THE GENERAL CHOOSES A ROAD
The Forbes Campaign of 1758 to Capture Fort Duquesne
NILES ANDERSON
THIRD INSTALLMENT
VII. "Pray God Send Us a Few Fair Days"—October 1758

The rolling hills of Pennsylvania were resplendent in their fall coloring in October 1758—as they are every October—yet not one word of beauty appears in the military correspondence of the month—or in any other month of the campaign, for that matter.¹⁴⁹

Nature was hard and nature was rough to the road building army. The blossoming laurel and rhododendron were but impenetrable thickets through which to hack a path. The green sea of tree tops stretching limitless to the horizon was but an endless roof to block the sun from the gloomy forest floor—the “Shades of Death”—beneath. And the turning leaves were but war paint of the enemy’s lurking, scalp-bent Indians.

Forbes’ army, however, might as well have enjoyed the scenery that October in 1758. They did little else—besides repair roads, perform camp fatigue and pull guard. Unseasonable rains made a quagmire of roads and slowed the advance until late in the month when the uncertain sun dried the clay to permit the army to close.¹⁵⁰

At month’s end Bouquet still was encamped at Loyalhanna where he had been joined by the rest of Washington’s troops. Forbes with the army rear had progressed from Raystown to Stony (or Stoney) Creek (Stoyestown).

¹⁴⁹ One exception: describing Loyalhanna Major George Armstrong wrote Bouquet on July 27, 1758 that it “is a very pretty place; well watered and Grass in abundance.” Bouquet Papers, p. 283.

With the successful completion of the campaign, Bouquet promised Anne Willing an account of the expedition “chiefly about the beauty of this situation, which appears to me beyond description.” Bouquet to Willing Nov. 25, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 608.

¹⁵⁰ Hopeful Forbes wrote Bouquet on October 15, 1758: “Your Description of the roads pierces me to the very soul yet still my hopes are that a few dry days would make things wear a more favorable aspect as all Clay Countrys are either good or bad for Cariages according to the wet or dry season.” Bouquet Papers, p. 571.
October was a month of frustration and promise, marked by only one happening of note—the successful repulse of an attack on the fort at Loyalhanna when French and Indians from Fort Duquesne came to repay Grant's September call.

The Braddock Road versus new road argument lay dormant but the bitterness and scars remained. On the 3rd Colonel Armstrong reported to Richard Peters, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Provincial Council: "The Virginians are much chagrined at the opening of the road through this government, and Colonel Washington has been a good deal sanguine and obstinate upon the occasion."

Forbes pictured the plans and problems of the month to Abercromby on the 8th, writing from Raystown: "It is now ten days past, when I proposed to have marched from this, and to have marched directly for the banks of the Ohio, which would have taken eight days . . . but the provisions and Waggons put an absolute barr to that Step for a few days, and was no sooner remedied, than some excessive rains made the roads absolutely impracticable . . . all my endeavours have by some fatality or other been frustrated."

One other problem Forbes cited to Abercromby, a problem that had been vexatious from the beginning of the campaign in spite of countless scouting parties sent to Fort Duquesne. He had no accurate knowledge of the enemy's strength. Earlier Forbes had commented to Bouquet, "Wee are like people in the Dark, perhaps going headlong to Destruction."

Whereas George Croghan, Indian agent of the Pennsylvania government, estimated a strength of at least 4000 at Fort Duquesne, Forbes' own judgment was that the enemy could have no more than 1200. The difficulty was that although the garrison strength at the fort at a given time reasonably could be estimated, there was no way to evaluate reinforcement capabilities. While Bradstreet's success at Frontenac had barred the northern and major source for augmentation of troops and supplies, the waterway to the south still was open. Further, the war potential of Indian allies of the French was but conjecture with the endless forests hiding their numbers.

In early October Bouquet personally took charge of road repairs. The line of communication, already more than a month in

152 Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 8, 1758: James, p. 224.
154 Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 8, 1758: James, p. 224.
the making, was almost impassable from usage and rain, particularly the section from Fort Stony Creek to Fort Dudgeon and over Laurel Hill to Loyalhanna.\(^{155}\) In the meantime Colonel Burd, with upwards of 1500 men, defended the depot and fort at Loyalhanna and busied himself in strengthening the fort and in improving the road forward to the advance post of Grant's Paradise.

The result was that Bouquet was mired in the mud on the easterly side of Laurel Hill when at noon on the 12th French and Indians from Fort Duquesne attacked Loyalhanna, and continued their attack through the night.\(^{156}\)

Losses to the Loyalhanna garrison in the skirmish were light, about 60 men, half from the grass guard. More serious from a military standpoint was the loss of all the horses which would need to be replaced before any assault on Fort Duquesne. The oxen, fortunately, were saved and the fresh meat supply not interrupted.\(^{157}\)

Jubilant was the word for the provincials under Colonel Burd who thought they had won a great victory. The wagoners who had deserted after Grant's defeat now were "as brave as Lyons."\(^{158}\) Forbes and Bouquet were less impressed, particularly since there had been no pursuit of the outnumbered enemy.

To Forbes it merely was an incident in the daily grind of an army. Reporting to Prime Minister Pitt,\(^{159}\) he first commented that Grant's defeat had been a "most terrible check" on his small army "just in readiness to have marched to the Enemy." Then he added: "Since then nothing has happened, except that upon the 12th . . . a Body of 900 French & Canadians, came to repay Major Grant's

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\(^{155}\) From Stony Creek on October 12 Bouquet reported to Burd that he had discovered a new way to the top of Laurel Hill "4 miles shorter, and 8 miles better" and asked for a work detail and 100 axes. The new road shortened the way from Stony Creek to Fort Dudgeon by by-passing Kickenapaulins (Quemahoning Reservoir). It more nearly followed the line of today's Kantner-Jennerstown section of U. S. 30. Bouquet to Burd, Oct. 12, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 551. See also line of road on Potts' Marching Journal.

\(^{156}\) Bouquet had immediate reports of the action and could hear the cannon, but was helpless to do other than trust in his judgment of Burd to still his natural concern. He sent a dispatch to Burd, "I am very easy about you, the Post is Strong and in good hands." Bouquet to Burd, Oct. 13, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 553. Bouquet likewise informed Forbes, "Be at ease about the post." Bouquet to Forbes, Oct. 13, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 555. Forbes reacted by sending forward reinforcements, including Colonel Washington and the remaining 200 troops of his Virginia regiment. Forbes to Bouquet, Oct. 15, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 561. See Forbes-Washington Orderly Book for details of Washington's march.


\(^{158}\) Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 16, 1758: *James*, p. 231.

visit... They attacked the Post for three hours, with little damage on either side."

Perhaps the victory might have been greater had the British forces pursued. On the other hand, the attack did fail, and once again was demonstrated the soundness of the plan of "deposits." And unmistakably the victory, such as it was, belonged to the provincial command.

The rains that had mired Bouquet at Fort Dudgeon while Burd was earning his spurs at Loyalhanna, also mired the impatient Forbes at Raystown. He complained to Abercromby on the 16th that he had been stalled by mud since the 8th, adding: "I am ruined and undone by Rain, So pray God send us a few fair days—At present can not move one yard."160 All Forbes could do therefore was sit tight and hopefully wait out the rains, meanwhile making plans for going ahead when the weather permitted.

Bouquet again was instructed to reconnoitre all possible routes to Fort Duquesne—including the Braddock Road—to quiet any arguments that later might develop regarding failure from choosing the wrong road.161 Bouquet's reconnaissance parties reported back that while they could fall in with the Braddock Road, the Monongahela River was unfordable and in addition the Braddock way would be 20 miles longer than other routes.162

By the end of the third week the rains let up and the sun came out to dry the sticky clay and give promise of passable roads. Weather problems still were uppermost in Forbes' mind, however, when he reported his projected forward movement to Pitt on the 20th:163 "I am now upon my march to the Ohio, as the Season will not admit of one Moments delay, and I wish most sincerely I could have proceeded sooner, as I have no alternative left me now, but a bold push at last, to which I have been absolutely drove by a Multiplicity of Cross Events." Forbes detailed the cross events of wagons and roads, and then summarized the weather and wilderness problems: "... The whole an immense uninhabited Wilderness overgrown everywhere with trees and underbrush, so that no where can any one see twenty yards those roads during the hott and dry Seasons were made practicable for carriages, and I was assured by every

160 Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 16, 1758: James, p. 231.
162 Bouquet to Forbes, Oct. 20, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 582.
163 Forbes to Pitt, Oct. 20, 1758: James, p. 237.
one, and made believe that the Months of October and November were the two best Months in the year for an Expedition because of the trees losing their leaves, by which one can see a little thro' the woods, and prevent the Enemy's surprize, which is their only strength, and likewise, that in those two Months the Indians leave the French as it is their chief hunting Season, in which they provide for their families during the winter."

He explained to Pitt that October had not borne out its promise because unusual rains had rendered the clay roads absolutely impracticable for artillery and wagons. He concluded: "I cannot form any judgement, how I am to extricate myself, as everything depends upon the Weather, which snows and rains frightfully... and must in a day or two choose either to risque everything, and march to the Enemy's Fort, retreat across the Allegany if the provincials leave me, or maintain myself where I am to the Spring." One note of promise was contained in the report of dreary prospect: the Easton Indian conference had been successful.164

By the next day—Saturday the 21st—the continued fair weather persuaded the mud-bound Forbes to move forward. He notified Bouquet: "... as now the Weather has been extremely fine... and as we now have plenty of provision betwixt this and Loyal Hannon for forty days, besides five hundred Pack horses on the Road from Carlile... and the Season of the year pressing hard upon us, I have therefore ordered the whole to march upon monday next with a design to make very few resting days, untill that we see the Enemy."165

The fickle weather did not hold to its promise. While the long delayed closing on Loyalhanna got under way on schedule,166

166 With the forward movement under way, Forbes was concerned with problems of success almost as much as with the shadows of failure. Both presented like difficulties. He informed Pennsylvania Governor Denny on the 22nd that even if Fort Duquesne were not taken, it still would be necessary to garrison the various forts on the army road as well as those east of the Susquehanna, and that his 1,200 remaining regulars would not be available for that service. Forbes to Denny, Oct. 22, 1758: James, p. 242. Similar letters were addressed to the other southern provinces. Denny presented Forbes' request for provincial troops to the Provincial Assembly on Nov. 16, 1758, but no action was taken. Pa. Colonial Records, p. 226. See Forbes-Washington Orderly Book for details of march to Loyalhanna.
rain stalled the column at Fort DeWart\textsuperscript{167} on the 24th. There, in the "camp top of the Allegany Mountain," the troops huddled in their tents for five days, waiting a break in the weather. The muddy night of the 24th Forbes wrote Abercromby that the roads were so bad that "horses could not carry back empty waggons" and in low spirits announced: "I am told that it is impossible unless assisted by a miracle to proceed . . . I confess my sanguine hopes of success are sunk to the lowest depths."\textsuperscript{168}

The next day he wrote Bouquet that "I dread these four last days perpetuall rain have entirely putt the roads past all hope of recovery for this season." But dark as the outlook might be, Forbes resolved to keep going when the weather again permitted. He continued to Bouquet: "For my own part I am soon determined . . . to do all in my power that prudence can suggest for the good of the service, nor do I think that in the Criticall way things stand, one is anyways flattered to run the risque of ruin, in the rash pursuit of military glory."\textsuperscript{169}

Take a chance Forbes would, if the odds were in his favor, but he was not a born gambler to risk all, or to risk his men, for the mere sake of military glory.

Finally the rains let up and the sun came out. On the 30th tents were struck at Fort DeWart and over the impossible roads the army rear proceeded. Forbes reached Stony Creek that night, but again the rains came and the roads once again were a morass. So at the end of the month Forbes was marooned at Stony Creek, just over the mountain from final decision.

While Forbes was attempting to reach Loyalhanna, Bouquet continued to prepare his contingent of the army for combat. Clothes and equipment were inspected and shortages noted. A "Return of Maryland Troops under the Command of Lt. Col. Dagworthy Wanting Necessaries," dated October 25, eloquently attests the supply situation and the troop morale: "The Whole wants Blankets, but they are sent for; The Whole wants Clothes, but they are making."\textsuperscript{170}

To Washington's mind the month of October further accented the merit of his original contention concerning difficulties in build-

\textsuperscript{167} Also called Fort MacLean. Clearly discernible earth embankments 60 feet square still mark the original fortification. Located at the head of Breast-work Run, one mile north of Grandview on U. S. 30.

\textsuperscript{168} Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 24, 1758: James, p. 244.

\textsuperscript{169} Forbes to Bouquet, Oct. 25, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 584.

\textsuperscript{170} Thomas Balch, Provincial History of Pennsylvania, p. 147.
ing a new road, and brought closer to reality his prophecy that the campaign would bog down at Loyalhanna for the winter. On the 30th he reported to Virginia Governor Fauquier: "My march to this post gave me an opportunity of forming a judgment of the road; and I can truly say, that it is indescribably bad. Had it not been for an accidental discovery of a new passage over the Laurel Hill, the carriages must inevitably have stopped on the other side." 171

Washington had every reason to believe that by using the Braddock Road the army would have been at Fort Duquesne before now. Whether the fact of arrival would have assured victory was another matter. Washington had yet to learn the rewards of patience and the value of striking when odds favored the main chance. His experience gave him no basis to evaluate the success of the Easton Conference, nor to weigh the influence of Post's second journey among the Indians, nor to judge the strategic value of English victories farther north.

Now time was short and the season advanced. The army was drawing together and November would be the month of final decision. A striking force of some 5000 effectives shortly would be on anxious leash at Loyalhanna. 172

VIII. "... TAKING BRADDOCK'S ROAD... WOULD HAVE BEEN OUR DESTRUCTION"—November 1758

Over the rocky Laurel Hill and into the fort at Loyalhanna

172 At this time about 6,000 troops were being provisioned out of Raystown, including the Loyalhanna advance party, and another 600 men were on detached service on the Pennsylvania frontiers and on the line of communication and serving as wagon escorts. An estimated 500 sick would be hospitalized at the General Hospital at Raystown and a garrison left for local defense there when the army moved forward to join Bouquet at Loyalhanna. Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 24, 1758: James, p. 244. (See note 63.)

The Raystown troop return for Sept. 25, 1758, cited in Olden Time, II, p. 284 and also in W. H. Lowdermilk, History of Cumberland (Md.), p. 249, is as follows:

Royal Americans ............. 363
Highlanders .................. 1,267
Virginia ..................... 1,484
North Carolina ................ 141
Maryland ..................... 270
Pennsylvania .................. 2,192
Lower Counties ............... 263 5,980

Detached Service:

Pennsylvania ............... 563
North Carolina ............. 61 624

5,980

6,604
jolted Brigadier General John Forbes in his horse litter on November 2, 1758.

For the first time in the campaign the little task force now was together and it was a pleasant sight for the worn general after the toilsome months of preparation and frustration—the plaid kilts of the Highlanders and the scarlet coats of the Royal Americans, set off by the green coats of the Pennsylvanians and the buckskin brown of the Virginians, with a flash here and there of the yellow and vermilion of the few remaining Indians—all the more colorful against a backdrop of frost-turned and falling leaves in the waning days of nature's fall pageantry!

And what of it if the brambles and brush and mud had torn the uniforms and stained their colors, if leggings were in ribbons and shoes without soles, the men dirty and unkempt? The heart of the sternest of commanders must have been stirred. We may guess that for a moment John Forbes forgot his horse litter and incessant pain, forgot his supply and road and other difficulties, and envisioned for one instant the glory of the conqueror. His objective—Fort Duquesne—was but fifty short miles to the west. But just for one instant, and then the stark realities pierced the golden dream. So near to success, every military fact, every reasonable assumption, pointed to failure.

There still was no knowledge of enemy strength. Winter clothing was not available for the troops. Roads soon would be impassable and the army snow-bound, with no replenishment for the dwindling supplies until spring. Natural forage for cattle and horses was gone. Provincial troops would melt away within a short time with the December 1 expiration of their enlistment period.

Yet Forbes was not one to give up until the last moment. Preparations went ahead as if there still were time and as if expected supplies would arrive on schedule. To follow up the treaty at Easton letters were addressed to the Delawares and Shawnees on

173 The troops were reviewed on November 4 and the General was pleased. General Orders of the day state, "Brigadier Forbes was Extremely well pleased with the appearance that the troops made this day and returns the Officers and Soldiers his most hearty thanks." Forbes-Washington Orderly Book.

174 Stevenson to Bouquet, June 2, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 7.
176 Although the enlistment period for many of the provincials was to expire December 1, 1758, Forbes had privately resolved to hold these troops for an additional month. Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 24, 1758: James, p. 244.
the Ohio, recommending that they return to their home fires for safety.  

The senior officers were asked to submit plans for a march on Fort Duquesne. Bouquet suggested a winter attack by boat, and Washington criticized the plan in friendly fashion. Earlier Washington had suggested an attack formation that in general principles eventually was to be used.

Finally the hour of decision arrived. It was either attack now or hole up for the winter. A Council of War on the 11th was attended by Bouquet, Montgomery, St. Clair, Washington, Byrd, Armstrong, Burd and Mercer (Colonel Hugh Mercer of the Third Pennsylvania Battalion). All battalion and regimental commanders were present. Pros and cons were weighed, and the reluctant conclusion reached that it was not worth the risk to proceed further until spring and jeopardize success so far attained in thwarting the Indian menace. Unanimously the senior officers recommended: "The risks being so obviously greater than the advantages there is no doubt as to the sole course that prudence dictates."

So the prediction of Washington was to come true. The army was to be stalled at Loyalhanna over winter—and all because the Braddock Road had not been used.

To cast further gloom on the reluctant decision of halting at Loyalhanna for the winter, the supply situation now was so critical that half rations were ordered. Liquor there was in plenty—a gill of spirits per man per day—but flour and meat were in short supply and the ration was cut to one-half pound each per man per day.

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177 Forbes to Kings Beaver and Shingas, and Forbes to the Shawnees and Delawares on the Ohio, Nov. 9, 1758: James, p. 252. On his second mission to the Indians Christian Frederick Post carried copies of these letters.

178 Bouquet: Proposals for a Winter Expedition, Nov. 5, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 594. (See also notes 147 and 148.)

179 Washington to Bouquet, Nov. 6, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 597.


181 Bouquet: Council of War, Nov. 11, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 600.

182 Washington was slow to appreciate that an advance this far partially fulfilled Forbes' orders from Prime Minister Pitt. Bouquet earlier had recognized the point. In August Bouquet wrote Forbes to suggest, in view of uncertain intelligence about the enemy, that a fortified post at Loyalhanna would serve two purposes: as a springboard for an attack, or if the enemy were too strong, as a frontier outpost. In the latter event he noted, "We shall have already accomplished something by regaining 140 miles of lost ground, and by occupying all the passes through which their parties come to overrun the provinces." Bouquet to Forbes, Aug. 8, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 335.


Then occurred one of the most fortunate bits of good luck ever to fall the lot of a beset general, and the general was quick to take advantage of the circumstance. What Forbes had been trying to obtain for months from countless scouting parties—accurate intelligence of the enemy—was delivered into his hands, unasked for. Prophetic indeed had been his words in an earlier letter to Abercromby: "I know one thing certain, that a little good luck and success often justifies the worst of measures and the stupidest of actions." 

The good fortune came about as the aftermath of an inconceivable, but understandable, military blunder. The day after the Council of War, Indians attacked in an attempt to kill or carry away the oxen and horses. Forbes sent out two strong detachments to pursue and surround the raiding party.

As darkness closed in, the two parties mistook each other for the enemy and opened fire, killing and wounding some two score fellow soldiers. Washington himself was in the middle of the crossfire and with difficulty brought the trigger-happy men to their senses—and the ignominy of it all was that the men were Virginians, his own troops.

Three prisoners were captured, two Indians and one white man. The white man was a British subject who had joined the French. Faced with the likelihood of death sentence for bearing arms against the King, he broke down in interrogation to tell of the weakness of the forces at Fort Duquesne.

This was all Forbes needed to know. Now he was willing to push ahead, with the odds of success in his favor, short rations or no short rations. An attack force of 2500 picked men was organized, divided into three brigades. Bouquet and Montgomery

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185 Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 16, 1758: James, p. 231.
187 The white man reputedly was named Johnston. Pennsylvania Gazette, Nov. 30, 1758, reprinted in Frontier Forts II, pp. 269-270. “Johnston” was the password to identify friendly Indians the eve of the capture of Fort Duquesne. Forbes-Washington Orderly Book and Shippen Orderly Book, Nov. 24, 1758.
188 Even though the attack was ordered Forbes prepared for all eventualities. On Oct. 16 he received reports from engineers Harry Gordon and Richard Dud-geon regarding measures to fortify Loyalhanna. Bouquet Papers, p. 602.
189 Figure of 2,500 is cited by Bouquet in a letter to William Allen. Bouquet to Allen, Nov. 25, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 610. Figure of 4,300 is cited in an article in the Pennsylvania Gazette of Nov. 30, 1758, reprinted in Frontier Forts, II, pp. 269-270.
and Washington were named commanders and given temporary rank as Brigadiers.\footnote{190}

On the 15th the attack got under way with segments of all three brigades on the march. The 1st and 2nd Brigades—detachments of them—went ahead to cover and prepare an advanced fortified position. Washington’s provincials drew the initial road-cutting assignment.

It was a makeshift road to be constructed, sufficient for a few pieces of artillery and a small wagon train. By 11 o’clock that night, a full moon shedding its helping light,\footnote{191} Washington had reached the top of Chestnut Ridge, six miles from Loyalhanna.

Apparently the old Trading Path along the south side of the Loyalhanna Creek, on which so much labor had been expended to make it passable to Grant’s Paradise, had to be abandoned because of marshy ground from fall rains. The new road went over Chestnut Ridge rather than through the Loyalhanna gap. From the far side of the ridge, south of Youngstown, the road followed in general the old Trading Path.\footnote{192}

The next day—the 16th—six more miles of road were cut. As he directed the cutters and their guards, Washington could not keep from mind that just 20 or so miles south lay the Braddock Road, already open and ready for use. He reminded Forbes: “The keeping of Fort duQuesne ... will be attended with great advantage to the middle Colonies; and I do not know so effectual a way of doing it, as by the communication of Fort Cumberland and Genl. Braddock’s Road.”\footnote{193}

By mid-morning of the 18th, Washington had arrived at Arm-

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\footnote{190} Bouquet commanded the 1st Brigade consisting of the Pennsylvania Regiment and the Royal Americans; Montgomery commanded the 2nd Brigade consisting of the Highlanders and the Second Virginia Regiment; Washington commanded the 3rd Brigade consisting of the First Virginia Regiment and North Carolina, Maryland and Lower County (Delaware) troops. Forbes-Washington Orderly Book, Nov. 14, 1758.
\footnote{191} New moon: October 31 and November 30.
\footnote{192} The northerly alternate of the Path was taken via the headwaters of the Turtle Creek in order to avoid ambuscade in the defiles farther south and to take advantage of higher ground which meant a dried road and better security. The southerly alternate which runs through the Bushy Run Battlefield site of 1763 was opened in the fall of 1759 when security was less important and a shorter route preferable.
\footnote{193} Washington to Forbes, Nov. 16, 1758: Fitzpatrick, p. 302.
strong's Camp, the "Three Redoubts," where an advanced fortified position had been laid out by engineer Harry Gordon. Washington's road cutters went ahead and returned at dark. The remainder of Washington's men helped with the new fortifications. The brigade butchers slaughtered and dressed the bullocks that had accompanied the troops in order to permit a new issue of fresh meat.

Early the next morning—3 a.m.—Washington went ahead with 1000 men in the direction of the headwaters of the Turtle Creek, leaving the Highlanders of the 2nd Brigade in position at the Three Redoubts to await the arrival of their commander, Montgomery. On the 20th Bouquet's 1st Brigade had joined up with Washington, and Forbes was but a few miles behind at the Three Redoubts. The 21st brought the three Brigades together at Washington's Camp (hilltops south of Newlonsburg). Now the outlook was bright: the weather continued fair; no enemy resistance had been encountered; more important, supplies again were sufficiently ample to permit a return to full rations.

Bouquet took the lead on the 21st and by nightfall had arrived at the final assault site—Bouquet's Camp (ridges south of line Center-Universal). Two days later, on the 23rd, the supply road had been cut to the new camp and all troops had assembled except the heavy artillery. Fresh rations were issued—six days flour and four days meat per man.

On the 24th local defenses were strengthened while awaiting return of scouting parties. Dispositions were made for the next day's attack. The scouts returned in the evening to report hearing explosions and seeing smoke over Fort Duquesne, and to report flight of the French. The light horse was sent forward to investigate.

The next day—the 25th—the whole of the little army marched...
the remaining miles to Fort Duquesne, in battle formation and with flankers out to avoid surprise. The entire day was taken for the movement.199

The first view of what had been Fort Duquesne was of charred chimneys200—sentinels in the sky to be replaced a century later by towering blast furnace chimneys as the characteristic silhouette of the town at the forks of the Ohio.

The 25th was a Saturday. The next day—Sunday—was proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving, with troops ordered to attend divine services.201 Then came burial of the dead, the corpses of Grant's command about the fort and in the nearby woods, and the weather-beaten bones that once had been Braddock's proud army a few miles away at Braddock's field.202

The senior officers were quick to report the capture of Fort Duquesne. Forbes reported to Abercromby and Amherst and the Provincial Governors and Prime Minister Pitt. To Pitt on the 27th he proudly announced that: "I have used the freedom of giving your name to Fort Duquesne . . . Nor could I help using the same freedom naming two other Forts that I built . . . the one Fort Ligonier & the other Bedford."203

199 See Olden Time, I, p. 181 et seq. on local color incidents on approach to Fort Duquesne, including reaction of Highlanders to sight of mutilated bodies of compatriots placed on stakes on Indian race track. Bancroft in his History of the United States, IV, p. 311, states that Pennsylvania Colonel John Armstrong raised the British flag. No authority has been found for the statement.

200 Pennsylvania Gazette, Dec. 14, 1758, with date line "Pittsburgh (Lately Fort Duquesne) Nov. 26, 1758": Bouquet Papers, p. 612, with notation "author unknown." Same letter in Olden Time, I, p. 184 and in Rupp Western Pennsylvania History, p. 301 appendix, is credited to Captain John Haslet as written to the Rev. Dr. Allison. Also in Frontier Forts, II, p. 95.

201 Who preached the first sermon is moot. Presbyterians claim the honor for the Rev. Charles Beatty, chaplain of the 1st Battalion of the Pennsylvania Regiment. They cite a letter in the Pennsylvania Gazette (see note 200) that "Mr. Beatle is appointed to preach a Thanksgiving Sermon." Not to be outdone, Church of England supporters quote General Orders of Nov. 26 that "The Whole Line to attend Divine Service at one o'Clock at the General's Tent. The Rev. Mr. Barclay to perform." Shippen Orderly Book, Nov. 26, 1758. A Rev. Thomas Barton had joined Forbes' army at Carlisle in July. Forbes to the Rev. Mr. Barton, July 9, 1758: James, p. 132. The Shippen Orderly Book for Nov. 25, 1758, has the general order "All the Troops are to attend Divine Service tomorrow afternoon."

202 Tradition has it that Major Halkett found the skeleton of his father, Col. Sir Peter Halkett, one of Braddock's two regimental commanders. Olden Time I, p. 186, quoting from Galt's Life of Benjamin West.

203 Forbes to Pitt, Nov. 27, 1758: James, p. 267. When it appeared that the campaign might be stalled at Loyalhanna for the winter, consideration was given to naming that locality after the Prime Minister. Council of War, Nov. 11, 1758: Bouquet Papers, p. 600. Even after the capture of Fort Pitt,
But the Braddock Road remained a sore spot. Washington was not one to admit that Forbes might have been right. To Governor Fauquier on the 28th he wrote: "The possession of this fort has been a matter of great surprise to the whole army, and we cannot attribute it to more probable causes, than those of weakness, want of provisions, and desertion of their Indians."\textsuperscript{204}

Bouquet was more outspoken in praise and in attributing success, in part, to use of the Forbes Road. On the 25th he wrote William Allen in Philadelphia: "After God the success of this Expedition is entirely due to the General, who by bringing about the Treaty of Easton, has struck the blow which has knocked the French in the head, in temporizing wisely to expect the Effects of that Treaty, in securing all his posts, and giving nothing to chance; and not yielding to the urging instances for taking Braddock's Road, which would have been our destruction."\textsuperscript{205}

With the celebration over the practical matter of disposing of the capture became important. Supplies could not be carried forward for a large garrison. Consequently a small force of 200 men, half Pennsylvanians and half Virginians, was organized for the defense of Pittsburgh.\textsuperscript{206} Colonel Hugh Mercer was put in command. The remainder of the troops were ordered home, into winter quarters, and into the many forts in the back country.\textsuperscript{207}

Forbes instructed Washington to march his troops home along the Braddock Road, repairing it en route.\textsuperscript{208} To this Washington demurred since his soldiers had left all their personal belongings at Loyalhanna. Forbes yielded to Washington's viewpoint. Washington so informed Bouquet, getting in the last word of the campaign on the road argument: "It has been representd to the General that it will be very inconvenient for the Virginia Troops to March along General Braddock's Road as their necessaries of every kind are at

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\textsuperscript{204} Washington to Fauquier, Nov. 28, 1758: \textit{Fitzpatrick}, p. 308.
\textsuperscript{205} Bouquet to Allen, Nov. 25, 1758: \textit{Bouquet Papers}, p. 610.
\textsuperscript{206} Forbes to Abercromby and Amherst, Nov. 26, 1758: \textit{James}, p. 262; Shippen Orderly Book, Nov. 29, 1758.
\textsuperscript{207} Forbes himself left Pittsburgh on December 3. His continued illness slowed his return trip to Philadelphia. He arrived in Philadelphia Jan. 17, 1759, and died there on March 11, 1759.
\textsuperscript{208} Shippen Orderly Book, Nov. 29, 1758.
Loyal hannan . . . and that the advantages proposed in pursuing the old Road; viz that of opening it, are very trivial; as this can always be done faster than a Body of Men can March.”\(^{209}\)

Actually Washington didn’t have the last word. Harry Gordon had it, Harry Gordon, the Engineer whom Forbes had labeled most inept, either “off at the nail” or “dilatory.”\(^{210}\) In 1765 Gordon, still in the service, prepared a “Memorial Concerning Back Forts in North America.” Discussing Fort Pitt he noted: “Before I finish the last Subject I must observe the extraordinary Infatuation that has attended likewise the Choice we have made of our Route.”\(^{211}\) Gordon explained away Braddock’s defeat as caused by delay of Pennsylvania in sending wagons. He claimed that if Forbes had used the Braddock Road he would have arrived at Fort Duquesne two months sooner. As it was, Gordon stated, Forbes had to “march back from Duquesne or starve.”

The argument can go on—Braddock Road or Forbes Road. But the inescapable fact remains that Forbes on a road of his own choice and making accomplished his mission and without even engaging the enemy. He did a soldier’s job. Success is his defense and a mighty good one on which to rest his case.

**IN CONCLUSION**

The year 1758 did not finish the Braddock Road-Forbes Road controversy. Road rivalry and provincial rivalry continued until the day came that not one road or two roads but many roads were needed to serve the growing nation.

The twisting forest aisle that was the Forbes Road played a major part in opening the west. Prior to the day of the canal and the railroads it was known to all America as the Great Road or Pennsylvania Road. Its original trace, with variations, today is followed by the Lincoln Highway, U.S. 30. The first section of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, joining Carlisle with Pittsburgh, as did Forbes’ route, closely approximates the road the soldiers hacked through the virgin wilderness two hundred years ago.

Others of today’s roads also reflect the pioneer work of Forbes’ axemen and their contemporaries. U.S. 220 flows from Bedford to Cumberland along the line of the communication opened to serve

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\(^{209}\) Washington to Bouquet, Nov. 29, 1758: *Bouquet Papers*, p. 615.

\(^{210}\) Forbes to Abercromby, Oct. 8, 1758: *James*, p. 224.

the conquering army. The spur of the old Burd Road, southwest from Bedford, now forms a part of scenic State Route 31, formerly called the "Glade Road." The planned but only partially completed connection between William's Ferry and Fort Cumberland now forms part of the first National Road, U.S. 40; U.S. 40 continues west from Cumberland to the summit above Uniontown along the line of Braddock's road.

This account has been of the Forbes expedition with road rivalry as the point of accent. While Washington lost the argument, nevertheless the story reveals the early military grasp and growth in military conception of the youthful soldier.

Where he was not self-taught, almost the whole of Washington's military education prior to the Revolution came at the hands of two British generals, Edward Braddock and John Forbes, and their subordinates. And what better tutors could the Virginian have had than the plodding, indomitable Scotsman and his loyal second-in-command Henry Bouquet; and what poorer tutor than the personally brave but inadequate Braddock?

It was well for America that Braddock failed where all signs pointed to his success, and that Forbes succeeded where all signs pointed to failure. Forbes won without engaging the enemy; Braddock lost by engaging the enemy. In the darkening days of conflict of the American Revolution, Washington thankfully could look back upon the emaciated, pain-racked little general in the horse litter who had taught him the virtue of patience, the value of logistics, the efficacy of training, and the reward of choosing battle upon his own terms.

A BRIEF BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Practically the whole story of the Forbes Road and Forbes Campaign may be gained from three recent anthologies: Bouquet Papers, Writings of Forbes (James), and Writings of Washington (Fitzpatrick), and from complementary Orderly Books of Henry
Bouquet, George Washington and Joseph Shippen. The anthologies locate the depositories of all writings.

If to the above is added the glowing account of master historian Parkman in *Montcalm and Wolfe*, plus a general background of the French and Indian War localized to Pennsylvania such as James' chapter on "Decision at the Forks" in James and Stotz *Drums in the Forest*, the story of Forbes will be in proper perspective. The accounts of the expedition in Buck's *Planting of Civilisation in Western Pennsylvania* and in Freeman's *George Washington* are excellent.

Only principal references are cited, particularly those published since the thorough bibliography compiled by Irene Stewart of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh as part of her *Letters of General John Forbes* in 1927. Buck and Freeman and the *Bouquet Papers*, cited above, contain complete bibliographies.

Citation to maps and accounts of early travelers, pointed chiefly to the course of the Forbes Road, are not included since exact road location is not a major premise of this account. Because of their particular worth, however, Potts' *Marching Journal* and Hulbert's *The Old Glade Road* are noted.

Attention should be called to the many excellent and popular publications of the University of Pittsburgh Press dealing with local history, the latest of which, a biography of General Braddock, was released in the summer of 1958: *Ill-Starred General* by Lee McCardell.

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