquor ration offers vital insights into how soldiers overcame the daily drudgery of frontier service and combat. Likewise, the use of alcohol as a desperate but often necessary means to preserve morale integrates with the next chapter's focus on the role of nutrition and food insecurity. Like the use of alcohol to maintain morale, it also important to note that hunger and food insecurity are far more damaging psychologically, as well as to health in general, than combat. Understanding the War of 1812 from company level documents further illustrates the challenges of soldier motivation.

CHAPTER 4
WARFARE AT THE COMPANY LEVEL:
JOSEPH TREAT AND HIS UNIT'S WAR AGAINST NATURE

While the previous two chapters have focused on topics such as hunger and alcohol, this chapter explores the War of 1812 from U.S. company-level records. Company-level leadership has not yet had a major influence on the War of 1812's historiography. In an era when soldiers' accounts were written by a small number of men whose education and ability to publish manuscripts set them apart from the typical rank and file, company-level sources consisted primarily of order books that recorded rations, present for duty rosters, clothing records, and muster rolls. Most soldiers could not remain on the company rolls past their first maneuver. Company records provide better insight into the nature of a war in which, no matter how experienced a regiment became on paper, illness and day-to-day losses meant that the rolls were persistently filled with new recruits. The American army of that period has typically been considered inept and unprofessional.¹ Moreover, operational history tends to ignore environmental factors. However, analyzing the war from the company level reveals how difficult it was for commanders to retain seasoned veterans because of the unique ecological challenges of the Upper Canadian frontier.

Reconstruction of the history of any single company in the War of 1812 is extremely challenging, because company-level records are sparse, pragmatic

¹ A study that includes an insightful analysis of American leadership is Wesley Turner, *British Generals in the War of 1812: High Command in the Canadas* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999).

documents. There are few narrative descriptions, yet the day-to-day details of men in or out of the ranks, food supplies, and muster records provide the best sense of the significant non-battle influences on the larger conflict. Company records are the best records of what soldiers did because they provide data on how they died, how many were fit-for-duty, what they ate, their professions before the war, and what type of fighting was typical for them. What soldiers did strengthens our understanding of what officers reported in dispatches. And more importantly, they emphasize the difficulty of merely surviving camp life and campaigning. Like soldiers in the twentieth century, who often stressed how the daily dullness of military service outweighs moments of terror in battles, the company level records during the War of 1812 extend our understanding of the daily grind of soldiering.

A close study of Joseph Treat's leadership as a company commander in the 21st Infantry Regiment provides an in-depth look at one unit in the War of 1812. Given his court-martial, memoir, and detailed company order book, Joseph Treat was one of the most carefully studied junior officers from the conflict. His two order books are arguably the most detailed company-level documents relating to the War of 1812. After being honorably acquitted of General Jacob Brown's accusations about his alleged negligence at the Battle of Chippewa, Treat remained in Brown's Army. However, Treat was denied participation in some of the U.S. Army's most significant victories at the Battle of Bridgewater/Lundy's Lane and the siege of Fort Erie. Treat's denial of command during his regiment's finest battles led him to publish *The Vindication of Captain Joseph Treat against the Atrocious Calumny Comprehended in Major General Brown's Official Report of the Battle of Chippeway*. The rich

sources covering Treat's company reveal the complexity of a conflict that was fought using innovative and challenging light infantry tactics, and they show that the Northern Army's service on a distant frontier meant that illness was a more formidable challenge than battles with the enemy. In short, a close analysis of Captain Treat's company illustrates that the War of 1812 was a messy, complicated, and controversial conflict in which New Englanders played a significant role despite the political opposition of their Federalist states. Tragically, while New England states periodically served as the primary suppliers of the British army through smuggling, their regular soldiers suffered from malnutrition and fell ill.² This betrayal meant that New Englanders were more likely to describe the harsher side of war, even as they sought the romantic battlefield glory commonly desired by joining an army in wartime.

As a field of academic history, the War of 1812 has largely escaped the advances of the "New Military History," and it is generally lacking in social history. Alan Taylor's two recent books have won both great acclaim and the author's second Pulitzer Prize, and have helped to create a social history of the conflict. Taylor's approach lacks an attention to the nuances of military institutional culture.³ Military histories of the War of 1812 have focused almost solely on tactics, and on battle and

² Again, the work of Joshua Smith describes the relationship between smuggling development of permeable border between the United States and British North America. Alan Taylor has also described the War of 1812 as a civil war, because of cross border relationships. However, Taylor sees the smuggling as self-defeating during the War of 1812. The change that this dissertation illustrates, with the support of Taylor's research on Virginia in the War of 1812, published after *The Civil War of 1812*, is the recognition that most of the soldiers who fought in the northern campaign came from the states engaged in the smuggling. See Allan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, and Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), and Allan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

³ Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812; The Internal Enemy*.

campaign analyses, with a smaller emphasis on matters of logistics and day-to-day operations. A company-level study of the conflict provides much-needed insight into the center of balance of the conflict and challenges both fields of inquiry. The War of 1812 was a frontier conflict; battlefield victories were rarely decisive. The social-historical field has elevated soldier suffering and officer incompetence without grappling with human agency, perseverance, and camaraderie gained through suffering. Soldiers and officers were happy to suffer if it led to battlefield laurels. The soldiers in Joseph Treat's Company maintained a reasonable degree of health because their commander adapted to the climate. After Treat's removal, however, the company's losses increased significantly. An approach that investigates the health of soldiers and the operational management of health should help unite these two seemingly irreconcilable approaches to the conflict.

Historians have described soldiers' experiences in the war, yet the role of junior officers lacks a thorough analysis. Three accounts of highly successful junior officers reveal that Joseph Treat was a promising and able young officer, whose previous promotion to Captain was the best proof of his courage and capacity. This lack of scholarly emphasis on company-level leadership is disheartening because of officers like Josiah Snelling, who started the war as a Captain but finished as a Colonel, and Thomas Sidney Jesup, who began the conflict as a Lieutenant and finished as a Lieutenant Colonel in Command of Regiment.⁴ Additionally, Captain Zachary Taylor distinguished himself as a Captain while in command of Fort

⁴ Thomas Sidney Jesup, *Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers*, Library of Congress. Josiah Snelling "The Journal of Josiah Snelling," *Minnesota Historical Society*, 1938.

Harrison, and began a career that led eventually to the White House.⁵ Snelling and Jesup became regimental commanders for similar reasons; Snelling emerged as the strongest captain in the Fourth Infantry Regiment during both Tippecanoe and the Battle of Brownstown. Leading the vanguard of the attack at Brownstown, or the village of Maguaga, Snelling was central to the only victory during William Hull's disastrous campaign that culminated in his surrender at Detroit.⁶ After being captured as a Lieutenant, Jesup gained the rank of Brigade Major. He was released from captivity without being exchanged and therefore could not serve as a combatant. As such he emerged as the chief logistician of William Henry Harrison's campaign in the Old Northwest. After taking command of his regiment at the Battle of Bridgewater/Lundy's Lane, the Army promoted Jesup to Lieutenant Colonel.⁷ Taylor, while not commanding a regiment during the war, led a small, isolated force of mostly ill soldiers against a large contingent of Shawnee tribesmen. Although he was so sick that he could not even remain awake for the entire siege of fewer than thirty-six hours, Taylor somehow managed to hold his fortification against several attacks.⁸ These three accounts of junior officers are the most extreme examples of Captains

⁵ Jack Bauer, Dorothy Bauer-Cornish, and Brainerd Dyer, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, Statesman of the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993). Letter From Captain Zachary Taylor to Governor William Henry Harrison, Fort Harrison 10 September 1812, in John Brannan (ed.) *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, during the late War with Great Britain in the years 1812, 13, 14 & 15: with some additional letters and documents elucidating that period*, (New York: Way & Gideon, 1823), 61-63. Hereafter, *Official Letters*.

⁶ Letter from Major General William Hull, to Secretary of War William Eustis From Detroit 13 August 1812, in Brannan (ed.) *Official Letters*, 37.

⁷ Jesup, "Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814," "Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, 11 of memoir and 193 in papers.

⁸ Letter from Taylor to Harrison, Fort Harrison 10 September 1812, in Brannan (ed.) *Official Letters of the Military*, 61.

gaining high status in the war. For most, being mentioned in dispatches was the highest measure of performance.

During the War of 1812, the U.S. Army granted two principal awards that officers could receive. The first was a Congressional Gold Medal, an award primarily reserved for the commanders of battlefield victories, but which at times was given to subordinate officers whose bravery led to a victory. The second award was the Brevet promotion for temporary rank during the conflict, which, during the War of 1812 when the Army was struggling to fill its ranks, often led to permanent promotions. Because there were only two formal means of promoting or awarding officers, junior officers typically could expect at best to be mentioned positively in the dispatches describing a battle. The most certain way to make it into dispatches was to die or become severely wounded, yet officers were also singled out for competence, bravery, or serving under fire while unfit for duty.⁹

Another less well-known path to gain a reputation in dispatches was in the manner that officers cared for soldiers. Typically, this resulted from empathy, but to some degree, these were novel public health policies. Although of a higher ranking than Snelling's Regimental Commander, James Miller singled himself out by the care of his soldier's blisters during the march from New England to Ohio.¹⁰ While there is little evidence of Snelling positively influencing soldier health during the war, his journal of command at Fort Snelling illustrated how the growth of healthy crops

⁹ Officers in branches like Artillery and Engineering were typically the ones singled out for praise of their competency while Infantry and Cavalry officers received praise for moral firmness.

¹⁰ Adam Walker, *A Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U. S. Infantry in the Michigan and Indiana Territories Under the Command of Col. John P. Boyd and Lt. Col. James Miller, During the Years 1811 & 12* (Keene, N.H.: Printed at the Sentinel press by the author, 1816), 7.

outweighed the benefits of drills and maneuvers.¹¹ Similarly, Jesup distinguished himself at Fort Harrison by paying for clothing for recaptured prisoners from his own income.¹² The junior officers in Treat's regiment were particularly effective at adapting to the environmental challenges and reducing casualties. Treat and his officer contemporaries, such as James Miller, Josiah Snelling, and Thomas Sidney Jesup, excelled at managing soldier health.

Campaigning in Canada was not possible for much of the winter, so the fighting season occurred when logistics became more difficult, and illness was more problematic. Wagons were impossible on muddy roads, so supplies were transported via the soldier's load, the use of packhorses, and by subsisting off the countryside.¹³ While most of the historiographical research on malaria has been focused on southern climates, in the north winter forced armies to fight during the most virulent seasons.¹⁴ The regulars, who were the most disciplined soldiers on campaign, suffered higher rates of communicable camp-based sicknesses because regular regiments recruited soldiers from more diverse locations than militia units drawn from specific communities.¹⁵ As a result, regular soldiers suffered illness and were often unfit for

¹¹ Snelling, "The Journal of Josiah Snelling."

¹² Letter from Jesup to Harrison Fort Harrison 20 May 1813, Thomas Sidney Jesup Papers, 152.

¹³ See Neil Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier: Environment, Society, and Culture in the Trent Valley* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003).

¹⁴ J. R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean 1620-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Sylvia Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Era* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Andrew M. Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers: Malaria, Yellow Fever, and the Course of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

¹⁵ The best example of this occurs in Joseph Treat's Order Book in the October-November time frame, there is an addition of soldiers without record on any new recruits. The militia would have been hardened by fighting at Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, and Fort Erie and would make for the best new additions. Lemuel Bradford records that there was an influx of twenty-seven recruits but gained sixty-two new soldiers on 9 October 1814. In the Fall under siege operations the 21st strengthened itself from local militia. See The Company Order Books of Lemuel Bradford and Joseph Treat, Records of Units,

duty within weeks of joining their regiment. No early modern publisher would produce a memoir of a soldier who took ill after his first forced march, or during his first weeks in a military camp, which accounts for the scarcity for accounts and makes company-level muster records so crucial for an accurate understanding what the war was like for soldiers and junior officers.

The 21st Infantry Regiment fought in every battle in the Buffalo-based Niagara campaign of the War of 1812. Joseph Treat started as a lieutenant in his regiment and moved up to the rank of Captain before the 1814 campaign. Treat was promoted and singled out for praise by his commanding officer for his service at the Battle of Chrysler's Farm.¹⁶ While Treat was not an officer of the acclaim of Thomas Jesup or Josiah Snelling, promotion in the US Army was typically an award for bravery. An exploration of Treat's court-martial reveals that his soldiers and non-commissioned officers supported their leader. Even with the wellspring of information available concerning Joseph Treat, he does not appear in written records before he assumed command of his company. His leadership only technically covered the Battle of Chippewa because he was formally in command; he was held as a prisoner of Jacob Brown after the battle. Treat's order book described the day-to-day experiences of the company in great detail. Unfortunately for Treat, his years of quiet unrecorded professionalism have next to no explanation, yet his worst day as a commander has been meticulously preserved. His order book and self-defensive

Infantry, 1789-1815 21st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁶ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel T. Upham to Joseph Treat from Portsmouth New Hampshire, 25 August 1815, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat, Late of the Twenty-First Regiment United States Infantry, Against the Atrocious Calumny Comprehended in Major General Brown's Official Report of the Battle of Chippeway* (Philadelphia: Printed by Author, 1815), 60.

manuscript do, however, provide extraordinary evidence into day-to-day operations and the struggle against the environment to keep soldiers healthy and in the ranks. They also illuminate the role that small-scale skirmishes played on the outcome of the War of 1812.

New Englanders Suffering in Republican Conflict

First, it is essential to illustrate that New Englanders served in the regular units of the U.S. Army more than southerners. The U.S. National Archives holds an extensive collection of War of 1812 era muster records, and these sources reveal the dominance of New England-based soldiers in the Army's rolls.¹⁷ The prevalence of New England accounts could be attributed to higher rates of literacy. Short serving junior officers may have been more literate in New England, and the work of J. C. A. Stagg has proven that the elites were not the principal group making up the officer corps.¹⁸ For example, the order book of Virginian Captain Byrd C. Williams has the least information found in company records. He merely had a clothing record that recorded deaths and discharges in margins.¹⁹ The shared record book for Captains John McRae and John Standard's company also has very few reports, and the Virginian accounts of junior officers are the sparsest records.²⁰

¹⁷ Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

¹⁸ J. C. A. Stagg, "United States Army Officers in the War of 1812: A Statistical and Behavioral Portrait." *The Journal of Military History* 76, no. 4 (2012): 1001-34.

¹⁹ Byrd C. Williams, Company order book for the Company of Captain Byrd C. Williams, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815 20th Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Entry 232.

²⁰ John McRae and John Standard, The Company order book for the Company of Captains John McRae and John Standard, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-

The scant records of Virginian junior officers stand in contrast to more extensive records kept by New England-based officers. Alan Taylor's recent Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Internal Enemy*, catalogues how British naval raids employed freed slaves to threaten Virginian plantations.²¹ These naval raids supported slave uprisings that threatened southern states, requiring a large contingent of southern regiments remitted to garrison duties. Southern-dominated Democratic-Republicans championed a war and believed the invasion of Canada would be a "Mere matter of marching," yet southern states could only field a few troops for service outside of the region.²²

New England opposition to the war did not preclude them from feats of heroism. A private dialogue about the performance of officers from Hillsborough, New Hampshire, is particularly revealing of the contribution of New England-based regular Army regiments. The following account, from a letter sent from Benjamin Price to Major John McNeil, illustrates the contradictions between campaigns principally fought by New Englanders and opposed politically by New Englanders. McNeil stated that "You were fortunate in having the command of the 11th Regt.—Capt. Crooked has dutifully upheld himself & also the brave Col. (James) Miller—

1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815 20th Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Entry 231.

²¹ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*. This also is a good example of the central paradox of American history argued by Edmund Morgan in *American Slavery, American Freedom*. Southern Republicans called for a war with Great Britain but were too busy subjugated chattel property. See Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975).

²² Henry Stephens Randall. *The Life of Thomas Jefferson*. Vol. 3, (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), 368. Gordon S Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2009).

you are all from the county of Hillsborough.”²³ During Treat’s detainment, New Englanders like John McNeil, James Miller, and Henry Leavenworth distinguished themselves at the Battle of Bridgewater/Lundy’s Lane. Treat suffered and was injured in service but was denied the honor of leading troops in his regiment’s most consequential victory, missing out on the laurels that would have justified his daily frustrating experiences as a New England army officer in the War of 1812.

Order books are often incomplete working documents prone to omissions, but the records of Treat’s fellow company commanders help paint a clearer picture of what his Maine-based company endured. The order books of the 21st Infantry Regiment are extremely telling documents. Like most U.S. military order books, they did not start actively measuring present for duty data through morning reports until 1814, but these practical documents reveal a great deal about the nature of the conflict. The number of illnesses is significantly higher than those of soldiers wounded in combat. Captains Lemuel Bradford, Morrill Marston, and Charles Proctor all had companies in the same regiment as Treat, and their records provide extensive data describing both the present for duty totals as well as the soldiers who were sick and absent. In their documents the sickness occurred after an action or battle, and after a period of low rations. In an aggregated list of one hundred and three deaths, seventy-four soldiers died of illnesses: nineteen “of fever,” sixteen “unknown,” two of “Consumption,” one of dysentery, and thirty-six unspecified (one of whom died in captivity), as well Private Stocy Thompson, who died of “insanity” on 5 October

²³ Letter from Benjamin Price to Major John McNeil from Hillsborough New Hampshire 11 August 1814, Bentham-McNeil Family Papers, Library of Congress, 22.

1813.²⁴ It is important to note briefly that Thompson's death occurred in conjunction with most of the fever deaths, and the fatiguing illnesses were sometimes hard to separate from psychoses. The 21st Infantry fought at Queenston Heights, Chrysler's Farm, Chippewa, Bridgewater, and the Siege at Fort Erie, yet lost twenty-nine soldiers to wounds.²⁵ Twenty-nine in the bloodiest battle of the war was less than half of the number of soldiers lost to illness. As a regiment fielded from Queenston Heights to Fort Erie, the 21st Regiment's battlefield deaths could have easily overtaken illness, making it especially tragic that men who had survived so much fighting died due to disease. For the duration of the conflict, the aggregate company records illustrate how the 21st Regiment lost the sum of a company's strength to deaths and had roughly seventy-two percent of those deaths attributed to sickness. The aggregate regimental losses of seventy-four soldiers to illness matched the number of privates present for duty, which numbered in the mid-thirties for each company. Bradford's company had the highest numbers of soldiers in the regiment, with sixty-one privates present for duty at their first engagement at Queenston; this was more significant than the sixty-two present for duty in the same company after

²⁴ Lemuel Bradford, Company Order Book for the Company of Lemuel Bradford 1812-1815, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815 21st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Entry 233, Vol 1, 113-14; Morrill Marston, Company Order Book for the Company of Morrill Marston 1813-1814, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815 21st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Entry 237, 59-60; Charles Proctor, Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815 21st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Entry 238, 58-60.

²⁵ Bradford, Company Order Book for the Company of Lemuel Bradford 1812-1815, Vol 1, 113-14. Marston, Company Order Book for the Company of Morrill Marston 1813-1814, Record Group 98, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, 59-60, Proctor, Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815.

the war ended in January 1815.²⁶ The environment claimed far more lives than the British coalition of regulars, Canadian militias, and Native American warriors.

Sickness also influenced the present for duty numbers by placing men in hospitals. Charles Proctor, another commander from Captain Treat's Regiment, had forty-one soldiers in hospitals during 1814, most of them in the fall when his present for duty numbers were in the twenties.²⁷ Seventeen hospitalizations occurred after a period of low rations. Soldiers joined for battlefield heroics but instead suffered death and disability due to low rations and high rates of sickness.²⁸ Lemuel Bradford recorded forty-eight soldiers in hospital, and though many of them occurred in October of 1814 when there were many documented cases of illness, there are no descriptions of why the soldiers were in the hospital.²⁹ However, this corresponded with high rains that hindered logistics and led to low rations. Mosquito-carried illnesses debilitated soldiers, but soldiers were incapacitated after weather hindered logistics. Of the forty-one dead listed in Proctor's book, only two were killed in action. The remaining thirty-nine deaths due to illness were far more extensive than his present for duty soldiers. Appropriately, Proctor's book includes one of the most significant quotations regarding the nature of war experienced by men in the 21st Regiment. More than a year before Jacob Brown's Command Major orders, he stated: "Our ranks must not be thinned in camp or Quarters the Gallant Soldiers must not

²⁶ Lemuel Bradford, *Company Order Book for the Company of Lemuel Bradford 1812-1815*, Vol 1, 126-27.

²⁷ Proctor, *Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815*, 90 (note that there are two pages numbered 90).

²⁸ Proctor, *Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815*, 73-74, 90.

²⁹ Bradford, *Company Order Book for the Company of Lemuel Bradford 1812-1815*, Vol 1, 117-18.

perish ingloriously in filth & wretchedness.”³⁰ No matter how the 21st Regiment demonstrated repeated gallantry on the battlefield, they suffered more from the harsh environment and lack of supplies.

Many soldiers incapacitated by illness were present with their companies, but unfit for duty. Of the previously listed causes of deaths, some have individual descriptions next to the soldiers’ muster data, stating that they died “on the march.” Charles Proctor recorded Privates John Lewis and Oliver Fletcher as having died “On the March” in an unknown location to describe two of his otherwise unspecified deaths.³¹ While some died, many soldiers were left at garrisons on the line of march. Lemuel Bradford listed Daniel Lane and Sylvester Ahord as both being left at Greenbush as one example of soldiers who could not march and were left at the safest possible location.³² The War of 1812 would bring the 21st Regiment many battlefield heroics, but that provided little solace to men left on the road to die or to be captured by the enemy. Joseph Treat’s company recorded twenty-five soldiers sick and present in July of 1814, nineteen of which occurred during the Battle of Bridgewater.³³ Only forty-five were listed as present for duty before the battle, which was close to half of the company’s force.³⁴ For example, Bradford had seventeen soldiers sick for much of September 1814 at Fort Erie, leaving him twenty-five to twenty-six privates

³⁰ Jacob Brown, General Orders, 23 January 1813, Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815. There are no page numbers in the section of Proctor's order book that recorded general orders.

³¹ Proctor, Company Order Book for the Company of Charles Proctor 1813-1815, 59-60.

³² Bradford, Company Order Book for the Company of Lemuel Bradford 1812-1815, Vol II, 3,5.

³³ Joseph Treat, “Absences Explained” July 1814, Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of Units, Infantry, 1789-1815 21st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C., Entry 239.

³⁴ Treat, “Monthly Report July 1814”, and “Muster Roll for July and August 1814,” Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815.

present for duty.³⁵ Although the U.S. forces prevailed through highly successful attacks against the British powder magazine, Major Thomas Sidney Jesup – himself wounded with his arm in a sling – commanded the defense of the fort with the invalids and a small group of uninjured soldiers. The victory was achieved, under significant duress caused by high rates of sickness.³⁶ The sick served actively in defense of fortifications.

The records of the 21st Infantry indicate that the regiment with the most battlefield experience lost most of its soldiers to poor health and low supplies.³⁷ High turnover rates were the nature of the war fought by New Englanders and by the Mainers in Joseph Treat's company. The data from the other companies are useful because they provide a significant period before Treat's assumption of command in 1814. Captain Treat was in the regiment before his order books because the regimental commander testified to his service under fire at Chrysler's Farm.³⁸ His previous commander, Lieutenant-Colonel T. Upham, testified to his service "as an attentive and vigilant officer" after witnessing Treat's "gallant conduct at Chrysler's Field."³⁹ Based on the dates of his order book and Upham's character testimony, it is evident Treat had advanced in the ranks based on his service in the campaigns of 1813. Moreover, his order book provides ample evidence that he was well-liked by his company.

³⁵ Bradford, Company Order Book for the Company of Lemuel Bradford 1812-1815, Vol I, 126-7.

³⁶ Jesup, "Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814," 15.

³⁷ The 21st Regiment was matched only by the 4th Infantry (which shifted to the 5th Infantry after losing its colors after the surrender of Detroit), and it is unfortunate that the 5th regiment has fewer records than the 21st Regiment.

³⁸ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Upham to Joseph Treat from Portsmouth New Hampshire, 25 August 1815, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 60.

³⁹ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel Upham to Joseph Treat from Portsmouth New Hampshire, 25 August 1815, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 60.

An Exceptional Document

Treat's order book is among the most detailed among the War of 1812 documents in the National Archives. His attentiveness to details relating to how many of his soldiers were present and how many absent because of sickness occur are unmatched in other documents.⁴⁰ Most records also have one master muster roll for the entire company for the duration of the command, but Treat updated his book periodically with new waves of enlistments, transfers, and losses.⁴¹ It is fortunate for Maine history that the company in the regular army composed most significantly of men from Maine had the most meticulous officer, and it is even more fortunate for historians that Treat was subject to such a significant controversy.⁴² These nuanced differences may seem like small matters, but it meant that the information available from Treat's company provided greater details about the lives of soldiers.

Company order books tend to be incredibly monotonous and practical sources. They primarily chronicle enlistment records, daily and monthly reports on soldiers present for duty, clothing records, and returns on provisions. They also include lists of deaths, soldiers absent at hospitals, and troops on furlough. It is challenging to determine the signal through the noise of all the data present in such working

⁴⁰ Treat, Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol I and II.

⁴¹ Treat, Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol I and II.

⁴² His meticulous and matter of fact document during a time of controversy and change during the War of 1812 bears resemblance to the journal of Martha Ballard. Maine is fortunate to have both documents to enrich our sense of life in the early American Republic. See Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

documents. However, one section reveals a difference in Treat's leadership philosophy. Three furloughs were unique when compared to the wider U.S. Army.

Of the three leaves that stand out, two involved Mainers. These records consist of two soldiers recovering from injuries and another permanently disabled and at home while drawing his pay for the duration of his enlistment due to a major wound. Corporal Othaniel Cross lost an arm and he receive his pay while Furloughed ay home in Portsmouth from 14 July 1814 to 13 June 1817. Cross's pension records placed him in Massachusetts from 1843 to 1863.⁴³ It was rare for enlisted soldiers to survive amputations, but officers typically experienced better outcomes. Othaniel received immediate support from his unit that continued to the second half of the nineteenth century. Normally soldiers in his position would be discharged with a recommended pension, but in Treat's company Cross received his pay for the duration of his enlistment due to his sacrifice at York. Major General Jacob Brown approved the furlough. Treat also furloughed two other soldiers to Bangor. Joseph Kasey and Stephen Parmiten were both "unfit for duty" and allowed leave in Bangor and rejoined their company in June 1814.⁴⁴ Both soldiers were unfit without reference to a wound, which universally meant illness, and both soldiers returned to duty after convalescing at home. Officers were typically allowed the privilege of convalescing at home, but U.S. court-martial records overflow with cases of soldiers charged with desertions because they sought care from their families after commanders denied

⁴³ Treat, Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol I, 61-2, Othaniel Cross, Ledgers of Payments, 1818-1872, to U.S. Pensioners Under Acts of 1818 Through 1858 From Records of the Office of the Third Auditor of the Treasury, 1818-1872 (National Archives Microfilm Publication T718, 23 rolls); Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217; National Archives, Washington, D.C. accessed from Ancestry.com. *U.S. Pensioners, 1818-1872* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2007.

⁴⁴ Treat, Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol I, 61-62.

them furloughs.⁴⁵ Close attention to data in two meticulous books reveals how exceptional Treat was compared with other American company commanders. The policy was astute, because units fighting in Upper Canada rarely had adequate medical stores and provisions. Transporting soldiers home to convalesce with their families and trusted caregivers thus freed up resources that were always in short supply.

Treat understood that soldiers healed better at home, and his soldiers stayed fit while he was in command. Having served while ill and lame after falling off a horse was a critical feature of Joseph Treat's defense at his court-martial, as well as a source of his bitterness at not having shared in the glories of his regiment and company. He shared the day-to-day drudgery, inadequate rations, and illness, but was denied the laurels of battles at Bridgewater and Fort Erie. Even after being relieved at Chippewa, he carried a musket as a private until his Regimental commander gave him a platoon to command. Suffering on campaign created the most significant loss and had the most profound effect on the soldiers, but battlefield glory was what they sought to remember and record. Treat's line of reasoning was that he had suffered the drudgery. He had marched into Upper Canada despite a doctor ruling that he was unfit for the march, and he deserved to command his company in battle. Battles were a terrible reward for serving in an environment that was even more horrible and

⁴⁵ Court Martial of Jonas Watherbee, William Sage, Markus Remmee, Nathan Stone, Case File A-17, and Court Martial of Jacob Coons, and James Hyatt, case File R-80, Court Martial Proceedings, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. Two court proceeding representative examples were in Boston and Brooklyn Heights. One example of furloughs for "Benefit of Health" involved Lieutenant Claiborne B. Batts and Captain Eli B. Clemson (Oct 1810-May 19, 1811). See Eli B. Clemson, and John Symmes, Company order book For the Company of Capts. John Symmes and Eli B. Clemson 1812-1814, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, Records of the United States Army Commands, 1784-1821, 1814-1815, Records of units, Infantry, 1789-1815 1st Infantry Regiment, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

challenging than the enemy. Other accounts on both sides of the conflict illustrate how serving wounded or ill was a great honor.⁴⁶ Officers, who more often convalesced at home with family on furloughs, were considered a class by themselves when serving ill, injured, or lame.

By all accounts, Captain Treat was lame and sick due to a fall from a horse, yet he chose to lead his company in its movement into Upper Canada. At Treat's court-martial, Dr. Everett, the surgeon of the 21st Infantry, testified that in June Treat was "thrown from his horse." According to Everett, Captain Treat was "bruised in several places, especially on his leg: I attended him, and recollect that he was very lame, and had a tumor on his leg, which unfitted him for duty."⁴⁷ Still, Treat chose to lead his men "against the advice of Dr. Allen and myself."⁴⁸ Treat's tumor, which was most likely an infection, illustrated how injuries often turned into illnesses that incapacitated soldiers for extended periods.

What was unique about Treat's lameness was how it affected Major General Jacob Brown's criticism of him. An undetected force of light infantry attacked Treat's command of the pickets around Brown's army.⁴⁹ In the process of linking up pickets with the larger camp, Treat's hodgepodge of troops came under fire.⁵⁰ In a mixed unit

⁴⁶ Solomon Van Rensselaer, *A Narrative of the Affair of Queenstown: In the War of 1812*. (New York: Leavitt, Lord & Co: 183, 23, and 9 in Appendix. Letter from General Alexander Smythe to a committee of patriotic citizens of New York from a Camp Near Buffalo 3 December 1812, in John Brannam (ed.), *Official Letters of Military*, 104. These sources and events will be described more thoroughly later in the chapter.

⁴⁷ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 45.

⁴⁸ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 45.

⁴⁹ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 19-20, 25, 30, 35, 38, 41.

⁵⁰ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 19-20, 25, 30, 35, 38, 41.

made up principally of new recruits, many of his troops fled in fear. Treat tried to rally his soldiers who had returned to camp, recover the casualties, and pursue the enemy.⁵¹ However, Brown relieved Treat instantly for cowardice, but all the officers present testified to Treat coming into camp to allow an artillery battery attack the enemy.⁵² Captain Treat was calm and collected but lame and unimpressive looking. Brown relieved him for his actions while ill during a small-scale light infantry skirmish, thereby denying him the battlefield honors he sought despite his wounds and illness.

Defense of Honor and Denied Glory

The testimony also clearly indicates that although Treat was decisive and calm under fire, due to his lameness he did not always look the part of an officer. Officers and non-commissioned officers supported Treat as being “cool and collected under fire,” with Corporals Gale and Barton, as well as Sergeant Holt, Captain Gilbert, and Major Biddle all testifying to his disciplined demeanor.⁵³ No one offered testimony against him. The ugly skirmish that yielded no victor deprived him of his honor of leading men in the battles that would follow. Brown’s sacking of a cool-headed leader was an exceptional event on both sides of the conflict.

⁵¹ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 19-20, 25-27, 29-31, 35-6, 38, 41.

⁵² Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 39 and 41. Letter from Major General Brown to Secretary of War John Armstrong from Chippewa Plains, July 7th 1814, In Brannan (ed.) *Official Letters of the Military*, 363.

⁵³ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 21, 32, 37, 40, 42.

In most cases, officers who served under fire were singled out for praise in dispatches rather than censured and arrested. An excellent example of how the British valued officers serving while unfit comes in the description of Captain Jenkins, the commander of a company in the Glengarry light infantry. Captain Jenkins “Fixed Bayonets & pushed forward, but had not proceeded many paces when his left arm (which he had since lost) was smashed to pieces with a grape shot.”⁵⁴ Afterwards his right arm was “severely lacerated by canister, but he still ran on cheering his men to attack till his arms dangling useless before him.”⁵⁵ In the same letter, Lieutenant Colonel MacDonell provided comparable praise for Ensign Lowrie, who “had left his sick bed to join his company.”⁵⁶ In a November 1812 naval battle, a Captain Jacob James commended a Lieutenant Claxton who was too ill to command his division, but who “remained upon the deck and showed by his composed manner” with resolution despite being ill. Claxton’s illness eventually cost him his life, but not his honor.⁵⁷ Officers were symbols more than fighters, and Captain Treat performed exactly as he should have to inspire his soldiers. Treat’s performance in a bad situation explains why he “volunteered and went with his company and carried his musket,” serving as a private in the following battle to maintain further the honorable conduct of leaving

⁵⁴ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel George MacDonnell to Harvey Prescott At Kingston February 25th, 1813, In Charles Henry Wood (ed.), *Select British Documents of the War of 1812*, Volume II (Toronto: Lake Champlain Society 1922), 22.

⁵⁵ Letter from MacDonnell to Prescott At Kingston February 25th, 1813 In Wood (ed.), *Select British Documents of the War of 1812*, 22.

⁵⁶ Letter from MacDonnell to Harvey Prescott At Kingston February 25th, 1813 In Wood (ed.), *Select British Documents of the War of 1812*, 23.

⁵⁷ Captain Jacob Jones to Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton from New York 24 November 1812, in Brannan (ed.) *Official Letters of the Military*, 93.

his sick bed to command his company.⁵⁸ His service while ill also explains why his non-commissioned officers supported him during his court-martial.

The testimony of non-commissioned officers could never overturn the charges of a Major General in the regular army, so their testimony was less useful for Treat's defense than that of officers. But their testimonies do offer insights into how soldiers perceived their commanders. From his regiment, Corporals Gale, Fellows, and Barton, as well as Sergeant Holt, all testified to the capability and character of their commander.⁵⁹ The court-martial ended after the testimony of two officers, so their testimony solved little; nonetheless, it provides a rare glimpse into the point of view of Maine soldiers. Corporal Gale's testimony was that the attack on the "piquets" (sic) was very disoriented, and they were not sure who was firing at them in "very tall grass."⁶⁰ Treat had to muster all his energy to rally the men and maneuver his platoon back to camp to prevent fratricide. Gale also observed that "a significant part of the guard were new recruits," who cowered and fled to the nearest American position despite Treat's orders.⁶¹ Constantly fighting with raw recruits was the nature of the conflict on a distant frontier, where the most experienced infantry regiment in the Niagara Campaign was crippled by illness and essentially became a force of unseasoned and inexperienced recruits. Still, Gales observed how Major General Brown expected Treat to maneuver his troops as on parade and "march his guard to

⁵⁸ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 44-45.

⁵⁹ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 21, 32, 37, 40, 42.

⁶⁰ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 20.

⁶¹ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 20.

where he had been fired upon,” as if his movement to prevent fratricide in an irregular skirmish was cowardice in the face of the enemy rather than a textbook battlefield maneuver. By being present despite being lamed by an injury and sickness, Treat provided inspiration to his green troops. But that did not match Brown’s perception of the effective appearance of leadership.⁶²

Perhaps the best example of Treat’s stellar leadership came after his arrest and removal. His experiences demonstrated that combat and campaign experience was problematic because sickness tended to deny experienced regiments the service of their veteran soldiers. In Joseph Treat’s company, illness caused more casualties than the Battle of Bridgewater. At a time when the company’s ranks swelled with twenty-seven newly recruited privates, thirty-one soldiers would be fit for the maneuvers in Upper Canada.⁶³ On the monthly report, forty soldiers were listed as sick or absent, twenty-nine of which were related to the Battle of Bridgewater.⁶⁴ On 11 July the company, swelled by recruits, had seventy-nine privates present for duty; after the battle it had only forty-eight.⁶⁵ By August, Captain Treat’s company was platoon-

⁶² The best example of Major General Brown’s classic military bias involves his favoring the leadership of Winfield Scott over James Miller. James Miller won more gold Medals than any other U.S. Army officer, yet Brown’s praise of him was always brief and muted, the key example being when it took nearly a month for Brown to recognize that Miller led the attack that freed the Northern Army from a siege at Fort Erie. Miller had unquestioned valor, but his reputation had been made in the Detroit and Ohio frontiers, and he was far less “spit and polished” than Scott. He looked less presentable and was often unfit due to illness, but there was no better office in a bayonet charge. See Letter from Major General Jacob Brown to James Monroe from Fort Erie 1 December 1814, Jacob Brown Papers, Library of Congress, 214.

⁶³ Treat, “Morning Reports July 1814,” “Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol II.

⁶⁴ Treat, “Monthly Return July 1814,” “Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol II.

⁶⁵ Treat, “Morning Reports July 1814,” “Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol II.

sized (less than forty), despite having ninety-eight soldiers on the roster.⁶⁶ The company only lost four killed in action and eight to wounds received at the battle, yet the force lost half of its effectiveness due to illnesses.⁶⁷ The 21st Infantry Regiment fought in nearly every battle of the war, but the men that could hold rifles were almost always recruits. By the time Brown relieved the company of a seasoned and respect officer, it had been badly crippled by sickness.

Treat, on the other hand, felt like his denial of leadership at Bridgewater was the forfeiture of the honor he gained through suffering the greater hardships of campaigning on a distant frontier. Jacob Brown's detainment of Treat removed him from his regiment after two years of failed campaigns, and therefore deprived "him of all the scenes of glory which awaited his comrades in arms."⁶⁸ Treat had suffered the worst that illness, denial of supplies, and a harsh climate could throw at him, and he believed he deserved to have the opportunity to fight at Bridgewater and the siege of Fort Erie. As Treat stated, "I repeat sir, if after these multiplied privations, indignities, and wrongs." He was most upset that he could not return to command his company; he firmly believed that he had earned a chance to lead in battle.⁶⁹ The day-to-day sufferings on the campaign entitled him to his regiment's greatest honors, and the only privations he described were his denial of the same.

The irregular nature of the small skirmish preceding the battle of Chippewa also made Treat's removal from command so upsetting. Skirmishing claimed as many

⁶⁶ Treat, "Morning Reports August 1814," "Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol II.

⁶⁷ Treat, "Muster Roll for July and August 1814," "Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol II. Eight soldiers were listed as killed in action, with only four linked to the Bridgewater campaign.

⁶⁸ Letter from Treat to President James Madison (undated) in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 6.

⁶⁹ Letter from Treat to Madison, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 6.

lives from the company in July and August of 1814 as did the Battle of Bridgewater, and smaller actions represented a significant portion of those killed and wounded.⁷⁰ However, skirmishing was seldom described in detail in the reports of officers, and the points of view of soldiers were rarely recorded as it was at Treat's court-martial. The non-commissioned officers that testified on Treat's behalf described an unwinnable clash that created fratricide, and how Treat's quick retreat prevented further unnecessary loss of life. Because of Brown's firing of Treat, other officers also described the light infantry battle that occurred before the Battle of Chippewa. Thomas Sidney Jesup described how Major General Phineas Riall used light infantry and the support of Native Americans. On the Fourth of July, Jesup described how "Riall's light troops were discovered in our neighborhood."⁷¹ Riall would use his light force to support "a body of militia and indians (sic) in the woods."⁷² The light infantry ambush occurred from concealed positions that made their approach nearly impossible to detect. This ugly and impossible skirmish negated Treat's laudable service in previous battles and prevented his participation in his company and regiment's greatest successes.

Corporals Gale, Fellows, and Barton, and Sergeant Holt all testified to the capability and character of their commander, but they also thoroughly described a pre-battle skirmish.⁷³ Small-scale clashes were plentiful in the War of 1812. Corporal

⁷⁰ Treat, "Muster Roll for July and August 1814" "Company Order Book for the Company of Captain Joseph Treat 1814-1815, Vol II.

⁷¹ Jesup, Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814, page 186 in overall papers, and page 3 of the memoir.

⁷² Jesup, Memoir of the Campaign on the Niagara Spring 1814, page 187 in overall papers, and page 4 of the memoir.

⁷³ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 21, 32, 37, 40, 42.

Gale explained how Treat took control of a highly disorganized “picquet” (sic) in the dark of night with little help from the staff officer who ordered him there.⁷⁴ Gale stated that “Treat asked the officer of the watch, Major Orne who gave him charge of the piquet to go with him and show him where to station it. He told Capt. Treat it was no use to go; he could find it as well as himself.”⁷⁵ On the march to Chippewa Treat became more ill, his injuries more bothersome. He desperately needed a restful night, but the officer of the watch ignored his unfitness. Corporal Gale made it clear that “When capt. Treat was on the picquet, he complained and seemed very lame.”⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Treat struggled to accomplish his assignment, despite inadequate guidance and his infirmity. Gale described the general confusion: “It being dark, it was some time before captain Treat could find the sentinels of the picquet (sic). He placed his sentinels, but they would not reach to the other picquet (sic) which he had not found.”⁷⁷ Treat stumbled in the darkness because the former officer in command of the watch performed an inadequate relief. Thus, it is no surprise that when Captain Treat’s force was fired on in the morning, it was impossible to determine whether friend or foe attacked him. A prompt court of inquiry would have acquitted him with enough alacrity for Treat to have served the remainder of the campaign, but he was denied that honor without cause.

⁷⁴ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 19.

⁷⁵ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 19.

⁷⁶ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 20-1. Corporal Fellows identified the officer of the watch as Major Orne from Brown’s staff on page 25.

⁷⁷ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 19.

Corporal Gale further articulated that the skirmish was a great surprise that shocked the untrained recruits. When asked about the number of casualties, Gale stated that there were “three; one of which was accidentally by a bayonet in his leg.”⁷⁸ Gale was not the only soldier to testify to the utter confusion of the battle. He described the chaos as follows: “I thought as well as others, that it was the piquet firing on us.”⁷⁹ All of the soldiers testified to tall grass concealing the enemy and being close to the larger fortification, and a link-up with friendly forces is one of the most difficult of maneuvers to achieve under fire.⁸⁰ Being so close to the American position and a U.S. battery, it was clear to most of the soldiers that there was a significant risk of the fort mistaking them for the enemy. Many of the newer recruits fled directly to an artillery battery that was located close to the planned assembly point for the patrol, and according to Corporal Fellows, “upon that, captain Treat spoke out pretty loudly, to halt and form, several times.”⁸¹ In the chaos of concealed fire – during which it was impossible to determine whether it came from friend or foe – and being so close to a base, the unit broke in different directions in confusion. The wounded soldiers were left behind. However, this circumstantially chaotic skirmish occurred within in the direct view of Major General Jacob Brown, who discovered at the same time Captain Treat did that he had men left behind. Despite the regiment’s extensive combat experience, high rates of illness had left the company with

⁷⁸ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 21.

⁷⁹ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 20.

⁸⁰ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 20, 30, 35. Corporal Fellows uses woods to describe the concealment of the enemy on page 26.

⁸¹ Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett’s Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 26.

untrained soldiers who reacted poorly to the more difficult patrol tasks of asymmetric warfare.

Most of the war that Treat and his Maine Company experienced did not mirror the glories of a pitched battlefield. They died mostly of illness or ambushes, and in skirmishes that would never materialize into battle streamers on their regimental colors. Even battles like Bridgewater put more men on the sick list than were wounded or killed by wounds. Treat, having suffered illness and injury that made him officially unfit for duty, then survived an ugly, chaotic, and fratricidal skirmish. Everyone who testified at the court-martial noted that Treat had remained cool and in command.⁸² The losses and sufferings of the War of 1812 were driven principally by material forces, including the environment, inadequate supplies, sickness, and irregular tactics, but the men's combat motivations were still primarily those of ideology and a search for honor and glory. Treat and his company had suffered from the ugly realities of war, and therefore they deserved the battlefield glories that the regiment received in his absence. Treat's service in the battle after his relief is emblematic of a leader who inspired his soldiers, but it also indicated a man who believed he deserved combat in pitched battles after suffering the privations of years of campaigning on a distant frontier. His regiment believed in him because, in Treat's own words, he "Volunteered my services with a Musket; and on the movement of the regiment of the flank of the enemy, such was the confidence was placed in me by Major Vose, who was then the commanding officer of the regiment, that he required

⁸² Proceedings of a General Court Martial Held at Sackett's Harbor in held in the state of New York, in Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 21, 32, 37, 40, 42, 49.

me to lead a platoon.”⁸³ The soldiers in his regiment understood what they suffered and how battlefield service was a major motivation, and would not let one contentious skirmish deny Treat service under fire. That changed when Major General Brown detained him. Treat’s soldiers persevered significantly better when he was in command because he was an officer who did all he could to influence their health in a positive fashion.

Conclusion

Most of the studies of illness and warfare in North American have focused on the southern regions and climates where the time periods for the transmission of malaria and yellow fever were longer, or on more well-documented cases of smallpox.⁸⁴ This study of one company comprised of Maine-based soldiers illustrates how illness was a fundamental force in the campaigns in Canada during the War of 1812. When soldiers from what would become Maine volunteered to serve in a northern climate, they were exposing themselves to a much worse environment for illness. The harsh winters in the north meant that the campaigns would occur in the spring, and in the marshy glacial till of Upper Canada and Niagara.⁸⁵ Since the roads were muddy for most of the campaign, supplies by land were always unreliable – even when contracted quartermasters provided the services. Widespread sickness, mixed detachments that co-occupied garrisons, and the long winter meant that

⁸³ Treat, *The Vindication of Joseph Treat*, 13.

⁸⁴ McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*; Frey, *Water from the Rock*. Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire*; Elizabeth Fenn, *The Great Smallpox Epidemic 1775-82* (New York: Macmillan, 2002).

⁸⁵ Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier*, 3.

soldiers of different towns and cities shared communicable diseases in cramped tents.⁸⁶ The border region between the United States and what became Canada was an ideal environment for the spread of various illnesses that crippled soldiers and made it nearly impossible for regiments to retain experienced soldiers.

Still, officers prized and sought the glories only found on the battlefield. If anything, the privations, sickness, and exposure to a harsh climate solidified their motivation for battlefield exploits. The day-to-day experiences did not match their ideas of battlefield exaltation. A lack of support betrayed the soldiers of the Northern Army. When high casualties were reported, the description of the tragedy typically included language relating to how soldiers were lost to less noble means. They were denied battlefield glory by infirmity, or they survived great battles only to die of sickness. Combat motivation was rooted in an ideological drive towards honor, yet the biggest influences on each company's active soldiers were material factors such as the environment, illness, and availability of supplies. The Northern Army felt betrayed because New England smugglers supplied their enemies while they starved.⁸⁷ This generation of veterans became embittered because the harsh realities of the campaign prevented them from securing the glories of a complete triumph.

The men in Joseph Treat's Maine Company were from the best possible place to secure soldiers for a campaign in the frontier between Upper Canada and the

⁸⁶ Solomon Van Rensselaer, *A Narrative of the Affair of Queenstown: In the War of 1812* (Boston: Leavitt Crocker & Brewster, 1836), Appendix 9 and 23. Letter from General Alexander Smythe to a committee of patriotic citizens of New York from a Camp Near Buffalo 3 December 1812, in John Brannam (ed.), *Official Letters of Military*, 104. Rensselaer described all the fatiguing illnesses suffered while creating a road to Queenston Heights, while Smythe described the rise of "measles and other diseases" in winter encampments.

⁸⁷ Letter from Major General Izard to Secretary of War John Armstrong from a Camp near Plattsburg 31 July 1814, George Izard, *Official Correspondence with the War Department* (Philadelphia: Thomas and Dobson, 1816), 57.

United States. However, his company was an ever-changing entity with most of its veterans convalescing in the hospital and recruits filling the ranks. Treat's company fought in the bloodiest battles of the war, yet its losses to illness far outweighed battlefield casualties. Losses to skirmishes that would never draw the collective acclaim soldiers sought were as common as deaths on the battlefield. War was not what they believed it would be, but instead of the harsh realities changing their perspective on war, they clung to a desire to fight great battles. Soldiers of that generation were not resentful that war did not meet their expectations; instead their bitterness arose from the fact that they were not supported in such a manner for them to be able to fight more battles. The early nineteenth century was the era of Napoleon, constant illness, and few supplies, and ignoble death did little to supplant to the glories of battlefield courage. A close look at one Maine-based company illustrates that war, as it was experienced, was close to the harsh fatiguing unreality of the twentieth century, but this did very little to change the minds of its fighters. The ideological bias by historical actors was significant. However, this should not influence the work of scholars, nor turn their attention away from the significance of material factors on the outcome of the war. The fact that New Englanders fought in the Northern Army is a vital factor that needs to enrich and perhaps complicate the historiography of the War of 1812, and a study at the company level reveals the harsher realities of day-to-day experience despite the penchant of most accounts to elevate more formal battles. It also illustrates that although the environment claimed more lives than battle wounds, the policies of officers and the resilience of motivated soldiers could significantly influence the fit for duty rosters that were central to unit

effectiveness at the company level. Like the experiences of Joseph Treat's company in the 21st Infantry Regiment, an exploration of the Canadian-recruited 104th Regiment of Foot in the next chapter will offer important insights into the British Army's success and failings during the War of 1812.

CHAPTER 5

WASTED OPPORTUNITIES AND THE 104TH REGIMENT OF FOOT

*“Most of them have been brought up in the woods from infancy”*¹

The 104th Regiment of Foot, one of the most studied units of the War of 1812, was the only British regiment raised in North America. Like Joseph Treat’s company, much of the potential of the 104th was wasted by the institutional culture of its leaders. It benefits from the only national historiography that pays serious attention to the war. For the United States the war, save for one campaign, was embarrassing; for Great Britain, on the other hand, it was a sideshow in a broader conflict against Napoleon. The 41st Regiment of Foot was a regiment with far more significant service in combat, and yet its less ambitious war record illustrated critical problems with the British military. For much of the conflict, the 104th Regiment of Foot secured coastal garrisons, only to have its ranks replaced by invalids as the war progressed. Its arduous march into active campaigning is legendary, but it mirrored the experience of other regiments that moved into North America after fighting in Spain and the Mediterranean. The 41st Regiment of Foot, the most seasoned British infantry unit in the entire conflict, was forced to fight most of its key actions without adequate support. The largest units of British forces came in 1814 after daunting service in Spain and were employed at the same time as the 104th Regiment of Foot. In 1814 they served as separate detachments with various experience

¹ Letter from Major General Martin Hunter to T F Addison from Saint John New Brunswick 20 November 1811, in Regimental Order Book for 104th Regiment of Foot, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB), 31-32.

in light infantry duty until used as standard infantry at the siege of Fort Erie. Due to their garrison role for two years, most of the service of the 104th was less auspicious.

The 104th Regiment of Foot was formed from the New Brunswick Fencibles in 1811. Fencible units were like militia, however they were employable in broader conflicts. While militia served in their province, Fencible units could be deployed more broadly. The formation of the regiment in 1811 occurred before hostilities with America. However, at the outset there was a rush to purchase newly available commissions. When drilled, the soldiers in the regiment performed excellently. Yet the officers that purchased commissions were typically unfit for any meaningful duty in the frontiers where the War of 1812 was fought. Minus some minor detachments sent to the fighting, the 104th remained garrisoning in the Maritime Provinces until 1814. In that year the bulk of the British Army came to North America following their victories against Napoleon in Spain and Portugal, and the 104th's final employment comprised a small contingent of a larger group of reinforcement of the British Army in Upper Canada. The regiment performed well in light infantry *petite guerre*, flank company tactics, only after the U.S. Northern Army reforms led to consistent American victories in major battles. The 104th Regiment of Foot was relegated to a supporting role for most of the conflict, and only used in the latter stages of war when their impact and skill in North American warfare mattered the least.

The hardy British North American fighters were like their American enemies, skilled at light infantry maneuvers and poor at parade-style grenadier tactics. Being seasoned to the climate of North America was as essential as combat. Veterans are often described as combat experienced and or seasoned, but in North America the difference

between those two attributes illustrate the wasted potential of the 104th Regiment of Foot. A veteran was experienced in the combat of campaigns and battles, while a seasoned soldier was fit for the environment. One might assume that the combat veterans were also seasoned, but not necessarily for the unique North American environment. The units coming from Europe had more experience in combat but were unprepared for the climate. The 104th was better adapted to the environment, and being a seasoned unit was more central to success in the War of 1812. The impressive endurance of the 104th Regiment of Foot in the closing campaigns of the War of 1812 illustrated how their service in garrison for most of the conflict was a waste of resources. The best regiments to help understand the 104th Regiment were not other British Regiments of Foot, but rather the foreign regiments composed of Swiss and Spanish soldiers. The majority of the records of the 104th illustrate the humble role it played for most of the war.

The 104th Regiment of Foot's most extensive series of records predate their service in active combat. However, they provide insights into the composition of its forces. At its formation 104th Regiment of Foot was well soldiered but less than adequately commanded by long-serving officers who were unfit for an active campaign. A report on the Captains of the regiments recorded 1,000 soldiers, with officers who never even made it to their first parade. According to the regimental order book, some Captains were not fit mentally. One example follows: "Captain Christian is certainly deranged in his mind, and lame of one leg, he has not done any Duty since his appointment as Captain in 1803 except Recruiting and is not even fit for that Duty –

being incapable of keeping Accounts of his (word garbled).”² Service did not break all of the officers mentally. Christian’s fellow officers, Captains George von Gereau and Captain Halles, were either sixty or nearly sixty years of age and had typical infirmities from long service.³ The leaders were overall old and worn out from long service, and Maritime Canada was the farthest region from the fight. Perhaps the only young captain never even made it to the Regiment: “Captain Dennis never joined, reported by the Agent of the Regiment in a very bad state of health, and not likely to join for a very long time.”⁴ The soldiers of the Regiment, on the other hand, were probably the most capable British Force on the Continent for North American light infantry tactics. The Regiment was “drilled in the light infantry movements” and were “nearly perfect.”⁵ A war fought on the frontier of Upper Canada was particularly suited for the hardy backwoodsmen from the Maritime provinces. According to Major General Martin Hunter, “The men of the 104th in general are very good Marksmen, and most of them have been brought up in the woods from their infancy.”⁶ While the fight between the United States and the Shawnee Confederation was developing into the first campaign of the War of 1812, unfit officers led the best soldiers in the British regiment and they were relegated to garrison duty in the Maritime Provinces.

The Regiment’s records from before the more substantial British shift from war with Napoleon to war with America, are sparse and utilitarian. However, they are differentiated from other regimental histories because of their employment of

² Letter from Major General Martin Hunter to T F Addison from Saint John New Brunswick 20 November 1811, in Regimental Order Book for 104th Regiment of Foot, PANB, 25-26.

³ Letter from Hunter to Addison, 26.

⁴ Letter from Hunter to Addison, 26.

⁵ Letter from Hunter to Addison from Saint John 2 December 1811, 104th Order Book, 31.

⁶ Letter from Hunter to Addison, 31-32.

unconventional *petite guerre* tactics. Under constant strain and with heavy losses, most regiments fighting in the War of 1812 were promoting by ability and merit, albeit due to necessity because officers without purchased commissions struggled to stay in regiments after the war.⁷ The 104th Regiment of Foot's order book in the spring of 1813 included minimal reference to conflict, but it spent a great deal of time describing the specifics of the rates that lieutenants Petit and Rose paid for their commissions. Because this related to a transfer from the 103rd to 104th regiment, the conflict or misunderstanding was thoroughly recorded. These two officers overpaid for their Lieutenant commissions into the 104th, and paymaster of the 103rd advocated and secured their remuneration.⁸ Other regiments were actively fighting and were losing officers at a rate that was unsustainable, yet squabbling officers that purchased commissions commanded the regiment with the

⁷ Other regimental orders were promoting officers based on their performance in the War of 1812. The best example comes from the 103rd Regiment of Foot. After Captain Bowie was medically unfit for duty there is significant correspondence relating to selecting a replacement based on merit. Captain Logan Francis was initially promoted, but for an unspecified reason they sought another replacement. The 103rd Regiment of Foot described the promotion of a Captain Gardiner based on his performance under fire as late as 1815. Lieutenant Charleston would have been the ideal promotion to Captain in the 103rd, but he was killed in action. See Letter from Lieutenant Colonel William Smelt to Adjutant General's office 14 January 1814, and Letter from Smelt to Adjutant General from Quebec 1 April 1815, Regimental Order Book for 103rd Regiment of Foot, PANB, 9, 19-20. For the Second Battalion of the Kings Regiment, meritoriously recommended commissions predated the start of the War of 1812. In February 1811, Captain William Compton resigned from his commission. He stated that "I have not demanded, or accepted, neither will I demand or accept, directly or indirectly at any time or in any manner whatever, any gratuity for the said commission." Additionally, Major P. J. Robertson, the officer who took temporary command of Compton's company, begged leave "to recommend Ensign Ross as an officer in every respect qualified to succeed to the vacancy." See Letter from William Compton to George Prevost, Halifax 1 February 1811, Regimental Order Book for the Kings 8th Regiments, PANB, 7. Letter from P. J. Robertson to George Prevost, Halifax 1 February 1811, Regimental Order Book for the Kings 8th Regiment, PANB, 8. During the height of the 1812 fighting of the War of 1812, the 41st Regiment of Foot lost several of their junior lieutenants, so much so that they recommended promotion from the ranks. Their Sergeant's Major Dennis Fitzgerald had served well enough to be granted a commission for service in North America. The 41st Foot struggled significantly with the loss of leaders and abandoned the traditional purchase system for demonstrated combat effectiveness. See Letter from George Porter to Military Secretary Noah Freer, Detroit 26 November 1812, Regimental Order Book for the 41st Regiment of Foot, PANB, 91; and Letter from George Prevost to George Procter, Horse Guards 16 March 1813, Regimental Order Book for the 41st Regiment of Foot, PANB, 94.

⁸ Letter from Lieutenant Colonel William Scott to Robert Francis (103rd Regiment of Foot Paymaster), 20 March 104th Order Book, PANB, 50.

best fighters for North American backwoods conflict. Because the 104th was commanded by unfit officers, it could only send small detachments to the active fighting in Upper Canada.

Although the bulk of the regiment was serving in coastal garrisons in 1812, two flank companies fought in the active summer season of 1813. Major Moodin served as the commander of the detachment for the first actions, in and around Fort George. The 104th Regiment of Foot was formed from the New Brunswick Fencibles, which was a unit composed of volunteers capable of serving at the command of the British regular Army. In the early stages of the War of 1812, the 41st Regiment of Foot mostly fought alone, and it is ironic that as a Fencible or militia unit the soldiers of 104th could have supported the fighting. However, as a newly formed British regiment the bulk of the 104th remained in garrisons in the Maritime Provinces. The Fencibles followed a command structure that was much like American volunteer units. The United States Department of War, not state governors, commanded the volunteers. Similarly, the Fencibles were essentially militia units controlled by the British Army rather than provincial leaders.

Major Moodin's letters in the regimental order book contain no descriptions of named battles. He described his losses of soldiers to desertion and included memorials on behalf of wounded officers. His account testifies to their service in combat, that consisted of daily activities rather than a series of set-piece battles. Authors like John Grodzinski and Austin Squires have not focused on the formative years of the 104th Regiment of Foot that preceded their combat duty. However, the fact that the British regiment with the best soldiers for the North American environment was officered almost solely by invalids and given the lightest duty illustrates the problems the British faced in a broader conflict with

Napoleon. The 104th Regiment of Foot was not removed from its garrison duties until it was relieved by the 10th Royal Veterans Battalion, a unit that was officered principally by the leaders that previously led the 104th Regiment of Foot.

In its formative stage, the 104th was mostly led by aging men, many with over thirty years of service. The 41st Regiment of Foot served as the primary regiment in the conflict with soldiers recruited from Great Britain, and many soldiers with service in the West Indies carried the diseases that came with such service. The 41st slogged through every significant battle in 1812-13 and was reformed into a composite battalion through high rates of attrition, while some of the best backwoods fighters garrisoned the Maritimes.⁹ The 104th was relieved of its garrison duties after there were enough soldiers to create veterans battalions composed solely of invalids. John Grodzinski has recently argued that historians have focused too much on the 104th Regiment of Foot's arduous winter march to Upper Canada and have therefore ignored the regiment's combat acumen. Grodzinski praised the 104th role in flanking maneuvers during the 1814 campaign, based on an exemplary combat record. However, the fact that the regiment most skilled at light infantry at the outset of the war was left to garrison duty while another regiment suffered extreme losses illustrates a wasted opportunity and poor tactical leadership. The British Army wasted the talents of the 104th because of institutional insistence on purchased rather than earned commissioning; however, this would change as the conflict escalated. The 41st Regiment of Foot's initial victories at

⁹ Letter from Henry Procter to George Prevost from York, 20 October 1812 in, Regimental Order Book for 41st Regiment of Foot, PANB, 86-90. In this letter the 41st Foot describes the multiple posts such as Fort Erie, and George as well as the unlisted troops at Detroit. The 41st Foot was significantly overused, while a Regiment that was capable at light infantry warfare guarded garrisons hundreds of miles from the active front.

Detroit and Queenston Heights was followed by more flawed performances in support of Shawnee and Potawatomi allies who excelled at light infantry tactics.¹⁰ The 104th was the most suitable for such duty, and the soldiers of the 41st suffered significantly without local fighters who spent their whole lives in the North American backwoods.

The officers who immediately commanded the 104th in 1811 would lead the same coastal outposts in the 10th Royal Veterans Battalion in 1814. The formation of a new regiment would not court the best officers, because it was unlikely that the 104th Regiment of Foot would remain in existence at the end of the Napoleonic War, and a group of invalid officers prevented the participation of soldiers who were most prepared for a North American style warfare. A letter on 14 June 1814 described how Captain George von Gereau, who served as garrison commander at Halifax, had “done duty for more than nine years with that regiment,” and his long service and ailments placed him in the 10th Royal Veteran Battalion.¹¹ Captain George von Gereau’s memorial cataloged his ailments of long service; they also illustrated how the Regiment was manned initially by infirm officers who often continued to serve as leaders of the Maritime garrisons, only to later command fellow invalids. The 104th was therefore only able to send a full complement of soldiers until there were enough losses to illness, age, and injury to man the coastal garrisons.¹² Veterans Battalions were a great idea, but they were used to delay the employment of an extremely capable light infantry force – the 104th Regiment of

¹⁰ Sandy A. Antal, *Wampum Denied: Procter's War of 1812*. Carleton Library Series, 2nd ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).

¹¹ Captain George von Gereau to T F Addison from New North Barracks, Halifax 13 January 1814, Regimental Order Book 104th Regiment of Foot, Book II, PANB, 2.

¹² The garrisons themselves are vague in the records, there were clearly troops at centers like Fredericton, Halifax, and Charlottetown, but there is only one reference specifically describing the transition between Veterans and 104th Foot soldiers at Charlottetown.

Foot. Gereau, a German officer with service in Fencible regiments after he survived a wound in the American Revolution, appeared ideal for a new regiment. Gereau was highly experienced, even if he was not a prototypical British gentleman. However, after years of severe service he was only capable of garrison duties. The use of unfit officers to lead safe garrisons was wise, but it also kept the 104th out of the first years fighting. Long-serving officer like Gereau were excellent Veteran officers but kept the 104th Regiment of Foot in garrison when they could have done the most good in an active combat zone.

In the summer of 1813, the regiment sent individualized flank companies to the Niagara region. The detachment of flank companies served in the light infantry tasks, such as scouting, skirmishing in front of line units, and picket duties. In the indirect, isolated, and independent roles of flank companies, the early combat record noted the desertion of “fifteen men from the 104th Reg^t.”¹³ Flank duty was a particularly arduous duty, so it is no surprise that the previously untested detachments sent to the Niagara region did not initially fare well. The summer of 1813 was a particularly harsh period regarding rates of sickness. The regiment had recently lost eighteen soldiers and only forty-seven percent of soldiers were present for duty. By August only nineteen percent of men were present for duty.¹⁴ The regimental record indicates a small number of casualties and losses as a result of continuous operations rather than grand actions. A letter from Kingston on 24 November 1813 described the need to promote James McLaughlin to

¹³ Letter from Major W Moodin to Lieutenant General George Prevost, from 12 Mile Creek 7 July 1813, 104th Order Book, 56.

¹⁴ John Grodzinski, *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot in the War of 1812* (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane Editions, 2014), 152.

Ensign because Lieutenant Grave was killed in action at York.¹⁵ Like the majority of U.S. regiments drawn from New England, the Regiment sustained most of its losses because the fighting occurred during the inclement seasons in marshy Upper Canada, as well as slow attrition through small-scale skirmishes. McLaughlin's elevation came because he was the son of Captain McLaughlin and the regiment was manned primarily by family groups, often with boys serving in the ranks with their fathers.

The 104th's transitions from militia, to Fencibles, to British Regiment of Foot uncovered some unique characteristics – one of which was the extensive service of children. In February 1814, a return listed forty-four children serving in the Regiment in an active campaign at the fort at Three Rivers, and ten at Kingston.¹⁶ The ages ranged from ten to sixteen, but ten-year-olds were the largest contingent.¹⁷ At the age of ten, Antoine David already had six years and three months of service; he was three feet seven inches at his enlistment. Twenty-two ten-year-olds were listed in the regiment.¹⁸ Many were serving with family members, and the records listed one as a noncombatant clerk.¹⁹ Geoffrey Worth fought in the 104th with two brothers; one died of wounds and the other served at the Kingston detachment. John Worth was fifteen years old and Geoffrey was twelve, and an unnamed brother that was killed in action illustrates that children regularly served in combat.²⁰ The list itself indicates that there was a realization that the 104th Regiment of Foot had many soldiers that did not meet the British age requirement of

¹⁵ Letter from Major Moodin to Lieutenant General George Prevost, from Kingston 24 November 1813, 104th Order Book, 67.

¹⁶ "A Return of the Ages, Size, & Length of Service of the Boys & Lads of the 104th Regiment Stationed at Three Rivers 23rd February 1814," in 104th Order Book, 75.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

fifteen years of age.²¹ However, because serving in the Regiment was a local and family affair, British generals were “Satisfied that the 104th Regiment [was] authorized to enlist Boys at 10 years of age.”²² Fifty-four children serving in the Regiment was a larger contingent than most companies had in fit-for-duty soldiers; these child soldiers were ultimately accepted by British Commanders as a necessary. The fact that the 104th Regiment of Foot actively recruited ten-year-olds, only to serve in garrison duties for much of the conflict, illustrated a paradox. The British recognized the necessity of employing ten-year-olds in a locally formed regiment and made exceptions, yet they left the same regiment in garrison duties for most of the war.

Bringing all the males over the age of ten to combat in Upper Canada created significant family problems in New Brunswick. The regiment is famous for their rapid and grueling march from New Brunswick to Niagara, which was a supreme test of physical endurance. However, the rapid exit from the province created substantial difficulties for family members who were left behind. Major General Hunter wrote the Military secretary advocating for the families. According to Hunter, “I felt so much for the distress of the women, and the families of the other soldiers’ wives belonging to the 104th Regiment, who were left behind when the Corps marched to Canada that I deemed it my duty to represent their miserable situation.”²³ In March 1814, with a massive

²¹ Letter from Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston Secretary of War, to Major General Hunter from War office London 12 December 1814, in 104th Order Book, 78.

²² Letter from Captain (acting Major) Richard Leonard to Major General Thomas Saumarez from Kingston 28 February 1813, in 104th Order Book, 80.

²³ Letter from Major General Thomas Saumarez to Lieutenant Noah Greer (military secretary), from Fredericton 16 March 1814, in 104th order Book, 82. It is atypical for this dissertation to correct grammar, but the word soldiers happen at the end of a page and I have assumed the plural possessive soldiers’ was present but was not visible in the microfilm version. John Lynn has written the most noteworthy book on the role of women and warfare in this time period. See *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

reinforcement of British Regiments following the successful Peninsular campaign in Spain, simply feeding the families the available rations was a monumental challenge. Therefore, the Major General requested “permission to go and join their husbands in Canada...in that case, I beg to know if I may order them rations and passage.”²⁴ Soldiers in the 104th Regiment fought beside children and left families destitute because of their rapid movement to Upper Canada. The high rates of desertion are easier to understand in relation to wives who could not provide for children. Frustration among the troops, caused by being employed late in the conflict without warning, was widespread. The deployment of the 104th with the largest contingent of British forces in 1814 meant that providing rations to families was not a priority.

Child Soldiers and families left destitute were probably exceptional cases specific to the 104th Regiment of Foot in British North America. However, the necessity of fighting with twenty-two ten-year-olds was emblematic of the desperate nature of the fighting in North America. The marshy glacial till of Upper Canada took a severe toll on the health of soldiers. On 14 May Lieutenant Shaffalisky was medically discharged as “unfit for military duty...it is understood that he is not to be replaced.”²⁵ The 104th also lost the active service of Lieutenant C. D. Rankin to parental duties, following the death of his wife. Rankin simultaneously required a promotion to cover the loss of income generated by his wife.²⁶ Deceased loved ones at home could often take British officers

²⁴ Letter from Saumarez to Greer, 83. Lynn, John A. *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

²⁵ Letter from William Merry to Colonel Henry Torrens, from the War Office, London 14 May 1814, in 104th Order Book, 90.

²⁶ Lieutenant Rankin, “The Memorial of Lieutenant Rankin of the 104th Regiment,” in 104th Order Book, 106-10. Rankin would also lose time in British North America as a Captain because of the death of his mother. Letter from Major General Thomas Saumarez, to Captain T F Addison from Fredericton 18 June 1814, in 104th Order Book II, 8.

out of the theatre, and even out of North America. As with American units in 1812 and the Revolution, the adequate clothing of soldiers was a challenge. MacKinnon stated that “the men had one year’s clothing due, but that he heard they would be very badly off before the next year comes...the detachment had hardly a coat to wear.”²⁷ Poor clothing exposed soldiers to cold and made them more susceptible to insect-borne fevers, but also added to the mental burden of being exposed to the harsh environment. MacKinnon sought “out the method in which I was to proceed to furnish the men with a covering as the weather was extremely severe.”²⁸ Exposure to extreme weather without proper clothing would destroy the regiment’s ability to fight. According to MacKinnon, “I shall be happy if you have the goodness to direct the steps I am to follow to prevent the detach^t being totally unfit for service.”²⁹ Like the opposing American units, the 104th suffered from a poor supply of uniforms. Unfortunately, British leaders squandered one of its best regiments for two years, and when the 104th was finally deployed in force, poor supplies caused a dramatic loss of soldiers due to preventable illnesses.

As the conflict escalated, the 104th Regiment of Foot served in conventional military operations. In a rare incident in British accounts, the acting regimental Major R. Leonard singled out a non-commissioned officer for praise in leadership despite his injuries. In a letter that recommended Sergeant Richard Smith for an officer’s commission, Leonard stated that Smith was wounded five times yet did not succumb to his wounds in the face of the enemy. Leonard noted: “I have only to add that he received five wounds, three of which, he got in coming off, after the attack that completely failed,

²⁷ Letter from Lieutenant John MacKinnon to Captain T F Addison from Sydney Nova Scotia 12 May 1814, in 104th Order Book II, 7.

²⁸ Letter from MacKinnon to Addison, 8.

²⁹ Letter from MacKinnon to Addison, 8.

so determined was he not to fall into the hands of the enemy.”³⁰ Smith escaped captivity with three wounds. Major General Drummond testified to Smith’s intrepid service and verbally communicated the need to reward valor with promotion to officer rank. When used as line infantry soldiers the 104th Regiment of Foot performed well, but Fort Erie was the last battle of the war in the Northern theatre. The Regiment’s record in combat was impressive, but unlike New England regiments in the U.S. Army, the Maritime-based 104th was underemployed. To be uniquely capable of operating in the North American frontier, yet sidelined for much of the conflict, was demoralizing for the regiment. Their meritorious combat record late in the war speaks to their resolve.

Smith’s injuries would make it impossible for him to serve actively in the 104th, yet he did meet the requirements in the Veterans Battalion, due to “loss he has sustained by his determination and gallantry.”³¹ Smith was a perfect soldier for a Veterans Battalion because of his exemplary service in the ranks. Additionally, his gallantry caused his disabilities. Like other boys in the regiment, he joined the “New Brunswick Reg^t in June 1805 at the age of fourteen.”³² At the start of the war, Smith was a sergeant and was the colors sergeant during the 104th service in Upper Canada. His major actions occurred at Sackett’s Harbor and Fort Erie, but serving in the “right division” under Gordon Drummond meant that he would have been present for multiple smaller repeated skirmishes.³³ Smith was wounded three times at Fort Erie, and one caused the

³⁰ Letter from Major Richard Leonard to Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, from Kingston 17 November 1814, 104th Order Book II, 31.

³¹ Letter from Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond to Captain Noah Greer, from Kingston 19 November 1814, 104th Order Book II, 31.

³² Sergeant Richard Smith, “The Petition of Richard Smith Color Serg^t in the 104th Reg^t,” in 104th Order Book II, 33.

³³ Ibid.

“amputation of his right arm.”³⁴ The Veterans Battalion eventually replaced the 104th Regiment of Foot, and it was composed of invalids. A unit of disabled soldiers took over the garrison role in the Maritimes. Smith’s petition for a pension provided some of the best evidence for the 104th Foot’s misuse for most of the War of 1812; after five combat wounds and an amputation, Smith sought a transfer into a Veterans Battalion and a return to garrison duties. Smith could perform the tasks he did in the 104th for two years while being significantly disabled. The War 1812 was a conflict when the British Army needed to use their gallant amputees, yet military leadership kept a fit and capable light infantry garrisoned an area hundreds of miles away from the fight.

During the height of the fighting season in the summer of 1814, the bulk of the 104th remained in garrison until relieved by invalids. Edward Baynes ordered the regiment’s main body into the fight late in the conflict, along with reinforcements from the Spanish Campaign of the Napoleonic Wars. According to Baynes, “two Companies of the 10th R.V.B. (Royal Veteran Battalion) for the purpose of relieving the 104th Reg^t. at Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton.”³⁵ For most of the conflict, the second battalion of the 8th Regiment of Foot and the 41st Regiment of Foot – supplemented by militia units – fought the bulk of the actions. Most of the 1812 reinforcements were veterans of the Peninsular Campaign’s asymmetric fighting. However, despite their experience, they did not have a stellar record in the northern theatre of the conflict. The 1814 reinforcements were so large that they included two Swiss Regiments. The highly experienced Swiss regiments in the British Army recorded losses at the battles of Plattsburgh, Chippewa,

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Edward Baynes, General Orders, Montreal 21st of July 1814, William Wood (ed.), *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*, Vol III, Part 1, (Toronto: Champlain Historical Society, 1920), 25-26.

Lundy's Lane, and the Siege of Fort Erie. The environmental effects of the frontier limited to their ability to support larger contingents, but unlike the U.S. Army, the British excelled at logistics. However, veterans of warfare in Spain and the Mediterranean brought both experience and large numbers of invalids. Adjutants filled their records with officers who sailed to North America hoping to be fit for duty, only to be unable to serve actively. The British Army employed the 104th in 1814, when the British Army was at its largest, after two years of being outnumbered significantly. Arthur Wellesley's army embraced the use of terrain and light infantry tactics, so the British had an example of those dynamics that predated the charge of the light brigade.³⁶ But at the time a regiment formed on the periphery of the British empire was not taken as seriously as other military units, and its capability and fortitude in the North American climate and courage under fire was underappreciated by commanders.

The administrative processing of soldiers who were unfit for duty based on the previous service in Europe and the Mediterranean dominated the regimental records of units that arrived in British North America in 1814. The 103rd Regiment of Foot listed one soldier and one officer unfit based on their previous service. Private Charles Dimond suffered a debilitating rupture, which could run the gamut of ailments from an untreated and unhealed wound to an infection called cellulitis, which is common today in elite military units. Punishing labor, poor cleanliness, and calorie depletion make it a condition common among Ranger soldiers, but these conditions were universal in early modern conflict. The old soldier was no longer capable of contributing. In his memorial Charles

³⁶ Philip Haythornthwaite and Steve Noon, *British Napoleonic Infantry Tactics: 1792-1815* (New York: Osprey Pub., 2008).

Dimond said, “Your petitioner is on the verge of 50 years of age & from his rupture, which daily gets worse often confining him to bed for days together, he considers himself a burden on the service.”³⁷ When Dimond moved to a Veterans battalion, his rupture improved and only precluded all service to something, “which occasionally prevents his doing duty.”³⁸ The full articulation of Dimond’s condition was rare, but ruptures in long-serving soldiers occurred often, and the war’s low rations and poor sanitary conditions meant that soldiers had infections so severe that they caused open festering wounds. An aggressive regimen of antibiotics would be used to treat those kinds of wounds today. The 103rd Regiment of Foot struggled to retain and replace officers while carrying convalescents. Captain Bowie was “ordered lame” and “from the very weak state of his intellects, and the incapacity to fulfill ever the duties of his situation as Captⁿ in the Reg^t.”³⁹ Bowie was given orders at half pay in 1815 after the conflict was over and two capable officers commanded his company. Major William Smelt noted the following: “Captⁿ Gardiner who from having received five severe wounds on the morning of the 15th of Aug^t 1814.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, he observed that “Lieutenant Charleston would be the best replacement” but “was unfortunately killed on the morning of 15 Aug^t 1814.”⁴¹ This brief exploration of the sister 103rd Regiment of Foot illustrates how the employment of the 104th Regiment of Foot, regardless of its lack of formal combat experience as a British regiment, was badly needed. It might well have outperformed

³⁷ Charles Dimond, “Memorial of Charles Dimond to Lieutenant General George Prevost,” Regimental Order Book for the 103rd Regiment of Foot, PANB, 5.

³⁸ Letter from Doctor R H Armstrong to George Prevost from New Brunswick Hospital 11 October 1814, 103rd Order Book, 8.

³⁹ Letter from Major William Smelt to Captain Noah Freer, from Quebec 4 January 1815, and Letter from Smelt to Freer from Quebec 1 April 1815, 103rd Order Book, 9, 19.

⁴⁰ Letter from Smelt to Freer, from Quebec 1 April 1815, 103rd Order Book, 19.

⁴¹ Letter from Smelt to Freer, 20.

other regiments, yet it was consigned to a marginalized role. The best comparative regiments were therefore not the standard British Regiments. Instead, the regiments composed of foreigners offer the best comparative lens.

Two units that fought in the 1814 campaign alongside the 104th Regiment of Foot were Swiss regiments that were commissioned as supplements to the British Army. Many of the soldiers in the Swiss regiments were recruited in Switzerland, but guerillas serving beside Arthur Wellesley's command in Spain replenished their ranks. The Swiss Regiments, like the 104th, consisted of marginalized soldiers that were denied the best duties and honors. Its officers were often transferred to Regiments that remained active after the war. The Regiments of de Meuron and de Watteville served in garrison roles in the Mediterranean and at Gibraltar, much like the 104th Regiment of Foot's duty in the Maritime provinces. Like other 1814 reinforcement regiments, and unlike the 104th, the veterans of European conflict brought soldiers unfit for combat. Lieutenant Casper Brewer in de Meuron's Regiment was deemed unfit for service before going to North America, but he decided to travel in the hopes of recovering. He was never of any use to his regiment, and despite four years of wartime service, Brewer was deemed by Lieutenant de Meuron Boyan as "totally useless to it (his regiment), on account of ill health, and also in my opinion by want of sufficient zeal and acting for the good of the Regiment."⁴² Rather than praising his character for shipping out to an active war zone, British officers questioned Brewer's fortitude because he remained unfit for duty.⁴³ Brewer, like many of the foreign soldiers in the Swiss regiments, later settled in

⁴² Letter from Lieutenant de Meuron Boyan to Captain Noah Freer from St. John Nova Scotia, 5 October 1814, Order Book for the Regiment de Meuron, PANB, 39.

⁴³ Gaspard Brewer, "The Memorial of Gaspard Brew to the Duke of York," Regiment de Meuron Order Book, 97.

Drummondville, Upper Canada. These German, French, and Spanish soldiers struggled as foreigners in Upper Canada. When the British paid the Swiss with “Spanish Pillar Dollars that are distinguished from Spanish Dollars by not having pillars stamped on them, and consequently are refused the same value,” the foreignness of the Swiss Regiments was solidified.⁴⁴ The British cynically offloaded worthless script left over from Spanish Peninsular campaign to pay the multicultural soldiers of the Swiss Regiments, as if it was an acceptable currency on the distant Upper Canadian frontier.

The Regiment de Watteville was a similar force composed of Swiss soldiers, and their records are far more extensive than those found in De Meuron’s order books. Major General Louis Watteville described how his subordinate struggled to keep men in the ranks. Lieutenant Colonel Fisher was distressed by the situation “under which he [found] himself placed.”⁴⁵ Without much action in the conflict in North America, sickness crippled this veteran Swiss regiment. His distress was caused by “the reminiscing of sick men, as many will become entitled to their discharge for having complete their period of service.”⁴⁶ The tougher service on the remote frontier caused contention, and like the men in De Meuron’s force, the British did not treat them as equals. Local non-regular Fencibles were offered larger enlistment bonuses for shorter service. The British denied Swiss soldiers’ entrance into traditional British regiments because they were “Foreigners.”⁴⁷ Their duties, like those of the 104th, would be light infantry assaults on Oswego and defense of small outposts. Moreover, the Regiment de Watteville’s postwar

⁴⁴ Letter from Lieutenant de Meuron Boyan to Captain Noah Freer, from Montreal 13 November 1815, Regiment de Meuron Order Book, 61, 63.

⁴⁵ Letter from Major General Abraham Ludwig Karl von Watteville to Colonel Edward Baynes from Chateauguay 21 January 1812, in Order Book for the Regiment de Watteville, PANB, 24.

⁴⁶ Letter from de Watteville to Baynes, 24.

⁴⁷ Letter from de Watteville to Baynes, 25.

records indicate that officers, infirm from wounds, struggled to receive just compensation.

The Regiment de Watteville functioned like the 104th before 1814. Lieutenant Everett commanded a detachment of de Watteville's force while he retained a commission in the 10th Veterans Battalion.⁴⁸ Like Fisher, he described the problem of retention because the soldiers in the regiment went unpaid. The use of an invalid officer illustrates how the Regiment was also shifting its invalids into garrisons that faced little threat. The 104th guarded the Maritimes until replaced by invalids of the 10th Veterans Battalion. The regiment later saw service primarily in flank company duties and other light infantry tasks, such as attaching blockhouses and supply depots. Likewise, the Regiment de Watteville would suffer most of its losses while attacking Oswego. That raid that occurred in support of the siege of Fort Erie, and, like the 104th Regiment, De Watteville's Regiment served as light infantry supplements to the British Army.

Light infantry tactics were what decided the outcomes of 1814, yet they did not bring the same accolades and advancement. Ensign J. Harmon requested promotion because he took command of a more significant force as a result of the death of an officer in "which your Memorialist was employed."⁴⁹ Captain "Ledingington^{ingo}"... received a wound from a Musket Ball" and lost his finger.⁵⁰ Injuries illustrated the irregular nature of the fighting on both sides. Captain "~~meholer~~^{Mittelholzer}" also "received two Wounds on

⁴⁸ Letter from Lieutenant General John Sherbrooke to Captain Noah Freer, from Halifax 23 December 1813, Regiment de Watteville Order Book, 23.

⁴⁹ J. L. Short (Surgeon), "Proceedings of the Medical Board reassembled by order of James Macaulay," Regiment de Watteville Order Book, 141.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 143. It is interesting that Ledingingo's name was misspelled, because the Swiss Regiments struggled to keep soldiers in their ranks in Spain, and therefore they mustered local Spanish guerrillas into their ranks. Strikeout and superscript in the original.

by a Buck Shot in his left Arm, the other by Musket ball” in his “left side.”⁵¹ It is also important to note that Mittelholzer’s injury was made worse by the environment. In his memorial Mittelholzer states that “he occasionally feels the effects of the latter Wound, particularly in Change of Weather.”⁵² Buckshot was typically used in irregular warfare, and Mittelholzer’s injuries illustrate how soldiers in marginal units typically fought in *petite guerre* roles. Still the effects the environment influenced the wounds, and the battle for calories was waged against nature and the enemy. The officers of De Watteville’s Regiment served an army that could not even understand (and perhaps pronounce) their names. Yet De Watteville’s soldiers fought and were wounded, and their memorials of disability were hastily compressed in one form that failed to secure adequate pensions. The British Army needed the service of regiments that they felt were marginal, but that did not mean that those regiments enjoyed the same privileges and accolades.

John Grodzinski recent regimental history of the 104th Regiment of Foot argued that the march on snowshoes had had too much attention in the record, at the expense of the Regiment’s combat record.⁵³ He demonstrated that they performed well in non-linear light infantry fighting, such as raids on small logistical posts and flank companies. However, the long march on snowshoes is the best illustration of the 104th Regiment of Foot’s fitness for the light infantry fight. Drummond’s adjutant wrote a letter criticizing the use of the bayonet in such a densely wooded and rugged frontier.⁵⁴ British leaders

⁵¹ Ibid., 144. Strikeout and superscript in the original.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Grodzinski, *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot in the War of 1812*.

⁵⁴ Edward Baynes, General Orders, Montreal 4 July 1814, in Wood, *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812*, Vol III, 23-24.

recognized the unique nature of the region of North America, yet they resigned their only North American-raised regiment to a supporting role.

If success occurred primarily due to the consistent success of crack regulars in battle, then it would be appropriate to dismiss the famous march of the 104th. Yet keeping soldiers healthy during the 1814 campaign season was the most significant challenge. Battlefield victory gained little save for accolades to the victors. The grueling winter march placed the 104th in excellent company. Adam Walker from the U.S. 4th Infantry Regiment described the journey from New England to northern Ohio as the hardest aspect of his regiment's service, and the unit's order book is full of the names of soldiers who fell out.⁵⁵ John Rabdy is the best example because he was left on the road, destitute without food or money, only to be court-martialed in New York after a harrowing journey to earn enough money to eat and travel home.⁵⁶ Governor Isaac Shelby, still a combatant in his sixties, led Kentucky militia troops; he was complimented by Major General William Henry Harrison for keeping up with the cavalry.⁵⁷ The 4th Infantry Regiment and Kentucky militia, under Thomas Shelby, were amongst the best light infantry backwoods fighters in the world, and the 104th Regiment of Foot's march on snowshoes placed them in the same fraternity.⁵⁸ Moreover, the 104th Foot shared the

⁵⁵ Regimental Order Book 4th Infantry Regiment (April 1811-May 1812), Records of United States Commands, 1794-1821, Records of Units, Infantry (1808-15), 1-34. Adam A. Walker, *Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U. S. Infantry: In the Michigan and Indiana Territories, under the Command of Col. John P. Boyd, and Lt. Col. James Miller, During the Years 1811 & 12* (Keene, NH: Printed at the Sentinel Press, by the Author, 1816), 11-12.

⁵⁶ Court-Martial of John Rabdy, Fort Columbus New York, Army Courts-Martial Records, U.S. National Archives, A 11, Case 65.

⁵⁷ Letter from Thomas Shelby to Susan from Franklinton Upper Canada, 28 October 1813, Shelby Family Papers, U.S. Library of Congress, 1652.

⁵⁸ The 4th Infantry Regiment won battles at Tippecanoe, Sandwich, Aux Canards, and the village of Maguaga before being surrendered without a fight at Detroit. See Walker, *Journal of Two Campaigns of the Fourth Regiment of U. S. Infantry*.

characteristics of light frontier fighters as well as the formidable discipline of British regulars. The 104th was in many ways superior to comparable U.S. infantry regiments in its general fitness and ability to withstand the punishing environment of North America's interior.

George Ramsay's account of the march from New Brunswick combines the descriptive language of nature with data that notes the daily distance traveled. Ramsay's description illustrates how difficult it was to supply the larger British Army. As the previous chapter on "The War for Calories" demonstrated, supplying the British Army in the frontier border region was extremely difficult. Ramsay's account meticulously listed each day that supply wagons could not follow the light troops on their march. The 104th was rapidly demonstrating that as a light force they could operate without the support of supply animals. The 104th Regiment of Foot marched 353 miles to the conflict, and then walked 283 miles on its return home in 1815.⁵⁹ Their movement over harsh terrain in the winter would have crippled most regiments. Most losses in the War of 1812 were not incurred in battle; they were caused by exposure to a harsh environment. The 104th Foot's ability to function after its exhausting march illustrated its fitness for conflict in the Upper Canadian frontier border region, even after years of sitting in garrison.

Ramsay's account is more than an eloquent description of human endurance; it is one of the best descriptions of the gritty challenges of the conflict. Like other regimental records it was a day-to-day description of events, and like most accounts, the more significant problems involved the struggle of human bodies versus nature. Again, it is

⁵⁹ "Memoir of George Ramsay," George Ramsay, 9th Earl of Dalhousie, 1770-1838, Family Papers, University of New Brunswick Loyalist Collection, 3-430, pages 6, 7.

hard to find an account of the War of 1812 that described the horrors of combat in anything but matter of fact tones. Yet Ramsay used emotional language to describe his unit's route. For example, he noted "A wretched road at all time" that was narrow and "just passable for a horse and in many places that is difficult."⁶⁰ Occasionally the 104th marched through a settled area "cleared of the timber," but life in the Maritimes prepared the men of the 104th for the harsh, unsettled terrain of the Niagara region. The parsimonious landscape is a persistent theme in Canadian geographical history, and the most common experience for soldiers on both sides was the daily struggle in an austere environment. Sir Arthur Wellington gained notoriety leading British troops in the wilderness region of India, but he did so with unlimited sources of labor.⁶¹ Backwoods Canadians, like their American counterparts, were more capable of fighting in remote areas away from supply wagons. The 104th Regiment of Foot's long winter march gained notoriety; it is one of the few episodes in the war's story where historians celebrate the day-to-day struggles of soldiers.

The 104th's rate of march was impressive but it was also a vital indication of their fitness to operate in an unforgiving land. When on good roads, the 104th marched upwards of thirty miles a day. The regiment made their most extended movement from Petite River to Cheston, logging forty-one miles. They were able to make formidable progress because the "the road for this distance is by far better."⁶² In a previous stretch, they covered twenty-six miles because of a good route. The route was "good [for] all but two miles" until "Mack's Mill to Petite River" where it was "bad all but two miles."⁶³

⁶⁰ "Memoir of George Ramsay," 2.

⁶¹ Jac Weller, *Wellington in India* (London: Longman, 1972).

⁶² "Memoir of George Ramsay," 3.

⁶³ "Memoir of George Ramsay," 3.

The regiment covered major distances in all but the worst conditions, which were most legs of the march. From Port Mouton to Liverpool the 104th covered only twelve miles. Ramsay stated that “this is an open country and about half the road is very fair / the remainder very bad not / very (sic) hilly.”⁶⁴ The open, unsettled country had poor roads that men could only use at a rate that slowed their pace significantly. Moreover, it often prohibited the movement of supplies via wagons. Light infantry was a category determined by a supply system that used pack horses, rather than wagons, and required heavier loads for soldiers. The 104th proved it could march in a land with bad roads harsh terrain. The most challenging feature of the war was operating in the wilderness, and the winter march of the 104th demonstrated their skill in *petite guerre* wilderness warfare.

The most significant historiographical influence of Ramsay’s short descriptive account of day-to-day marches from Fredericton to Quebec relates to the Canadian environment. The history of the War of 1812, studied more broadly, supports the critical theories of Canadian environmental history. Parsimony, staples theory, and the slow transition from rural first nature to settled second nature are significant themes in Canadian environmental history that Ramsay’s account serves to confirm.⁶⁵ His manuscript’s description of the march route testifies to the viability of theories that are predicated on the unsparing Canadian environment. This dissertation connects emphasis on daily environmental management in military history to geographical realities.

⁶⁴ “Memoir of George Ramsay,” 3.

⁶⁵ Neil Stevens Forkey, *Shaping the Upper Canadian Frontier: Environment, Society, and Culture in the Trent Valley* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2003); Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fisheries; the History of an International Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940); Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada; an Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956); and Harold A. Innis and Daniel Drache (ed.), *Staples, Markets, and Cultural Change: Selected Essays. Harold Innis* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995).

Supplying troops in the wilderness regions of North America was one of the most significant challenges from the colonial period until the American Civil War. The struggles of commanders and soldiers in 1812 mirrored events described in David Preston's latest book. Preston recontextualized Major General Edward Braddock's defeat at Monongahela as a result of the critical challenges of wilderness isolation.⁶⁶ Lisa Brady illuminated the manner in which Union officers such as Ulysses S. Grant and William Sherman used scorched earth tactics to turn portions of the South into a wilderness.⁶⁷ Kathryn Meier explored the idea that militia and volunteer soldiers were more apt to survive in the Shenandoah wilderness during the Civil War, primarily because they could return home when sick and practice self and family care.⁶⁸ Likewise, the 104th's performance illustrates the ability of a local unit to operate in the wilderness because of its soldiers' lifetime spent in pre-settlement "first nature."⁶⁹ The frontier environment presented one of the most significant challenges of the War of 1812. Surviving nature was the only way to even set foot onto a battlefield. Remarkably, the environment has yet to play a central role in historical interpretations of the war.

Conclusion

As was the case with American units, the 104th Regiment of Foot's most significant challenges came from the environment. For most of the conflict, one of the British units most capable of enduring the frontier guarded the unthreatened Maritime

⁶⁶ David L. Preston, *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁶⁷ Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

⁶⁸ Kathryn Shively Meier, *Nature's Civil War: Common Soldiers and the Environment in 1862 Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

⁶⁹ William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (1996): 7-28.

region. The 104th Regiment of Foot's proven endurance of the harsh North American environment set them apart. Its fitness for the environment might have made it one of the most storied units in the conflict, yet the 104th played a relatively small role in the conflict. When it became militarily active in the final year of the war, it was employed as one regiment in a sea of reinforcements that came to North America after the war against Napoleon shifted in the British favor.

British military commanders often adapted to the harsh environment far more astutely than their American counterparts. However, the British Army was still a rigid military hierarchy that held a unit of provincials in lower esteem than other regiments. Wellington may have been pioneering light infantry tactics and the use of rifles in Europe, but a provincial unit expert at light infantry was still not the same as more traditional British Regiments. Its provincial status made the soldiers of the 104th extremely capable, but it was also the factor that kept them in garrison for much of the conflict. Their daunting march to Upper Canada and military performance in 1814 were impressive, but they occurred long after the regiment could have made a significant impact on the war's outcome.

Moreover, like American frontier units, the 104th Regiment of Foot was composed of human beings with weaknesses and frailty. The endurance they showed on the march could not fully inoculate the regiment from common ailments; nor could it overcome the persistent paucity of supplies in a distant frontier. When they were employed in the 1814 campaign against the better prepared U.S. Army, the unit lost most of their forces from sickness. Their combat record was quite good, and they were the most capable of serving in the less heralded light infantry attacks on U.S. lines of supply and communication. The

104th kept the only tactically proficient U.S. force on the battlefield away from the supply lines. Their service underpinned victories at Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, and Fort Erie. Had the 104th Regiment of Foot been used earlier in the conflict when the tribal alliances with the British were stronger, the war's outcome might well have been different.

The 104th's decline in health was much like the best frontier units on the American side. Their success in 1814 overshadowed their human weaknesses, and the failure of British commanders to grasp their unique fitness for frontier conflict is perhaps one of the most significant blunders in the War of 1812. That is why the Swiss regiments offer the best comparison. The Swiss troops – like the 104th – were necessary, but commanders relegated them to a secondary role in the shadow of established British regiments. Moreover, they were employed late in the conflict and never earned the respect they deserved. In many ways, the 104th was more like the U.S. 4th or 21st Infantry Regiments. Both have been singled out because they were recruited in nearby New England. The 104th and New England-raised regiments excelled at light infantry tactics. Although the 21st struggled under poor commanders for two years, it enjoyed major military successes in 1814. Similarly, the 4th Infantry Regiment compiled victories in every major engagement until William Hull ordered its surrender. Their record further illustrates what a tactical waste it was to keep the 104th Regiment of Foot in garrison so long. The 104th Regiment of Foot illustrates the profound connections between the War of 1812 and North America's environment. The War of 1812 is best understood by a human portrayal of its combatants, because keeping soldiers healthy and in the ranks profoundly shaped its outcome.

CHAPTER 6

SICKNESS AND OPERATIONAL MILITARY HISTORY:

A HUMAN-CENTRIC CONCLUSION

It is widely known, almost to the point of a cliché, that sickness and disease are the highest known causes of death in early modern armies. However, there is little explicit work on the management of soldier health, especially from an operational perspective. The northern theater of the War of 1812 illustrates just how significant illness was to the outcome of the conflict. Moreover, the soldiers and officers were not passive actors subject to the accident of illness.¹ Officers and soldiers did much to overcome the environmental disadvantages of the Upper Canadian frontier. The sheer belief that they had control over their health meant that soldiers and officers who were proactive were more likely to overcome the challenges of illness on a distant frontier. Health research should not solely be understood as medical history; it was also a critical aspect of operational military history. War of 1812 commanders who adapted to the challenges of a harsh frontier environment became the leaders that won the most battles, largely because they kept more soldiers on their fit for duty rosters. Military

¹ The two key works that offer deterministic explanations for the accidental nature of European colonial expansion are Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), and Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: Norton, 2017). Given the obvious influence of humans on their physical environment, related to our understanding of climate change, more recent environmental histories have stressed human impact on sickness. Elizabeth Fenn's work on smallpox describes human use of the disease in the colonial warfare and the American Revolution, and John McNeill argues that yellow fever was a cultural artifact of the slave trade. See Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), and John McNeill, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620 - 1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

professionalism was also not simply a matter of regulars versus volunteers and militia; it was about the previous experience in frontier warfare.

For the Americans, the best commanders, save for Winfield Scott, all came out of state militias. Commanders who learned their trade in the frontier militia excelled at the management of health. Militia leaders learned the hygienic and tactical measures necessary to maintain the health of their soldiers. Commanders like William Hull, who viewed health as unmanageable, failed, whereas commanders who allowed their soldiers to continue to fight while ill or injured were successful. There was also a correlation between *petite guerre* irregular tactics and larger volumes of soldiers fit for duty. Light infantry tactics relied on logistics drawn from foraging and more dependable and versatile pack horses. Conversely, commanders that relied on wagons for logistics could not supply their forces, or worst, became tethered to their fortifications and engaged in few offensive actions.

A key disadvantage of American military culture in the War of 1812 was the Revolutionary heritage. There was a shared corporate identity in warfare as characterized by suffering and privation. The tradition of unsupplied soldiers serving in tattered uniforms connected soldiers to their Revolutionary forefathers but did not create an identity around competent logistics. The Continental Army succeeded through defensive survival against a more powerful opponent, but during the War of 1812 the U.S. Army was the aggressor and thus required competent logistics to succeed. The effective light infantry tactics of leaders such as William Henry Harrison secured the Old Northwestern Territories, but the American Army could not maintain a campaign long enough to seize all the provinces of British North America (present-day Canada).

The regiments that were best disposed to succeed in the Northern campaign of the War of 1812 were drawn from regions where the war was fought. Political divisions in America made the war extremely problematic. The Democratic-Republicans who called for the War of 1812 were strongest in the southern states but were forced to keep most of their regiments in the south to protect against a slave revolt supported by the Royal Navy.² The borderlands New England and the mid-Atlantic states provided the best regiments in the War of 1812. Perhaps ironically, these states were heavily influenced by Federalists who opposed the war. A case study of the 21st Infantry Regiment reveals soldiers who suffered failure after failure early in the conflict only to be denied victory during the 1814 campaign. In 1814, after numerous reforms, the U.S. Northern Army won all its engagements but was forced to abandon its offensive action because of inadequate logistics. For the New England soldiers of the 21st Infantry Regiment, the failure of logistics occurred simultaneously with the smuggling of New England supplies to the British Army. This represented a particularly galling betrayal of their years of suffering privation on a distant frontier. The flaws of a divided slave-based and free country led to frustrating failures in the northern campaign, making the suffering of privation far more onerous.

The British use of a locally drawn Regiment of Foot was frustrating for reasons far more connected to problematic institutional culture in the British Army. The 104th Regiment of Foot was drawn from New Brunswick and excelled at light infantry tactics from its inception. However, the unit's commissions were all based upon purchase, and

² Alan Taylor recently described the role of British maritime raids that exploited southern slave populations in *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

most of the officers who commanded in the 104th had to grapple with invalids who could not physically handle active campaigning. The Regiment defended unthreatened coastal fortifications for most of the War of 1812. The best light infantry fighters in British North American languished in garrison duties while a small force of British regulars struggled with a larger U.S. force in the Upper Canadian frontier. The 104th Regiment of Foot remained in coastal garrison duties until the volume of invalids from the fighting in Upper Canada was large enough for invalid Veterans Battalions to relieve them.

The 104th Regiment of Foot deployed to the fighting during the 1814 campaign along with large reinforcements that came to North America following the Duke of Wellington's victory in the Peninsular Campaign. By that time, there were so many British Regiments in North America that Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond had to pull units out of combat duties because his forces exceeded his ability to supply provisions. The unit's quick winter march to the fighting theatre illustrated the 104th Regiment of Foot's unique fitness for the conflict. Moreover, it attested to their wastage for the duration of the conflict. The best regiments for a comparison to the 104th Regiment of Foot did not consist of fellow British units; rather, they were the "foreign regiments" drawn from Swiss Allies. The 104th Regiment of Foot performed well in combat, and it is appropriate that they have been so celebrated in Canadian history. However, military leaders squandered them in garrison duties for most of the conflict because they were a provincial regiment. This dynamic represents one of the biggest mistakes in the War of 1812. The 41st Regiment may have been the most experienced regiment on the continent, but the 104th was the most prepared to meet the environmental challenges.

The resources of commanders and soldiers were often grossly inadequate to take control of their health in an austere environment. Morale and health were inextricably linked and speak to John Lynn's three types of soldier motivation: the motivation to serve, combat motivation, and sustained motivation.³ Alcohol was a means to secure both combat and sustained motivation and, as such, became a method of managing illness on both sides of the War of 1812. Before combat, soldiers drank a pint of hard alcohol, and often that improved their combat effectiveness. There were also references of liquor used to fortify soldiers in the harsh environment, with American soldiers receiving extra rations after harrowing stream crossings and British soldiers receiving extra rations in isolated outposts. Alcohol use to help soldiers stay healthy and in good spirits was so widespread that individuals on both sides shared alcohol. While the shared experience of alcohol could unite soldiers on both sides, it further alienated Native Americans. Most records about Native American alcohol use pertained to Shawnee confederate and Potawatomi tribes and served to exacerbate differences. Alcohol, when used by Native Americans in the same manner as white soldiers, was interpreted as something that furthered the purported animal nature of Shawnee and Potawatomi fighters. Alcohol was an imperfect device that offered soldiers and officers some measure of control of their health in a harsh environment. The flawed nature of the solution of alcohol illustrates the perniciousness of the War of 1812's environment and the desperate nature of day-to-day survival in the Upper Canadian frontier.

³ John Lynn, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

In a conflict on an isolated frontier, food and logistics became the most important factors for survival. Soldiers today suffer from the same health problems as soldiers in the War of 1812, and people die with similar conditions in the undeveloped world. Modern medicine helps soldiers survive; however, malnutrition is a leading factor in high rates of sickness. Robert Sapolsky's extensive research on the neurochemistry of stress and trauma places more emphasis on food insecurity than specific instances of violence.⁴ While scholars of human experiences focus on the emotional impact of violence, scientific research concentrates more on the role of stress and general illness. A focus on the military campaign of 1814 underscores an essential point: there was an extremely high correlation between illness and periods of low rations. American officers chafed under a system of unaccountable civilian contractors. After the reforms of Major General Jacob Brown and Brigadier General Winfield Scott, the Americans began to gain dominance on the battlefield. However, American commanders gained little lasting effect in the outcome of the campaign, save for increased reputation, by winning battles at Chippewa, Lundy's Lane, and Fort Erie, because they failed to support their forces logistically for future operations. British Lieutenant-General Gordon Drummond, who was born in Quebec, was a veteran of fighting in the Netherlands and Egypt. Because he possessed local knowledge, he developed a logistically feasible strategy. Drummond's reforms had already taken place when Arthur Wellesley addressed similar problems with the British Army in Portugal by establishing a Commissary-General.⁵

⁴ Robert Sapolsky *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* (New York: Times Books, 2004), and *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017).

⁵ Letter from Arthur Wellington to Lieutenant General Harry Burrard from Lavos, 8 August 1808, in Arthur Wellesley Wellington, and Charles Esdaile ed., *The Duke of Wellington: Military Dispatches* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 101.

The British used civilian contractors who faced the same problems as their American counterparts. However, they employed an accountable general officer who was responsible for the distribution rations. In 1814 Drummond received significant reinforcements from the Peninsular Wars in Spain and Portugal. However, he limited the size of his force so that the commissariat could keep up with demand. He also embraced the citizen-soldier model of part-time soldiers that returned home during the harvest. Native American tribes, including the Six Nations, Chippewa, Mississauga, Ottawa, Wyandot, and Delaware, were deployed as irregular forces that required far less logistical support. Drummond lost many battles but gained the most because he could supply his forces, and he used Native American allies and militia to cut the American army's lines of supply. He lost the traditional battles but consistently won the light infantry fight. Attention to logistics and the supply of adequate rations were crucial features of a successful campaign that brought few classic battle victories.

The War of 1812 is well understood as a conflict in which the British and American forces both considered themselves victorious, even if Native Americans gained very little for their fighting.⁶ Approaching the war from a lower-level operational perspective helps to clarify the key characteristics that led to successful military behavior. In the early years of their dominance, the British failed to employ the best regiment for the frontier conflict: the 104th Regiment of Foot. The U.S. Army experienced a slower process wherein successful frontier militia officers gained federal general officer commissions. At the company level, New England and mid-Atlantic soldiers filled the ranks. These soldiers came from states that opposed the War of 1812 politically. Officers

⁶ Wesley Turner, *The War of 1812: The War That Both Sides Won* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2000).

at the lowest level of U.S. command often desired the experience of bloody combat as a reward for suffering on a distant frontier. Additionally, low supplies and exposure to a harsh frontier environment meant that commanders at the company level (typically 100-120 soldiers) rarely had half strength of regular soldiers. As a result, they were forced to heavily rely on recently added recruits to amplify their numbers on fit-for-duty rosters. The best commanders exerted some level of control by prudently rationing alcohol and food. After being raised in Quebec, Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond possessed local knowledge and military experience. In 1814 he succeeded by emphasizing the role of the militia and Native American allies that were skilled light infantry tactics. Drummond may have always served in regular British regiments, but like the American militia generals he possessed local knowledge.

More classic environmental histories such as *Black Rice* and the *Columbian Exchange* argued for an environmentally deterministic theory of history.⁷ In the War of 1812, success for operational leaders was rarely accidental, and commanders who took responsibility for the health of their soldiers in a frontier border region outperformed their peers. Honor has been criticized significantly by authors such as Alan Taylor and Joanne Freeman, but it served as a fundamental factor in the hardiness and resilience of War of 1812 fighters.⁸ Moreover, leaders often used extremely problematic measures, such as a high rate of alcohol consumption, to manage the health of their soldiers. Even measures like moving to stagnant water and filth trenches were accidents of early nineteenth-

⁷ Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), and Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*.

⁸ Joanne Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), and Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).

century humoral theory. Anyone who believes they have control of their own health is far more likely to recover from survivable illness and injury than individuals who characterized illness and injury as fixed invalidity or disability. Events like the charge of cowardice for William Hull's surrender of Detroit are best understood in the context of the impact of environmental factors that dramatically shaped the human body's ability to overcome invalidity. Officers such as Zachary Taylor, who allowed their soldiers to fight rather than succumb to illness, succeeded because environmental hardiness was connected to the founding Revolutionary Army's tradition of being clothed in rags with negligible provisions.

In his book *The War of 1812: in the Age of Napoleon*, Jeremy Black argues that expeditionary forces were weakened because of the lack of lasting strategic results from battlefield victories.⁹ However, the historiography has yet to shift away from decisive battle interpretations of the War of 1812. A focus on the day-to-day management of illness reveals that the most consequential factor in the northern theatre was the management of the environment. Additionally, commanders who believed they could control the health of their soldiers performed better in battle. An approach to the War of 1812 from a daily management perspective illustrates the most important environmental factors that shaped the war; it also improves our understanding of how commanders succeeded in battle.

At the close of the northern campaign, the British army performances of environmental management far exceeded those of the American Northern Army.

⁹ Jeremy Black, *The War of 1812 in the Age of Napoleon* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

However, the American army learned far more as the 1814 campaign unfolded. The Duke of Wellington's victories in the Peninsular Wars and at Waterloo reinforced the dynamics of the British purchase system, and the result was the British army's extremely poor performance in the Crimean War. On the other hand, the American army changed dynamically after the War of 1812. Commanders like Winfield Scott, Thomas Sidney Jesup, and Zachary Taylor learned the hard lessons of a flawed logistics system in the campaign of 1814. They developed a much better approach to logistics and environmental management that led to successful campaigns in the Blackhawk War, Seminole Wars, and Mexican American War. Moreover, these officers had direct relationships with Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman. John Grenier has argued in *The First Way of War* that the military experiences from the colonial period to the War of 1812 shaped Sherman's brutal technique of targeting of the will of civilians.¹⁰ However, "the march to the sea" was also a campaign that focused on destroying the environment of the American South. The small peripheral wars between the War of 1812 and the Civil War developed on distant frontiers under the command of veterans of the 1814 campaign. While the commanders endured a broken logistics system in the War of 1812, they changed the institutional officer culture as the nineteenth century unfolded. While there are certainly problems with today's reliance on government contractors for logistics, the American army will probably never experience the dramatic supply problems that it did in 1814. Learning from military failure can be more valuable than success, and the small

¹⁰ John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607-1814* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

core of U.S. army officers who fought well in the War of 1812 created a system of reform the remains to the present day.

Battle narratives dominate the study of warfare by military historians, while environmental studies typically lack military operational depth. By studying the operational management of the environment, we gain a much clearer picture of the ways that officers and soldiers shaped their own experiences in harsh situations. Studies of military operational histories that do not account for the experience of war will often view soldiers as objects on maps. Importantly, the soldiers' experience and adaptation to their environment were as central to the outcome of the War of 1812 as the placement of regiments in key engagements. Frontier innovations in health management and tactics led to the most lasting success in the War of 1812 and illustrate that it is not enough to excel on the battlefield; it is also important to do the most to preserve the size and effectiveness of armies. Soldiers seek battlefield notoriety, but there are far more cases of dysentery and malaria than there is glory in war. As this dissertation has demonstrated, those who best managed the suffering, the filth, and the unromantic aspects of war prevailed.

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