

THE GENERAL CHOOSES A ROAD

The Forbes Campaign of 1758 to Capture Fort Duquesne

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SECOND INSTALLMENT

V. "DIABOLICAL WORK, AND WHISKEY MUST BE HAD"—
August 1758

FOR the full month of August Washington marked time at Fort Cumberland, frustrated in his attempt to sell the Braddock Road as the route of conquest, and impatient for activity. Yet at month's end he could console himself that the Braddock Road still was in the running although a lap or so behind; and take further satisfaction from the fact that not exaggerated had been his opinion of difficulties in constructing a new road to Loyalhanna.

As the month opened an angry Washington had just returned to Maryland from his conference with Bouquet at the halfway post. Full well he knew that Bouquet was unchanged in his desire for a new road. Bouquet, however, had asked him to put his arguments in writing for the eyes of the General.

Unaware that Forbes already had ruled against his views, Washington was three days preparing his road comparison report. On the 2nd of August the several hundred word manuscript was ready, and a thorough and analytical document it was.⁸⁶ Not a word of retreat from his long standing views appeared: forage was adequate on the Braddock Road, streams easily fordable, defiles inconsequential, grades favorable, the road open and ready for use as fast as an army could march.

Washington asked, "but supposing it was practicable to make a Road from Rays Town quite as good as General Braddocks, I ask if we have time to do it?" He answered his own question—"Certainly not."

One new idea was advanced—to go by way of Braddock's road

⁸⁶ Washington to Bouquet, Aug. 2, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 298.

with deposits at the Great Crossings and Salt Lick⁸⁷, the army to be reprovisioned at Salt Lick by pack horse from Raystown using the old Traders Path through Loyalhanna. (In the suggestion for re-supply Washington unwittingly once again spotted the supply weakness of the Braddock route.) He concluded with the self-serving statement: "I have offerd nothing but what to me appears beyond a probability: I have nothing to fear but for the general Service . . . therefore cannot be supposd to have any private Interest, or Sinister views . . ."

If his letter to Bouquet for forwarding to Forbes was a coldly logical document, his angry outcry to his old friend, Major Halkett, written the same day, was the hot and unreasoned outburst of a young man who had difficulty controlling his temper. Halkett, as Forbes' aide, was at Carlisle with the General, and Washington either intended it to happen or should have known that the letter would come to Forbes' attention. The Virginia Colonel wrote: "I am just returned from a conference held with Colonel Bouquet. I find him fixed . . . upon leading you a new way to the Ohio . . . If Colonel Bouquet succeeds in this point with the General all is lost! All is lost by heavens! Our enterprise ruined; and we stopped at the Laurel Hill this winter; not to gather laurels by the by, desirable in their effects."⁸⁸

The seasoned veteran Forbes, as might be expected, saw red when he came across the letter. Relationships with the senior Virginia officer that had been coldly formal in the past now were colored by distrust. Forbes wrote Bouquet on the 9th: "By a very unguarded letter of Col: Washingtons that Accidently fell into my hands, I am now at the bottom, of their Scheme against this new road, A Scheme that I think was a shame for any officer to be Concerned in . . ."⁸⁹ Similar criticism was contained in a letter to Abercromby two days later. And even a month later the sore still festered and Forbes told Bouquet, " . . . therefore would consult C: Washington altho perhaps not follow his advice, as his Behavior about the roads, was no ways like a Soldier."⁹⁰

Forbes apparently never was warmly attracted to Washington

87 A camp site of Braddock's army located by some authorities as two miles south-east of New Stanton, and about 15-20 across country from the Traders Path on the westerly side of Chestnut Ridge.

88 Washington to Halkett, Aug. 2, 1758: *Fitzpatrick*, p. 260.

89 Forbes to Bouquet, Aug. 9, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 344.

90 Forbes to Bouquet, Sept. 4, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 477.

as a person although he recognized his leadership and military potentials. Washington's hero stars hung loosely as far as the General was concerned. Because he needed the Virginia troops he welcomed the man who was Mr. Military to all of Virginia and even at his early age almost a legendary figure in the colonies; a soldier who knew the country in which the fight was to be waged. Reporting to Abercromby on April 22 Forbes commented, "Col^o Washington is to make the Campaign."⁹¹ Yet he never mentioned Washington as he did the other Virginia Colonel—William Byrd III—as "my dear friend,"⁹² nor did he praise Washington to Prime Minister Pitt as he found occasion to do in respect to Colonel Byrd.⁹³

But to come back to the story. After his complaint to Halkett Washington reported in similar but more temperate vein to Governor Francis Fauquier of Virginia on August 5: "We are still encamped here, and have little prospect of decamping, unless a fatal resolution takes place, of opening a new road from Rays Town to Fort du Quesne. In this event, I have no doubt the Virginia troops will be honored with a full share of the labor as they have already been, in opening a communication from hence to Raystown, and doing the principal part of the work at that place."⁹⁴

By the next day Washington had received word that Forbes had ordered the Raystown-Loyalhanna road opened. He accepted the inevitable, wishing success to the venture but doubting the result. Later he was to take every opportunity to restate his doubts and commend his original position. On August 6 he wrote Bouquet:⁹⁵ "The Generals Orders,—or the Orders of any Superior Officer will, when once given, be a Law to me . . . but till this Order came out, I thought it Incumbent upon me to say what I could to divert you . . . from a Resolution of opening a new Road . . . I am still of this opinion . . . If I am deceivd in my opinion, I shall acknowledge my Error . . . If I unfortunately am right; my Conduct will acquit me of having discharged my Duty on this Important Occasion."⁹⁵

Bouquet replied in sarcastic tenor on the 9th: ". . . At the same time as I was favoured with your Letter, I received one from

91 Forbes to Abercromby, April 22, 1758: *James*, p. 68.

92 Forbes to Washington, Sept. 16, 1758: *James*, p. 210; Forbes to Bouquet, July 23, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 264; Forbes to Bouquet, Sept. 23, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 535.

93 Forbes to Pitt, July 10, 1758: *James*, p. 140.

94 Washington to Fauquier, Aug. 5, 1758: *Fitzpatrick*, p. 261.

95 Washington to Bouquet, Aug. 6, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 318.

the General, with express Orders to begin to open the road . . . and as I shall allways obey the directions of a Superiour Officer with readiness; there was no room left to hesitate . . . ”⁹⁶

One other sidelight and we get on with building the new road. Bouquet himself had some qualms about the road to Loyalhanna. A supply breakdown plus the approach of winter caused him to think aloud to Forbes on August 8: “Instead of three months’ provisions, we have only two here [Raystown] which renders the subsistence of the army very precarious . . . In case of success, a large body of troops will remain on the Ohio, and if our provisions do not cross the mountains before the beginning of winter, how are they to be sent? I believe . . . use could be made of the Potomac in the autumn to set up storehouses at Cumberland, and over a portage of 74 miles to embark them on the Monongahela; by which the bad road from Loudoun here and the crossing of the mountains would be avoided.”⁹⁷

So here was a new slant—the Braddock Road might come in the back door—as a portage route in the event of success. How Washington would have laughed had he intercepted the letter!⁹⁸

Work on the new road proceeded in accordance with Forbes’ orders. Some 1,200 men, divided into various parties, soon were engaged with pick and shovel, saw, crowbar and axe on its course.⁹⁹ As Washington had anticipated, the Virginians were honored with a full share of the work. Seven companies under Lieutenant Colonel Stephen were assigned to road work to “Hurl mountains out of their Seat.”¹⁰⁰

The Virginians worked diligently. On the 20th Bouquet reported to Forbes, “Col. Stephen has done very well indeed . . . and displayed much judgment and energy,”¹⁰¹ one of the rare compliments from the professional soldier so sparse in praise for provincials.

At first all went well. St. Clair and Major Armstrong and Colonel Burd made favorable reports. Even Bouquet became en-

96 Bouquet to Washington, Aug. 9, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 343.

97 Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 9, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 335.

98 In the fall of 1759 Bouquet’s suggested route was opened and a storehouse erected at Redstone (Brownsville). A road was cut from Redstone to tap the Braddock Road at Gist’s.

99 As of August 3 Bouquet had only 200 axes at Raystown. Another 200 along with other tools had been left at Fort Frederick when work was abandoned on the Fort Frederick-Fort Cumberland road. They were sent for.

100 Stephen to Bouquet, Aug. 8, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 341.

101 Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 20, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 395.

thused. On the 10th he reported to Washington, at a time when the road had progressed some 18 miles to the foot of the Allegheny Mountain: "I expect daily the General or his orders to march mySelf to Loyal Hanning: We find happily less difficulty in opening the Road than we imagined. To this moment the choice of Roads has not contributed to retard the Expedition."¹⁰²

The optimism was premature. Difficulties there were and a plenty—natural and man made. Rocks and rain; shortage of tools; conflicting troop assignments; personality clashes; low provisions. Frustrated at his slow progress in a section called "Shades of Death" on top of Allegheny Mountain, Stephen wrote Bouquet on August 12: "There is nothing would have a greater Effect upon these Rocks, than the Essence of Fat Beef gradually mixt with a Puncheon of Rum, This would add weight to every stroke given them."¹⁰³ Previously Stephen had described the terrain to Bouquet: "the Shades of Death, a dismal Place! and wants only a Cerberus to represent Virgils gloomy description of Aeneas's entering the Infernal Regions."¹⁰⁴ St. Clair, too, found the road work difficult and, like Stephen, wrote for whiskey and men: "... this is a most diabolical work, and whiskey must be had."¹⁰⁵ By the 18th Bouquet reluctantly informed Forbes: "It is a difficult and long task to build the road."¹⁰⁶

Even today one can imagine the toil of inching with hand tools a narrow aisle of a road over the precipitous Allegheny Mountain, across the swampy plateau of Edmund's Swamp and through the virgin forests with their laurel tangles. It even can be appreciated that the shortage of grindstones to sharpen quickly dulled axes and shovels played its inconspicuous part in delaying progress.

Military planning and activities went on at faster pace than road building.

Down at Fort Cumberland Washington kept his troops busy repairing the start of the Braddock Road, and by sending out strong parties to "waylay" on the road as far as the Great Crossing. The feints for using Braddock's route so effectively deceived the

102 Bouquet to Washington, Aug. 10, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 350.

103 Stephen to Bouquet, Aug. 12, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 361.

104 Stephen to Bouquet, Aug. 18, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 341.

105 St. Clair to Bouquet, Aug. 12, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 360.

106 Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 18, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 379.

French that construction of the new road was not discovered until too late to halt its completion.¹⁰⁷

Not only was a continuous flow of scouting parties sent to Fort Duquesne to gain intelligence, but both Washington and Bouquet sent parties forward to reconnoitre a possible link-up from Salt Lick on the Braddock Road to a near point on the Traders Path beyond Loyalhanna, along which the Forbes Road likely would be built.

Bouquet estimated that the two roads would be but 16 miles apart on the westerly side of Chestnut Ridge, and on the 17th wrote Washington concerning the junction of routes to suggest: "As it is not impossible (between us) that a Body of Troops under your Command Should march by B——Route, you will keep at Cumberland a Stock of Provisions for one Month when your Convoy joins, and the Rest is to be forwarded to Reas Town."¹⁰⁸

The next day Washington replied, expressing his support of the plan but properly asking his proposed troop strength in order to estimate provisions required for stock-piling.

Finally Bouquet with the approval of Forbes ordered the occupancy of Loyalhanna prior to completion of the road over Laurel Hill, and made preliminary plans for launching a final assault once Loyalhanna was secured.

The idea of an early occupancy of Loyalhanna was suggested by Forbes in a letter to Bouquet on July 14.¹⁰⁹ Basing his plans on the promise of St. Clair that the new road would be ready for use, Bouquet on August 20 informed Forbes that an advance party 1,500

¹⁰⁷ The French were aware of Forbes' march and estimated his army at 8,000 men. They didn't know his time schedule or final route. From their own weakness, the French strategy was to make a show of force and thus force Forbes into winter quarters short of his goal. French letters and accounts are in *Pa. Archives*, 2nd series, VI.

On August 11 Forbes had informed Abercromby: "The Enemy has as yet given us no disturbance nor do I believe that they suspect my coming this way whereas along Mr. Braddock's route from the Great meadows (Fort Necessity) to the Great Crossing of the Yoghegeny, they have reconnoitered every pass and Defile, and have proceeded so far as already to have a *Batis de bois* where of necessity we must have passed had we been Confined to that road intirely." Forbes to Abercromby, Aug. 11, 1758: *James*, p. 172.

As late as September 6 Forbes was able to inform Pitt: "My advanced post consisting of 1500 Men, are now in possession of a strong post 9 miles on the other side of Laurell Hill, and about 40 from Fort Du Quesne, nor had the Enemy ever suspected my attempting such a road till very lately, they having been all along securing the strong passes, and fords of the rivers, upon General Braddock's route." Forbes to Pitt, Sept. 6, 1758: *James*, p. 202.

¹⁰⁸ Bouquet to Washington, Aug. 17, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 374.

¹⁰⁹ Forbes to Bouquet, July 14, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 207.

strong plus the artillery would leave Raystown on the 23rd, under command of Colonel Burd of the Pennsylvanians and with Major James Grant of the Highlanders in the party.¹¹⁰

The advance force got under way on schedule, but a breakdown in the road construction time-table west of Kickenapaulins Old Town (Quemahoning Reservoir) stalled the march. On the last day of the month Colonel Burd was mired in the mud at the Clearfields or Fort Dudgeon (near Kline's Mill, two miles west of Jennerstown at the easterly slope of Laurel Hill).

Cantankerous St. Clair added to the worries of Bouquet. After a dispute with Lieutenant Colonel Stephen of the Virginians, St. Clair put Stephen under arrest, thus threatening in one fit of temper to undo the *esprit* between provincial and regular Bouquet had labored so long to attain.¹¹¹ This left the 400-man Virginia component of the advance force without a tested leader.

Planning went ahead none the less. Bouquet had instructed Burd that upon occupying Loyalhanna he should first entrench and then send out two parties of 300 men each.¹¹² The one party was to reconnoitre a possible alternate advance post nine miles beyond Loyalhanna and on the other side of Chestnut Hill recommended by Engineer Rhor (Grant's Paradise or Fort Dagworthy),¹¹³ the other party was to cut back over Laurel Hill to meet work parties going forward.

Bouquet suggested to Forbes on the 26th: "If you think it wise to take post beyond Chestnut Ridge, Washington could join us there or not very far beyond."¹¹⁴ He wrote Washington the same day: "I expect with impatience the arrival of the General . . . We must Shortly enter upon action, and I know that we have time enough to carry our Point, if we meet with no new difficultys."¹¹⁵

110 Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 20, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 395. The party was to consist of 300 Royal Americans, 400 Highlanders, 400 Virginians and 400 Pennsylvanians. Provincial troops were to be picked up en route and released from road building. Note that none of the regular British troops was used for road work.

111 Stephen to Bouquet, Aug. 26, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 430; St. Clair to Bouquet, Aug. 27, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 434; Bouquet to Forbes, Sept. 4, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 471.

112 Bouquet to Burd, Aug. 26, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 418.

113 Bouquet gave the name "Grant's Paradise." Bouquet to Forbes, Sept. 11, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 492. The location is at the junction of the Nine Mile Run with Loyalhanna Creek in South Latrobe. From here Grant jumped off on his ill-fated September foray against Fort Duquesne.

114 Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 26, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 423.

115 Bouquet to Washington, Aug. 26, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 425.

Washington replied two days later, getting in the final word of the month on the road argument: "We must doubtless expect to encounter many difficulties in opening a new Road . . . 'tis a melancholy reflection tho. to find there is even a doubt of Success . . . when in all Human probability we might have been in full possession of the Ohio by Now [had] Braddock's been adopted . . . I could wish most sincerely that our Rout was fixd that we might be in Motion, for we are all of us most heartily tird and Sick of Inactivity."¹¹⁶

While Bouquet was conjecturing a joining of forces beyond the Chestnut Ridge, Forbes was arranging a relief for the Virginia troops at Fort Cumberland. He informed Bouquet on the 28th that Governor Sharpe of Maryland had agreed to garrison the fort with 250 militia.¹¹⁷

Forbes also suggested pushing forward *alla barb*—into the beard—of the enemy, but to proceed with caution, "as a small check from the Enemy may be of bad consequence to the whole of us," remarks he was to recall the middle of the next month after Grant's losing gamble with fame at Fort Duquesne. Finally Forbes noted: "The using of Braddocks road I have always had in my head, was it only a blind . . ."

Bouquet now felt he had the green light to go ahead. His personal time schedule for an advance on or about September 1 was within reach despite delays in road construction. And certainly his warning order to Washington should have pleased the Virginian: not only was inactivity to be terminated with activity, but also the Braddock Road—as far as Salt Lick—was to be used. On August 30 Bouquet wrote Washington: "The Generals orders are that you march with the Virginia Troops actually under your Command, by Braddock's Road and that you take Post at the Salt Like . . ."¹¹⁸

While Bouquet expressed doubt that the movement could get under way before the 7th or 8th of September, he lengthened the time-table in reporting to Forbes and suggested that the 10th of September was early enough for Governor Sharpe to relieve Washington at Fort Cumberland. He concluded to the General, "I think now that it is the time to Strike."¹¹⁹ Bouquet as well as Washington was impatient for action.

116 Washington to Bouquet, Aug. 28, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 443.

117 Forbes to Bouquet, Aug. 28, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 439.

118 Bouquet to Washington, Aug. 30, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 446.

119 Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 31, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 449.

As matters stood at the end of August Bouquet's appraisal that construction of the new road had not disrupted plans was a sound one. There still was time, though time was running out, with frosts to destroy forage around the corner and winter just behind.

Bouquet knew and Washington knew and Forbes knew that December 1 was the deadline for success. On that date the enlistment period of the newly raised provincial troops would expire.

From Washington's viewpoint there still was hope that his evaluation of Braddock's road finally would be recognized. All reports told of increasing difficulty in cutting the Pennsylvania road. At month's end it had not been completed in its entirety across Laurel Hill and even the completed sections were not satisfactory. In Washington's opinion the Braddock Road still lay open and available as it had all along.

Only Forbes seemed unconcerned about time. For days on end he hardly was concerned about anything at all. He was bed-ridden the last two weeks of July at Carlisle and was not able to move on to Shippensburg until the middle of August. The short trip brought a recurrence of his agonies. He still was there at the end of the month.

Principally, of course, and a fact not fully appreciated by either Bouquet or Washington at this time, Forbes wanted to wait out his efforts on the diplomatic front of weaning away the Indians from the French. As he noted to Bouquet on August 9, "And betwixt you and I be it said, as wee are now so late, wee are yet to soon."

Already there were evidences that the diplomatic war might bear fruit. Christian Frederick Post had met with some success from his mission to the Delawares and Shawnee on the Ohio. Also Forbes had persuaded the provincial Governors to call a conference of the various Indian tribes, tentatively scheduled for Easton in September.

Forbes also was waiting report of the attack up north on Louisbourg. While the French fortress guarding the St. Lawrence River fell to British might on July 26, knowledge of the victory did not penetrate the wilderness of Pennsylvania until the end of August. The effect of this battle might favorably or adversely influence Forbes' plans.

The period of waiting did not, however, deter Forbes from going ahead with his campaign. Troop and supply build-up at Rays-town continued, but the supply build-up was not according to sched-

ule. Slowness of transport, wagon breakdown, and miscalculation of the carrying capability of wagons and pack horses resulted in the necessity of digging into meager reserves to meet daily consumption requirements.¹²⁰ This forced a further slowdown in assembling all troops at Raystown.

However, despite the slowdown in assembly, the eventual attack force was gaining in strength and in ease of jointure. By the middle of the month¹²¹ some 3,900 troops were accounted for in Raystown returns, permitting with a margin for safety the detachment of the 1,500-man occupation force for Loyalhanna. To the south at Fort Cumberland and but a day's forced march away were Virginia reinforcements of from 800 to 1,000 men. At Shippensburg to the east a remaining contingent of the Highlanders formed the army rear. Pennsylvania troops, in addition to those with Bouquet, were strung out from provincial forts east of the Susquehanna River to detachments at every way post on the line of communication to Raystown. So scattered were these troops that Bouquet complained of being able to account for only 1,000 of their number.¹²²

VI. "NOTHING BUT A MIRACLE CAN PROCURE SUCCESS"— September 1758

Despite intimations from Bouquet and Forbes that action was close at hand, Washington on the first of September was camp-sick, dispirited and fearful for the success of the expedition. Since early July he felt he had been a forgotten man at Fort Cumberland, his advice spurned and his troops unwanted except as cutters on a despised Pennsylvania road.

In his inexperience Washington failed to realize that his very physical presence at Cumberland was part of Forbes' strategy of

120 Supply was through civilian contractors, Adam Hoops being the principal supplier. Because of bad roads, wagons took 24 days for projected 12-day trips; their loads, instead of being the planned 2,000 pounds, averaged but 1,400 pounds. Pack horses carried but 140 pounds instead of the 200 pound planning figure used in supply estimates. Forbes to Abercromby, Sept. 21, 1758: *James*, p. 215.

Even live cattle that furnished the fresh meat ration were not up to expectations. Bouquet informed Forbes that Virginia "beeves" are "small, lean and poor" and that he had forbidden Hoops "to take a single one more from that province." Bouquet to Forbes, August 26, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 423.

121 Joseph Shippen to Richard Peters, Aug. 16, 1758: *Pa. Archives*, 1st series, III, p. 510.

122 Bouquet to Burd, Sept. 1, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 458.

deception, and as well served to block the pathway for Indian raids on his own beloved province.

It is not surprising that the impatient Virginian would voice his complaints to the provincial government back at Williamsburg where lay his first loyalty.

If Bouquet's alert orders of August 30 had been received a day earlier perhaps Washington would have had a more restrained pen. But he did not receive Bouquet's message until the evening of September 1, and earlier had sealed and dispatched to Speaker John Robinson of the Colonial House a vitriolic and almost mutinous complaint: "We are still Incamp'd here, very sickly; and quite dispirited at the prospect before Us . . . We seem then, to act under an evil Geni, the conduct of our Leaders (if not actuated by Superior Orders) is temper'd with something, I don't care to give a name to, indeed I will go further, and say they are d—ps, or something worse to P-s-v-n Artifice, to whose selfish views I attribute the miscarriage of this Expedition, for nothing now but a Miracle can bring this Campaign to a happy issue."¹²³

Continuing, Washington explained that contrary to his sound arguments the Braddock Road had been abandoned and a new and inferior road selected. He noted that according to the best of intelligence the French forces at Du Quesne were weak, not exceeding 800: "See therefore how our time has been misspent; behold the golden opportunity lost; and perhaps never regain'd. How is it to be accounted for? Can G-l F-s have Orders for this? Impossible: Will then our injured country pass by such abuses?"

By now he was warmed to his subject, and next suggested that a representation be made to the King concerning the conduct of the expedition, offering himself as an aide to the emissary. He concluded: "It has long been the luckless Fate of Poor Virginia to fall a victim to the views of her Crafty Neighbors; and yield her honest efforts to promote their common interest at the expence of much blood and treasure."

Still disturbed, despite undoubted receipt of Bouquet's alert orders and with never a mention of their content, Washington followed up his letter to Speaker Robinson with one the next day to Governor Fauquier. It was, however, more a letter of resignation than a call of protest to the royal government. After all, the Governor himself was a representative of the Crown: " . . . but alas!

¹²³ Washington to Robinson, Sept. 1, 1758: *Fitzpatrick*, p. 276.

the Expedition must either stand or fall by the present Plan . . . The Pensylvanians whose Interest present and future it was to conduct the Expedition thro' their Government . . . had prejudic'd the General . . . made him believe we were the partial people . . . for I think *now* nothing but a miracle can procure Success."¹²⁴

He added the thought, which almost came too true, that "the campaign would end for the winter at Loyalhanna."

Washington's letters to Williamsburg enclosed copies of his correspondence with Forbes and Bouquet regarding road choice. The quill and sandbox worked overtime. At last he was "on record" with his own people, and vilification of Pennsylvania fell on willing ears at Williamsburg.

The Virginia Assembly resolved, after the enlistment period of December 1, to pull back the remaining Virginia troops to guard local frontiers.¹²⁵ Governor Fauquier alone diagnosed the complaint as stemming from camp-sickness. He wrote Washington on the 16th to express the hope that the difficulties were not so great as apprehended and that "the Army may reach Fort Duquesne this year."

With the blasts to the Provincial Government off his chest, Washington settled back to business. Action was what he wanted, and action seemed at last at hand.

On the 2nd—the same day he had written the Governor—he replied to Bouquet's alert orders, suggesting pack horses on the march to Salt Lick in order to shorten his train and improve security. Two days later Bouquet spelled out details of the proposed march: Washington was to plan on 1,000 effectives including waggoners, drivers, etc; wagons and pack horses would be furnished; the march would be covered by troops from the advance post (Grant's Paradise) and additional troops would be assigned to help fortify Salt Lick; the Maryland militia would arrive by the 10th. Then Bouquet concluded with the all too familiar words of delay: "I cannot fix the day of your March as it depends on two things out of my Power, the arrival of the General, and a sufficient

¹²⁴ Washington to Fauquier, Sept. 2, 1758: *Fitzpatrick*, p. 278.

¹²⁵ Fauquier to Washington, Sept 16, 1758: *Hamilton*, III, p. 103. At the assurance that the campaign was to be pushed forward, the Assembly later extended the period of troop service in order that Virginia might not later be blamed for failure of the expedition. News of this did not reach Bouquet until the final assault was under way in mid-November. Fauquier to Washington, Nov. 4, 1758: *Hamilton* III, p. 125 and Nov. 22, 1758: *Hamilton*, III, p. 131.

number of Waggons to send you from here Provisions, Tools Liquor &c."¹²⁶

Almost two weeks were to pass before the General arrived at Raystown, and in the meantime the Salt Lick proposal was dropped. Washington's almost last hope for using the Braddock Road was pushed aside to avoid division of forces.

If Washington had been frustrated at inactivity, Bouquet was no less so. Forbes had written on September 2 that even if we were ready for setting out directly for the Ohio—which was not the case—"it would be Imprudent yet for some time."¹²⁷ After defensively commenting that his infirmities had proved no handicap to the expedition, Forbes cited that Indian allies of the French soon would leave for fall hunting, that any attack now would jeopardize the Easton conference, and that any success of Bradstreet at Frontenac would serve to weaken the Fort Duquesne garrison.¹²⁸

Bouquet replied on the 4th to urge that every effort be bent towards action, particularly in securing wagons to haul provisions and build up supply reserves, the lack of which was the prime reason for delay.

Three reasons for action were cited by Bouquet. First, as far as the Indians were concerned, he advised an exhibit of strength—the big stick approach—as the best method to assure success at Easton. Second, he cited that the army was becoming impatient and bored. Finally he frankly told his commanding officer—in an unusual appeal from a subordinate to his superior—that Forbes' very military reputation was at stake: "England and America have eyes fixed on you. Of the three expeditions, one has failed, the other has succeeded; but all have acted, and we are remaining inactive. It is annoying to be reduced to self justification."¹²⁹

Forbes' response to the merited criticism was prompt. Strong letters were addressed to Governor Denny and to members of the Assembly, laying the blame on Pennsylvania for supply failure and demanding help under threat of withdrawing troops and once again exposing the frontier.¹³⁰ St. Clair was sent to Philadelphia to prod

¹²⁶ Bouquet to Washington, Sept. 4, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 475.

¹²⁷ Forbes to Bouquet, Sept. 2, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 460.

¹²⁸ After Abercromby's defeat, Lt. Col. John Bradstreet was given a small task force for an attack on Fort Frontenac that guarded the mouth of Lake Ontario at its easterly end. The attack was successful on August 27, but news of the victory did not reach Forbes until the middle of September.

¹²⁹ Bouquet to Forbes, Sept. 4, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 471.

¹³⁰ Forbes to Denny, Sept. 9, 1758: *James*, p. 206.

the Assembly and see to the securing of wagons, by impressment if necessary.

Forbes remained confident of the success of the expedition—despite the supply shortage, despite almost total defection of the southern Indians, and despite his low opinion of the services to be expected from provincial troops.¹³¹ His main concern in writing to the Prime Minister on September 6 was what to do about Fort Duquesne in the event of success since supply would be difficult over the winter months: “In a few days I shall have most of my Troops moved forward towards the head, there to be in readiness of seizing the first favourable Opportunity of marching to the Banks of the Ohio, which I now have in my power of doing, by a march of 48 hours, and if refused the Carriages demanded from the Pennsylvanians, or they appear too tardy, and dilatory in the execution thereof, I shall most certainly try it upon flour, and rice, with the Assistance of what live Cattle we can carry forward with us.”¹³²

Brave words were these, written by the ailing Forbes from Fort Loudon, en route from Shippensburg to Raystown in an improvised ambulance described by him as “a Hurdle carried betwixt two Horses,” and on a trip not to be concluded for another ten days.

While Forbes was putting pressure on Pennsylvania to procure more wagons, Bouquet was busy at Loyalhanna, securing the post and sending out additional work parties to repair the road back to Raystown. The road already had been a month in the making and still was unsatisfactory, particularly the section over Laurel Hill. He reported to Forbes on the 11th: “After the fine description which had been given of the roads, I was greatly surprised to find them abominable. The way has been opened by cutting down trees, but that is all. No trouble has been taken to go around the hills, to remove or break the stones, and the bridges are worthless. To my regret it is a job which must be done over.”¹³³

Colonel Burd's advance party 1,500 strong reached Loyalhanna on the 3rd; Bouquet arrived on the 7th. Now the army was deep

131 Forbes complained to Prime Minister Pitt: “A few of their principle Officers excepted, all the rest are an extream bad Collection of broken Innkeepers, Horse Jockeys, & Indian traders . . . they are a gathering from the scum of the worst of people, in every Country. . . .” Forbes to Pitt, Sept 6, 1758: *James*, p. 202. Later in the campaign the General thought better of at least some of the provincials.

132 *Ibid.*

133 Bouquet to Forbes, Sept. 11, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 492.

in enemy country and the enemy was not slow to respond. Indian scalping parties harassed the camp for almost the first time in the campaign. To "check the boldness of the Indian rabble" Bouquet gave a ready ear to a proposal of Major Grant of the Highlanders for a reconnaissance in force against Fort Duquesne—*alla barb*, as Forbes earlier had suggested.

Hastily plans were drawn up—repentance at leisure was to come later. A force of 800 men was organized, half regulars and half provincials. A pack horse train was formed and necessary provisions rounded up. Unfortunately no experienced provincial officers were available to outrank¹³⁴ and hold down the headstrong Grant. Lieutenant Colonel Stephen of Washington's regiment was in arrest.¹³⁵ Colonel Armstrong of the Pennsylvania First Battalion, hero of the 1756 assault on Kittanning and feared by the Indians, was somewhere on top of Allegheny Mountain recuperating from illness and directing road repair. Second Battalion Commander Burd was needed to command the Loyalhanna defenses.

So it was Grant's show and the start was as inauspicious as the finish. On the 8th 300 troops under Maryland's Lieutenant Colonel Dagworthy¹³⁶ were sent forward as a covering force to occupy and fortify the advance post (Grant's Paradise). Grant set out from Loyalhanna the next day, but from a mix-up in plans still was at the advance post when Bouquet came up on the 10th.¹³⁷

Grant finally moved out from the advance post on the 11th and by 3 P.M. on the 12th was within 16 miles of Fort Duquesne. The next afternoon he moved forward four miles and halted until 6 P.M. Then the march was resumed under cover of darkness for the remaining 12 miles.¹³⁸ The troops assembled about 2 A.M. on the 14th on Grant's Hill—all without discovery by the French.

Grant's defeat after the lifting of the early morning fog need

134 As contrasted with rank problems between regulars and provincials in earlier joint military efforts, Pitt gave full recognition to provincial rank for his 1758 campaigns. Date of commission controlled between officers of equal rank. Pitt to the Governors, Dec. 30, 1757: *Kimball*, p. 140.

135 Restored to command September 13. Sent with 300 men to help Dagworthy cover Grant's retreat at news of the defeat. Bouquet to Stephen, Sept. 13, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 496.

136 Promoted from captain: Forbes to Bouquet, Aug. 28, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 439. See also *Bouquet Orderly Book*, Aug. 30, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 685.

137 Bouquet to Forbes, Sept. 11, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 492.

138 Under a moon nearing full. New moon was September 2.

not be repeated here.¹³⁹ As far as future military operations were concerned, the loss of 273 picked men was severe; more serious as a command matter was the loss of 22 of 36 officers, including Grant himself and the almost indispensable Engineer Rhor.

Forbes took Grant's defeat in stride. Not the battle but the campaign concerned him. "how far we shall find the bad effects of it, I shall not pretend to say," he wrote Bouquet on the 23rd.¹⁴⁰

The loss, actually, was not without compensating values. It demonstrated the soundness of the plan of deposits and strong points to secure a retreat. Braddock's routed army, it will be recalled, not only was without reserves worthy of the name but had no place to make a stand and reorganize within 100 miles.

Again, as the recital of distances indicates, Grant's foray demonstrated that Fort Duquesne was within easy reach of Loyalhanna over favorable terrain that would even permit a night march with full flank protection. And finally the defeat seemed to give a lift to troop spirits. "The Troops now breathe nothing but Revenge and are in high Spirits," wrote Brigade Major Joseph Shippen of the Pennsylvania Regiment.¹⁴¹ With the waggoners it was otherwise—many deserted.¹⁴²

Forbes arrived at Raystown on the 15th. Washington paid a hurried call the next day. Provisions again were in short supply at Fort Cumberland and Forbes took prompt corrective action to provide for Governor Sharpe's militia that was to relieve Washington. The Virginia troops were ordered up to Raystown as soon as possible.¹⁴³ Forbes reported his actions to Bouquet on the 17th: ". . . I have seen with regret for this some time past a Jealousy and suspicion subsisting on the part of the Virginians which they can have no reason for, as I believe neither you nor I values one farthing where we get provisions from, provided we are supplied, or Interest ourselves either with Virginia or Pennsylvania, which last I hope will be damn'd for their treatment of us with the Waggoners, and every other thing where they could profit by us

139 Grant to Forbes, Sept. 14, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 499; Bouquet to Forbes, Sept. 17, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 517. Casualties, *Bouquet Papers*, p. 508. Prisoners, *Bouquet Papers*, p. 535. Newspaper account in *Pennsylvania Gazette* of Oct. 5, 1758 is reprinted in *Olden Time*, I, p. 179.

140 Forbes to Bouquet, Sept. 23, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 535.

141 Joseph Shippen to Edward Shippen, Sept. 19, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 527.

142 Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 8, 1758: *James*, p. 224.

143 *Forbes-Washington Orderly Book* gives a day-by-day account of military activities at Raystown from September 21 on, after arrival of Washington's troops at Raystown, and traces the movements of the Virginia troops until the eve of the capture of Fort Duquesne.

from their impossitions, Altho' at the risque of our perdition . . . "144 A postscript contained the welcome news of Bradstreet's success at Frontenac.

A week later Forbes once again took up the cudgel against the Virginians and their persistent road complaints. On the 23rd he wrote Bouquet: 145 "Col^o Stephens¹⁴⁶ writes Col^o Washington, that he is told by everybody, that the road from Loyall Hannon to the Ohio and the French Fort is now impracticable, for what reason, or why, he writes thus, I do not know; but I see Col^o Washington and my friend, Col^o Byrd, would rather be glad this was true as otherways, Seeing the other road (their favorite Scheme) was not followed out; I told them plainly that, whatever they thought . . . we had proceeded from the best Intelligence that could be got for the good and convenience of the Army . . . The road forward to the Ohio must be reconnoitered again in order to be Sure of our further progress, for it would grieve me sadly that Mr. Washington or Mr. Byrd should have any reason to find fault, with that, which without their knowledge they have so publickly exclaimed against."

In the same letter Forbes assured Bouquet that the supply picture was brighter, and acknowledged with regret and some concern, Grant's fiasco. He also expressed optimism regarding the Easton Indian conference.

Another thread in the route story appears at this point. Bouquet apparently was toying with the idea of a water-borne invasion when fall rains would make possible descent of the Allegheny by boat from Loyalhanna. On the 20th Engineer Harry Gordon gave him an estimate for building bateaus.¹⁴⁷ On the 27th Scout Alexander Beall gave him a report on courses and distances from the Loyal Hanna to the Kiskiminetas and down that river.¹⁴⁸

As September came to a close Forbes' army was no farther advanced than it had been at the beginning of the month. Washington had moved on to Raystown but his move was north and not

144 Forbes to Bouquet, Sept. 17, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 522.

145 Forbes to Bouquet, Sept. 23, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 535.

146 Undoubtedly his arrest by St. Clair had embittered Stephen. On September 9 he had reported to Washington, "You can have no reason to alter your opinion of the Rout of the Army . . . I can make it appear that the Virginians have Contributed their Utmost to forward his Majestys Service." Stephen to Washington, Sept. 9, 1758: *Hamilton*, III, p. 87.

147 Estimate for Building Bateaus, Sept. 20, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 529.

148 Alexander Beall: Report of Distances, Sept. 27, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 545. Loyalhanna Creek flows into the Conemaugh River at Saltsburg to form the Kiskiminetas River which in turn flows into the Allegheny River at Freeport.

west. If Washington's complaints had merit on September 1 they had double merit on September 30. Another month of no progress had passed. All that had happened was Grant's mad gamble with fame which only added to Washington's low opinion of British regulars, be they Braddock, Bouquet, Forbes or Grant.

Washington, however, did not see the whole picture. From the standpoint of Forbes, the dark clouds of delay were lifting. While troops still were being held back pending further supply build-up, the supply situation was improving. Washington's Cumberland garrison had joined the main army at Raystown. Road repairs were going apace. The Easton Indian Conference gave promise of success. And finally, Bradstreet's victory at Frontenac had cut communication between Fort Duquesne and Montreal. No longer could the enemy be reinforced from Canada either in men or supplies this year.

There still was time, though just barely enough. Success seemed assured—if Forbes' health and the fickle weather permitted.

[To be continued]