HENRY BOUQUET: PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER

Not merely by his five wigs and powdering gown, his "Scarlet gold lac’d frock and Breeches," and his green umbrella, does Henry Bouquet belong to the eighteenth century. The aristocracy of the ancien régime, hopeful for new pleasures in its twilight, was accessible to philosophers, charlatans—and military careerists. Franklin and Cagliostro overcame in diverse ways the handicap of humble birth. Spain was ruled a while by a Cardinal bred in a truck-garden; England's Admiral Nelson was born in a country parsonage. The profession of war offered, for clever and able men, ingress to the salons and the parkways of the wealthy and well-born. The wars of the Age of Reason, many as they were, had not the ravaging implacability of war in the seventeenth century nor of the postscripts to the French Revolution; they seem almost formal maneuverings for prerogatives, or boundaries, or prestige. The nationality of a skilled militarist was not of primary concern. Peter of Russia scoured Europe for army officers as well as culture-bearers. Theodore de Neuhoff, born in Westphalia, became king of Corsica after a career that wove across Europe. From an apprenticeship in the French navy Alexandre de Bonneval rose to the rank of a general in the Turkish Empire, a Pasha Achmet with three horsetails. The career of Henry Bouquet won neither plume nor coronet. But amid the cosmopolitanism of the war-game in the eighteenth century it was possible for this Swiss-born French Protestant to become, in his forty-sixth year, Brigadier General in the forces of Great Britain.

Possible, but far from easy. Bouquet was not an adventurer; he had no flair for the spectacular. He did possess creative ability at the art of war; urbanity; and a driving ambition. His connaissance of military technic was the means, for this man of the bourgeoisie, of his mingling happily in drawing-rooms, exchanging courtesies with the best-born gentlemen and confidences with the most charming ladies. Not un-

1 "Inventory of Effects belonging to the late Brig. Genl. Bouquet," British Museum Additional Manuscripts 21660. Transcripts of Br. Mus. Ad. Mss. 21651-21660 (the "Bouquet Papers") are in the Canadian Archives; photostatic copies of most of the volumes are in the Library of Congress.

2 For a convenient survey see Peter Wilding, Adventurers in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1937).
naturally Bouquet's philosophy was shaped into consummate militarism. When an adored correspondent insisted that his profession was not an attractive one, Bouquet put his argument: "You are very right to hate war—it is an odious thing, tho' if considered in a proper light we could discover many advantages arising from that very calamity. Is it not a fact that a long and uninterrupted peace corrupts the manners, and breeds all sorts of vices? Like a stagnated air we require then the agitation of winds, and even storms to prevent a general infection, and to destroy a multitude of insects equally troublesome and dangerous to society. The necessity of action gives a new spring to our souls, real merits and virtues are no longer trampled upon by the arrogant pride of wealth and place. The prejudice in favour of Birth, Fortune, Rank, vanishes. We cease to value people who have nothing more considerable than such frivolous and exterior advantages. . . ."

Born in 1719, in a village on the northern shore of Lake Geneva, Bouquet put on his first army uniform in his seventeenth year when he enlisted as a cadet in the service of the States General of Holland. During the War of the Austrian Succession he fought under the Sardinian banner with distinction. His expert narratives of the campaigns of that war, sent to friends in Holland, attracted the notice of the Prince of Orange; Bouquet was invited in 1748 to return to the service of the Dutch Republic, and received the rank of lieutenant-colonel in a regiment of Swiss Guards. He made the Grand Tour of France and Italy as guest of an English lord; studied his chosen profession diligently, and was welcome in learned discussions. Because nearly all of his papers of date prior to the spring of 1757 were destroyed by fire, details evade us of that course of self-training and experience which enabled Bouquet to win his lasting honors in the difficult battleground of the American wilderness, graveyard of the reputations of so many European officers.

In 1756 British insularity made a noteworthy concession: Parliament authorized the raising of four battalions for service in America,
largely to be recruited from among the German and Swiss settlers in Pennsylvania and Maryland, as many as fifty officers of this regiment to be foreign Protestants. There was much talk, especially from Lord Pitt, that England's bulwark against foreign rule—the Act of Settlement—was menaced, that England would eventually come under the heel of alien mercenaries; but the plan was carried. Bouquet was persuaded to accept command, with the commission of lieutenant-colonel in America only, of the first battalion of this, the Royal American, regiment. He came to America in the spring of 1756, and contributed materially to the success of recruiting among the Pennsylvania Germans. The recruiting was perhaps too vigorous; for many of the thrift-minded farmers complained that their indentured servants were being enticed by the flash of bounty money. The activity left a wake of civil suits, and some surliness that required threats of impressment to overcome when Bouquet and other officers were attempting to solve the commissary problems of the Forbes Expedition.

Bouquet's real initiation into the antagonisms of colonial politics began when, on December 10, 1756, he marched into Philadelphia at the head of a column of 547 men and officers to be quartered there. Governor Denny, himself a military man, and an appointee particularly instructed to guard the interests of the Proprietors of the province, was having his inevitable difficulties with the Quaker-dominated Assembly. The governor's energy, Bouquet's report that "Sixty-two beds were actually wanting for One Hundred and Twenty-Four Men, who lay upon Straw, in very bad Rooms, without Fire," Surgeon James Stevenson's report that "the small pox is rather increasing among our soldiers & as their quarters are so dispersed & the conveniences for their attendance so bad, unless a proper hospital is provided for them, I could almost venture to affirm that every house in this place will be an hospital in a fortnight," were inadequate to secure proper barracking and hospitalizing space; at the end of the year Lord Loudoun had to thunder from New York the threat to march additional troops into Philadelphia to seize quarters. Through these difficulties Bouquet's personal charm was shining brightly in

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the best homes of Philadelphia—particularly, he must have hoped, in the house of Charles Willing, where dwelt several "Goddesses." (A letter to Bouquet in 1760 describes a soiree at the Castle Willing at which Major Robert Rogers was a guest: "Major Rogers was introduced . . . and went thro the Ceremony of Saluting all the Ladies; but as soon as Tea was over, he made a Leg, and retreated with the loss of his Heart [as he told me today])." Bouquet lost his, perhaps during this first residence in Philadelphia, to Anne, eldest daughter of the merchant host.

When Lord Loudoun, in conference with the governors of Pennsylvania and the Southern colonies in March, 1757, was convinced that the point of imminent danger was South Carolina, Bouquet was ordered to sail with a detachment of Royal Americans to Charleston and command the regular and provincial forces for the defense of that region. No enemy appeared; but Bouquet found the natives and the mosquitoes plaguy enough. Provisions cost the officers exorbitantly. The province failed to raise half its quota of troops; of those recruited, Bouquet remarked that the men were almost naked, that he dared not exercise them except when the sun was shining. Money was difficult to obtain, and bills were heavily discounted. The regulars became sickly; in September and October the air was "so infected," Bouquet wrote Loudoun, that even the horses died.

Three capital posts on the seashore were garrisoned—Charleston, Port Royal, and Georgetown—and, with a two-gill subsidy of rum per man, the repair and extension of fortifications went on with dispatch. But the sensitive Colonel felt that the planter aristocracy regarded the military and its officers as, like Negroes, necessary evils. To one correspondent he bespoke a great weariness of America: if he could once get rid of it, never would he return. Writing to Colonel Stanwix, Bouquet narrowed his geography: "There is no danger of falling in love with South Carolina." A welcome letter from General Forbes reached Bouquet in March, 1758: an order to sail forthwith to Philadelphia, to join the General in the expedition against Fort Duquesne.

In the Forbes Expedition Bouquet carried an unwonted degree of

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8 Ourry to Bouquet, Feb. 11, 1760, ibid.
10 Bouquet to Ellis, Dec. 10, 1757, ibid.; Bouquet to Stanwix, Oct. 18, 1757, ibid.
responsibility. Forbes's prolonged, ultimately fatal, illness reduced the fuming Scotsman to conducting his campaign by letter-writing; Bouquet was his mentor, and the activating agent in every branch of the service.\textsuperscript{11} The arduous modeling of the provincial volunteers was an immediate task;\textsuperscript{12} and he realized that the Highlander troops needed exercises to flex their tactics if the massacre of Braddock's stiff-legged platoons were not to invite repetition. The standard drills in Humphrey Bland's manual were not enough; and, as Joseph Shippen wrote from Bedford, "Every afternoon he exercises his men in the woods and bushes in a particular manner of his own invention, which will be of great service in an engagement with the Indians.\textsuperscript{13}"

While ostensibly Bouquet left Forbes to choose whether the expedition should follow the Braddock Road or cleave a new road wholly within Pennsylvania, George Washington, stanch partisan of the Braddock trail, knew where the weight lay; and his ill-considered letter which fell into Forbes's hands named the Colonel: "If ... Bouquet succeeds in this point with the General, all is lost!" Bouquet shares responsibility for the egregious blunder of the expedition, the Battle of Grant's Hill, because of the very elastic instructions under which he allowed the impetuous and perhaps intoxicated Major James Grant to march out with eight hundred men.\textsuperscript{14} But that could amiably be charged off to experience when, from the Forks of the Ohio on December 25, Bouquet began a letter: "Dear Nancy: I have the satisfaction to give you the agreeable news of the conquest of this terrible Fort.\textsuperscript{15}"

Immediate work toward consolidating the victory was required: peace conferences with the Indians; fortification of the posts along the communication to Presqu’Isle and westward to Detroit; garrisoning and provisioning; repair and reconstruction of the spoor of the

\textsuperscript{11}The calendar of the Bouquet Papers in Douglas Brymner, \textit{Report on Canadian Archives, 1889} (Ottawa, 1890), is a guide to the wealth of correspondence involving Bouquet’s activities in the expedition.

\textsuperscript{12}Bouquet’s Orderly Book, MS., Library of Congress.


\textsuperscript{15}Bouquet to Anne Willing, Nov. 25, 1758, \textit{Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography}, loc. cit., 135.
Forbes Expedition, to make the Forbes Road. Direction of most of this program was left with Bouquet. Sir John St. Clair, quartermaster of the Forbes Expedition, after the fall of Fort Duquesne was at first preoccupied with defense of his imagined prerogatives, then with adjustment of the tangled accounts of the Forbes Expedition; and Bouquet became, to all practical effect, Deputy Quarter Master General as well as Acting Adjutant General. In August, 1759, Bouquet gave Engineer Harry Gordon directions for the building of Fort Pitt. The building of the blockhouse in 1764—the only part of the fort salvaged from time, vandals and housebuilders—was an additional defence built at his orders. From residence at the Pittsburgh post, from minor expeditions and tours of inspection, he had occasional respite at Philadelphia. Louis Ourry, commandant at Fort Bedford and close friend of Bouquet's, sent a letter to him eastward in 1759: "I imagine this will find you somewhat inured to the use of a Feather bed, and almost able to Sleep between Sheets."

When Bouquet was at Fort Pitt, Thomas Willing was his friendly agent in securing the best wines to be forwarded to the Colonel's larder. Anne offered to send him tea and other niceties; she and Bouquet exchanged letters, with no more than the usual quota of "I had imagined you had ... forgotten me" protests on the gentleman's part. When, in December, 1760, it was Ourry's fortune to be in Philadelphia and Bouquet's duty to be at Fort Pitt, Ourry wrote: "If I wou'd, I cannot forget you in the Ladies Company, they so often mentioned you and pity you, as I do from my Soul; but all the Consolation I can give you is that we constantly speak of you, wish for you, drink to you." But the wine which Thomas Willing sent was, somewhere on the westward road, diminished and adulterated; and in October, 1761, "a Gentleman of Fortune ... from London," Tench Francis, arrived in Philadelphia, Anne Willing was captivated.

Bouquet's friends in Philadelphia were reluctant to write him of the engagement or the marriage which quickly followed. Ourry, at Fort Bedford, was the unhappy go-between. Bouquet had written him, on January 20, 1762, about the great flood at Pittsburgh; his account began, "Quis talio fando temperet a Laerygneris!" Three weeks later Ourry returned the phrase: "Who can the sad Tidings, without Tears relate! My dear Colonel . . . ," and there followed

the news. Bouquet ran “full drive into the Lyon’s Mouth, by indulging a melancholy Solitude.” Friends could not rally him; and in March he wrote Ourry his decision to abandon the British service and return to Europe. Ourry reluctantly approved: “Leave a road, which, bordered with roses in the beautiful days of your love, now offers you no more than a path hedged with thorns. Abandon the beautiful mirages fleeing from you, and on to meet the solid advantages inviting you.” Bouquet wrote Captain Bentinck in May that he was cured of ambition, that three years at Fort Pitt would wear out any man’s patience. But the routine letters about expresses, invoices, company pay and promotions, flour, beef, and blankets, were dispatched in undiminished volume. Prospects that the war in Europe would involve all the nations deepened the sense of responsibility of an officer even in the frontier wilderness. And with the outbreak of Pontiac’s conspiracy in the summer of 1763, Bouquet was again the commander in action, his presence at the head of a column of troops the immeasurably good fortune of the West.

That three of the Pennsylvania posts had been taken, Fort Pitt besieged for some nine weeks, Ligonier and Bedford constantly encircled by the enemy, before Bouquet’s little force of five hundred men vanquished a much greater number of Indians, was due primarily to the utter unexpectedness of the outbreak. The last letter to leave Fort Pitt until the siege was lifted was sent on May 29. Eight days later General Amherst in New York was writing Bouquet that the Indian trouble in the West probably was nothing more than a rash attempt of the Senecas, which merited their severe chastisement; that such posts as Fort Pitt were in no danger. Bouquet forwarded the General’s opinions westward, and added some complacence of his own. When cumulatively alarming reports demanded the quick dispatch of a relief expedition, neither men nor provisions were ready. The force with which Bouquet set out from Philadelphia was for the larger part Highlanders unaccustomed to wilderness fighting and wan from service in the West Indies. At Carlisle, instead of the stores and transport which had been ordered, he found refugees and mourners, desolation and panic. Eighteen days of vigorous measures were requisite for the shaping of a convoy. On the afternoon of August 5,
while pushing through the hollows of Westmoreland County, but a half mile from the appointed resting place of Bushy Run, the line was halted by heavy fire. The ambuscade blazed until night; and at daybreak Indian warcries preluded renewed attack upon the fatigued and parched troops. "Our situation," wrote Bouquet, "was not the less perplexing, having experienced that brisk attacks had little effect upon an enemy who always gave way when pressed, and appeared again immediately." But the Highlanders, maneuvered by the right commander, adapted these tactics into a concerted strategy. The feigning of a retreat, with two concealed lines closing in upon the advancing Indians, routed the enemy; and, as Bouquet wrote in the blessed rest after the two-day engagement, "Our brave men disdained so much to touch the dead body of a vanquished enemy that scarce a scalp was taken except by the Rangers and pack-horse drivers."

At the time Bouquet had not the men to follow this success with a lethal thrust into the heart of the Indian country; but in 1764 two Pennsylvania battalions were assembled for his use, and with an augmented force Bouquet cut a road directly into the wilderness of the Muskingum valley. Here, in October, Bouquet held councils with Shawnee, Delaware, and Mingo chieftans. He was a conqueror speaking wrathfully. He brought back hostages, more than three hundred white captives reclaimed from Indian villages, and a peace which lasted for ten years.

At last, the accolades: compensation to the spirit for the years devoted to assiduous duty far from the table of the commander-in-chief, where promotions were made over the walnuts and wine; for the vexatious dealings with provincial assemblies; for the loneliness of barracking in the West ("How different is my situation, continually among a crowd, but without friends, I can say that I also live in a solitude, and of the worst kind"). General Gage wrote the Earl of Halifax: "In justice to Colonel Bouquet, I must testify to your Lordship the obligations I have to Him; and that Nothing but

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20 Ibid., 61-72; C. Hale Sipe, The Indian Wars of Pennsylvania (Harrisburg, 1929), 476-482.
the firm and steady Conduct which he has Observed, in all his Transactions with those Treacherous Savages; would ever have brought them to a Serious Peace." Early in January Bouquet arrived in Philadelphia, to receive private and public gratulations. The Assembly at first meeting adopted an address of thanks; the Virginia House of Burgesses made like tribute, with the request that the governor commend Bouquet to the King's ministers as an officer of distinguished merit in every service in which he had been engaged; the King publicly thanked Bouquet in general orders. Private advice from London in February hinted at promotion. On March 3 he was naturalized by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania; and in mid-April it was officially made known that Henry Bouquet was a Brigadier General. An officer of his battalion wrote from Lancaster: "You can hardly imagine how this place rings with the news of your promotion, for the townspeople and German farmers stop us in the street to ask if it is true that the king has made Col. Bouquet a general; and when they are told it is true, they march off with great joy... for sure I am that all the people are more pleased with the news of your promotion than they would be if the government would take off the stamp duty."

The sudden closing of Bouquet's career, while these fruits of merit were yet dropping at his feet, has the bald irony of schoolboy fiction. Gage was worried by reports of the sad state of the military in Florida; and called upon his "trouble-shooter." In April Bouquet was ordered to take command of the Southern District. He lingered in Philadelphia as long as he could; but when the accounts for the Western posts were in order, the Brigadier General with all his possessions took vessel for Pensacola. He arrived at Fort St. George on August 3. There was time to unpack his goods, buy a Negro or two, add some tamarinds and mangoes to his large stock of table delicacies; and to catch the yellow fever. That last was easy; ten or twelve of the

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23 Ethington to Bouquet, April 19, 1765, Cort, op. cit., 74-75; Carter, op. cit., 56; Potts to Bouquet, Feb. 5, 1765, and Gordon to Bouquet, April 13, 1765, Br. Mus. Ad. Mss. 21651.
troops were dying of a day. Bouquet was dead on September 2; and two days later a commission of five officers took inventory of his effects and proclaimed an auction. A drummer got a dollar for crying the sale. When the items were disposed of and the expenses paid (one line of the disbursements speaks the ugly terror of the plague: “To Cash pd. 6 Soldiers for Carrying the Corpse to the Grave...$3”), Lieutenant Francis Hutchinson of the Royal Americans sailed with the proceeds, the unsold goods, and Bouquet’s chests of papers, back to Philadelphia, to turn them over to Colonel Frederic Haldimand, Bouquet’s executor. In accordance with the will Haldimand assigned to Thomas Willing title to five tracts of Pennsylvania lands, and sent forty pounds, Pennsylvania currency, to the Hospital of Philadelphia.24

Among the Bouquet papers is a document which begins: “Whereas, the Honorable House of Commons of England have of late drawn into question how far the General Assembly of this Colony hath power to Enact Laws for laying Taxes, and imposing Dutys payable by the People of this His Majesties most Ancient Colony for settling and ascertaining the same to all future times, in the House of Burgesses of this present General Assembly, have come to the following Resolutions...”25 There follow seven clauses which are substantially those introduced in the Virginia House of Burgesses on May 29, 1765, by Patrick Henry. How this preliminary draft of the Stamp Act Resolutions reached Bouquet one cannot guess; it is easier to surmise what he thought of them. And I suggest that the Revolutionary cause may have gained much by that epidemic of yellow fever at Pensacola in the summer of 1765. General Bouquet would have entertained no democratic sympathies to dull the keen edge of his military mind. In January of 1761, while he was considering and rejecting the alternatives to a martial career—agriculture, business, politics—he wrote Anne Willing: “How could I brook the supercilious look and the surly pride of the Humble Quaker? or the insulting rudeness of an Assembly-man, who, picked up from a dunghill, thinks himself raised to a Being of a Superior nature? How submit to the insolent...
Rusticity of the free Pennsylvania Boor, who knows no distinction among mankind? Bouquet was the most brilliant leader of light infantry that the French and Indian War produced; he was uniquely equipped by experience and wit to lead troops in action on the expansive field of America. And against his erstwhile fellow-officers and friends in Pennsylvania and Virginia he would have pitted his battalions with the ruthless efficiency, the chess-like impersonality, of the professional soldier.

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Bouquet to Anne Willing, Jan. 15, 1761, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, loc. cit., 142.