
'A Kind of Running Fight': Indian Battlefield Tactics in the Late Eighteenth Century

By Leroy V. Eid

WRITERS often disagree on whether defeating a large Indian military group was an inherently difficult task. Indians were then, and often are today, viewed as having been amateur soldiers who lacked discipline, easily ignored orders of their officers and who essentially followed, at best, the simplest of plans in a battle.¹ That armies commanded by Europeans like Braddock and Americans like St. Clair lost is obvious; what is often not admitted is

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1 Perhaps the most explicitly important academic work for assuring writers that the "Indians [were] virtually without discipline" would be an article by John K. Mahon, "Anglo-American Methods of Indian Warfare, 1676-1794," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 45 (1958), 254-275. A 1979 popularizer faithfully captured the assumptions of his authorities when he wrote that although the main occupation of the Indian males was war, nevertheless, "the Indian had no feeling for grand strategy, was a sketchy tactician, and was nothing more than a primitive warrior." Jon M. White, *Everyday Life of the North American Indian* (New York: 1979), 114-115.

A number of modern writers have, of course, approached the subject quite differently. George Snyderman's *Behind the Tree of Peace* (Philadelphia: 1948) covers a great number of important aspects of military history not included in battlefield tactics. Even for the more narrow tactical aspect, Snyderman includes 11 pertinent points under "pattern of fighting." Patrick Malone's *Indian and English Military Systems in New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Ann Arbor: 1971) insists that Indian military "could execute complicated tactical operations in the forest...." (page 34) Francis Jennings, in a widely republished section ("Savage War") from his *The Invasion of America* (Chapel Hill: 1975) persuasively shows how totally misleading it is to emphasize the "skulking" Indian "spreading havoc and desolation" everywhere. Two decades ago Thomas L. Connelly illustrated with numerous examples that Tennessee Indians effectively used regular formations in their battle with settlers. "Indian warfare on the Tennessee Frontier, 1776-1794: Strategy and Tactics," *East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications* 36 (1964), 3-22. Connelly's opinion of those who argued that the Tennessee Indians "did not have the social organization" to fight in a sophisticated manner also applies to the Ohio Valley: the "Indians did not read sociological studies, for group maneuvers and frontal assaults were used extensively...." A most authoritative defense of the sophistication of Indian-style

that they lost because the Indian side was in some way militarily superior. The technical reasons for large Indian military groups being so difficult to defeat remain, then, somewhat unknown. How Indians fought in large-scale battles is, then, the central and neglected aspect that needs study. What follows will be, in particular, an attempt to suggest some of the political and military implications of the use of the half-moon battlefield formation.² A short comparison of Gen. Edward Braddock's and Col. Henry Bouquet's encounters with Indians will be used to illustrate the core of Indian battlefield tactics.

In large-scale battles, Indians carried out the political will of their village, tribe, and often, of confederate allies. This national will was carried out by disciplined common soldiers led by capable officers. As a result, late eighteenth century Indian battlefield maneuvering revealed a sophisticated use of flanking movements proceeding from a half-moon starting position. These flanking movements incorporated, as needed, elements of advance, retreat and firepower. Because on a

war is to be found in J.F.C. Fuller, *British Light Infantry in the Eighteenth Century* (London: 1925), 240-41.

2 The following primary works of authors who were sensitized by long settlement among Indians form the bases of the military analysis of this paper and are paraphrased numerous times without being mentioned in the footnotes. Of central importance are: James Smith, *Scoouwa: James Smith's Indian Captivity Narrative*, ed. John J. Barsotti (Columbus: 1978) is only the most recent reprint of this 1799 book that was so extremely popular on the frontier regions; James Smith, *A Treatise on the Mode and Manner of Indian War* (Chicago, 1948) is the only reprint of this truly unknown 1812 pamphlet. Also important are Robert Rogers' *Journals* (Ann Arbor: 1966), particularly his list of 28 rules of woodland war; William Smith's *An Historical Account of the Expedition Against the Ohio Indians in the Year 1764* (Chicago, 1948), especially the section "Reflections of the War with the Savages of North-America"; the "General Observations" portion of James Adair's 1775 *The History of the American Indian*, ed. Samuel C. Williams (New York: 1973); Major John Norton's *Journal*, ed. Carl F. Klinck and James J. Talman (Toronto, 1970), with its long traditional Iroquois accounts of woodland wars; the chapter "Warfare" in Joseph Lafitau's comparative analysis of the *Customs of the American Indians*, ed. William N. Fenton and Elizabeth Moore (Toronto, 1977); and the "Of the Origin, Manners, Customs, Religion, and Language of the Indians" section of Jonathan Carver's *Travel Through the Interior Parts of North America* (Minneapolis, 1956).

However, it must be readily admitted that, quantitatively speaking, the majority of European and colonial observers do not support the views of these authors. The picture of Indian societies painted by observers like Lafitau rests on a fundamentally different perception from the usual European (and scholarly) norms of political, administrative, and military reality. It must be stressed, however, that it would be impossible to find authors who better knew historical northeast Indian woodland culture in general, and some of its principal tribal groups in particular. Just as importantly, these authors often tried to rise above the confused maelstrom of detail to describe dominant patterns in the otherwise anecdotal stream of ethnological minutiae.

number of occasions these elements were in fact present, a former Indian captive, James Smith, argued that Indian soldiers had "all the essentials of discipline," and were under the "good command" of officers who "act upon . . . principles." These principles help explain why the American Revolutionary soldier, John Cleves Symmes, insisted with the Eastern intellectual Elias Boudinot that "one hundred Marboroughs could not fight fifty Indians in the woods with success." James Smith's claim was less universal: ". . . could it be supposed that undisciplined troops could defeat General Braddock, [James] Grant, Etc.?"³ At the very least, a knowledge of these tactical aspects of Indian woodland fighting should resolve the presumed Braddock paradox of ill-disciplined Indians sometimes defeating European and colonial armies.

First, however, it is important to note that the mere presence on the battlefield of Indians in large numbers indicated an important public cause. Most authors fail to notice (or believe possible) the crucial distinction made by a number of particularly well-informed soldiers between two types of Indian war: a petty, private or partisan type and a "national," public-sanctioned type.⁴ Long before most fighting tribes in the American Northeast met significant numbers of Europeans and colonials, the tribes possessed some kind of mechanism for initiating large-scale activities. Indian armies around the Great Lakes, for example, did not noticeably increase in size or use of multi-tribal forces between the first decade of the 1600s through the early decades of the nineteenth century. For example, Marc Lescarbot's 1606 account of 1,000 Algonquian warriors from three distantly related tribes campaigning against the Iroquois shows Indians who practice maneuvers, appear on schedule, march in order, and approach the enemy in

3 J.C. Symmes, "John Cleve Symmes to Elias Boudinot," *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 5 (1910), 96. J. Smith, *Scoouwa*, 161, 163, 169. James Smith's two books are the most authentic defense of this point. For other examples that Indian rank-and-file were disciplined, see Leroy V. Eid, "The Cardinal Principle of Northeast Woodland Indian War," in *Papers of the Thirteenth Algonquian Conference*, ed. William Cowan (Ottawa: 1982), 243-250.

4 What follows has been elaborated upon at greater length in L.V. Eid, "'National War' Among Indians of Northeastern North America," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 16 (1985), 125-154. This article based itself on the distinction found in: Robert Rogers, *A Concise Account*, 219-229; J. Carver, 300-301; Pierre de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America* (Ann Arbor: 1966), I, 327-332; Joseph Lafitau, II, 101; Pierre Boucher, *Canada in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. E. Montizambert (Montreal: 1883), 63; John Norton, *Journal*, 128-29; Chrestien Le Clerq, *New Relation of Gaspesia*, ed. William Ganong (Toronto: 1910), 265. In these authoritative accounts the formal use of councils to control public war constituted the characteristic political difference between petite and national types of war.

clearly defined units.⁵ The lethality of these 1,000 soldiers (who carried no guns) was shown by their possession of the heads of a hundred Iroquois killed in the recent campaign at the mouth of the Richelieu River. These Iroquois, in turn, a few chapters later, are shown surprising a group of 200 men, women and children and killing all except five who escaped — all this before Europeans appeared on the scene in large numbers and with no sign in either example of the moderate type of war some scholars hold as characteristic of Indian war before European contact.

Of course, the gun was accepted, and important resulting modifications were shortly made in Indian warring. In particular, the elaborate mass maneuvers (with no pretense of surprise) observed by Champlain were replaced by the fluid motion of an ancient communal hunt. In either time period, communally sanctioned engagements followed sophisticated tactical, battlefield principles. These battlefield practices must be distinguished from the tactically primitive methods followed by the more commonly reported one of personal satisfaction but — and this is the point — they were sanctioned by a communal desire to keep the young men on their toes.⁶ A general military preparedness resulted from these partisan or private war parties. When national war was called for by the political arm, it could count on officers and soldiers trained in petite war.

Both types of war were fought under a limiting condition. Indians felt very much the loss of a single person because of their small number. Any loss had great consequences for the chief of a war party. Particular in the post-exploration period, Indian demographics necessitated this reluctance to sacrifice lives. It was all four of the four horsemen of the apocalypse who profoundly altered all Indian societies.⁷

The importance given the prudent prosecution of war by a traditional kin-based society can be seen in the authoritative account of the Mahican chief, Hendrick Aupaumut, of his visit among the Ohio Val-

5 Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, trans. W.L. Grant (Toronto: 1911) Vol. 3, 11, 86, 124. For disciplined Virginian Indians, see J. Frederick Fausz, "Fighting 'Fire' With Firearms: The Anglo-Powhatan Arms Race in Early Virginia," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 3 (1979), 34. An authoritative recent expression of the assumption that indigenous Indian war was not particularly lethal would be Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly* 40 (1983), 528-559. The New England Algonquin experience may have been a great deal less lethal. See P. Malone, 30-31.

6 J. Lafitau, 103; R. Rogers, *A Concise Account*, 219.

7 Karl H. Schlesier, "Epidemics and Indian Middlemen," *Ethnohistory* 23 (1976), 142. D. Richter has emphasized (536) already how "efforts to minimize fatalities underly several tactics that contemporary Euro-Americans considered cowardly...."

ley Indians on behalf of the fledgling American Republic.⁸ In the series of councils recorded by Aupaumut, the divisive split was not between peace and war chiefs, but rather between war and peace factions within the war chief category. Kin-based war emphasized different priorities than state armies. Moreover, in Aupaumut's account, only one group (the Shawnees) allowed warriors to operate independently of the civil political structure, and the Shawnees were roundly condemned by all for this aberration.

"But when war becomes a national affair," the soldier Robert Rogers claimed, "it is entered upon with great deliberation and solemnity, and prosecuted with the utmost secrecy, diligence and attention, both in making preparations and in carrying their schemes into execution." Even here, one more generally saw only the smaller units in the field. Small units acting in concert with announced national goals tended, however, to be a lot deadlier than small units with personal goals. More importantly, large-scale military efforts would only be seen in this type of war.

Even for national wars, though, harsh demographic realities necessitated prudential rules of war. There had evolved over the years a number of corollaries to a basic strategic principle that normally no real societal gain could come from bloody combats. Above all else, operational techniques to limit the number and percentage of casualties centered around the use of stratagems to insure ambushes. Corollaries of this central military mentality also included: not fighting at night, a primary responsibility for protecting one's family from attack, and travelling by different routes whenever possible.

James Smith believed the Indians when they told him that between 1755 and 1758, "they killed or took fifty of our people, for one that they lost," and in the war commencing in 1763 they "killed or took ten of our people, for one they lost."⁹ This was the level of advantage that Indian commanders strove for. An Indian soldier was expected to retreat, even to run at full speed, in a disastrous encounter. In normal no-win conditions, the Indian commander and his soldiers covered their retreat, and their ability to carry off their dead was almost legendary by this time. No unforgiveable disgrace followed, though, when overwhelming enemy superiority forced Indians to drop everything and run for their lives. Small private or partisan parties often got into this circumstance, but there are examples from some major battles. By

8 Hendrick Aupaumut, "A Short Narration," in *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* II (1827), 105-120.

9 J. Smith, *Scoouwa*, 165-66.

eighteenth century European military standards this ease in resorting to flight seemed unprofessional and was generally so reported. Unless one accepts James Smith's view that "this proceeds from a compliance with their rules of war, rather than cowardice," Indian flight will often seem contemptible.¹⁰

These death-reducing techniques may have been judged cowardly, but they were seldom executed amateurishly. Northeast Indian soldiers, in fact, often displayed impressive martial skills. According to James Smith, Indians were punctual in obeying orders, they acted in concert, and they cheerfully and immediately carried out directions. While in a formation that could be a mile long, they were able to move forward without disorder, and when necessary, form circles or semi-circles, or large hollow squares. Smith insisted that Indian officers plan, order, and conduct matters both before and during the action. In particular, "it is the business of the officers to lay plans to take every advantage of the enemy — to ambush and surprise them, and to prevent being ambushed and surprised themselves. . . ."¹¹

Surprise techniques in a battlefield situation could, of course, only work effectively if the troops were disciplined. Indeed, Indians developed the necessary organizational expertise to get very good at the use of surprise, even in large-scale confrontations. Indians were incredibly proficient at the actual moment of springing the ambush. Nevertheless, by the late eighteenth century, colonial military units of all sizes were taking extraordinary efforts to avoid being seriously hurt by any ambush. Crushing a large force (even if part of it was effectively ambushed) presented, secondly, a qualitatively different assignment from destroying a small party. To gain the ascendancy required some luck, extreme speed, and, most importantly, technique. It required discipline and military sophistication. Even assuming a large-scale initial advantage resulting from surprise, the ensuing fight could be won only on the basis of additional tactical principles besides surprise.

The other fundamental principle can be found in the practice of outflanking.¹² An ability to outflank an enemy explains the defeat of Major James Grant's defeat a few years after Braddock's rout. Grant's troops in front of Fort Duquesne went, in his own words, from being in

10 J. Smith, *A Treatise*, 12.

11 J. Smith, *Scoouwa*, 169.

12 Obviously, descriptions in simple terms of Indian woodland battlefield maneuvers are not intended to imply that these describe, in practice, simple operations. Military history can easily appear to trivialize battlefield accomplishments. The over-arching movement of a battle, campaign, or entire military tradition can be explained with deceptive simplicity.

an advantageous position "with nothing to fear" to a position where in "less than half an hour" they were "fired upon from every quarter." Major Robert Rogers' *Journal* warned of the same sort of thing: "prevent the enemy from pressing hard on either of your wings, or surrounding you, which is the usual method of the savages." Rogers was with the foolish Captain James Dalyell at the Battle of Bloody Run outside Detroit. Here the Indians pretended to be "giving way everywhere" but actually "were endeavoring to get into our Rear." Years of experience taught the successful nineteenth century Indian fighter and future president, William H. Harrison, about "the peculiar tact of the Indians in assailing the flanks of their adversaries."¹³

A French report on Braddock's defeat is a great deal less perceptive and illustrates a common misreading of Indian tactics. The report correctly saw that Indian fighting differed from European fighting, but the report went on to define that difference exclusively in terms of men shooting from behind trees. Benjamin Van Cleve gave his first-hand account of the technique as he practiced it in St. Clair's 1791 defeat in the Ohio woods: ". . . I generally put one knee to the ground & with a rest from behind a tree waited the appearance of an Indian's head from behind a tree or when one ran to change his position." This was, however, only the minimal woodland method of fighting. At Minisink, New York, in 1779, for example, the Americans were utterly destroyed even though in combat they fought so-called Indian style, defined by one well-known and well-informed author of the event, William Stone, as "every man for himself, and the whole keeping up an irregular fire from behind rocks and trees as best they could."¹⁴

As Van Cleve's own experience in the St. Clair debacle indicated, if one only hid behind a tree and waited, the initiative passed to the enemy. A knowledgeable Indian-style fighter found that motion must be added to the treeing technique. Dr. Alexander Hamilton of Annapolis critiques Braddock's tactics more correctly in 1755, summarizing In-

13 Hugh Cleland, *George Washington in the Ohio Valley* (Pittsburgh: 1955), 206-207; R. Rogers, *Journals*, 62-64; Nelson Vance Russell, "The Battle of Bloody Run," *The Canadian Historical Review* XII (1931), 186; William H. Harrison, *Discourse* (1839, Reel 125 of American Culture Series), 256. Incidentally, James Grant later reappears in American history during the American Revolution to win the battle of Monmouth. (Another example of how fighting Indians was dangerous for one's military reputation.)

14 Winthrop Sargent, "The History of an Expedition Against Fort Duquesne in 1755," in *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania* V (1855), 411; Benjamin Van Cleve, "Memoirs of Benjamin Van Cleve," *Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 17 (1922), 25; W. Stone, *Life of Joseph Brant* (New York, 1838), Vol. 1, 418.

dian tactics as "a kind of Running Fight, Skulking behind Trees and Bushes."¹⁵ Even more accurately, Benjamin Van Cleve, in describing the general battlefield competency of the militia in the second Harmar, Ohio, engagement of 1790, pictures both sides in constant motion. This movement spread the combatants "for several miles & in some places the one party was over-powered by the numbers & the other party beaten at a short distance." In short, the crucial point was that "each party endeavored to outflank the other."¹⁶

A controlled pattern of retreating when pressed hard was the second additional tactic that Indians used in battle. Obviously, this form of retreat is absolutely different from that full flight earlier discussed. According to Norton, the retreat cycle consisted of a soldier firing, retreating past another, loading, watching the other go by, awaiting the approach of the enemy, and so on. If unable to continue the battle, they used the process until they found they were able to carry off the wounded. Above all else, Indian soldiers knew that they must avoid bearing the full brunt of a charging enemy unit by a calculated retreat. Examples of this difficult skill will be given in the later discussions of Indian battles with Braddock and Bouquet.¹⁷

Indians most certainly also knew how to charge as well as retreat. Indian commanders had an important option in their use of this third additional battlefield tactic. On occasion, Indians would move forward against a large force in a grand rush. On these occasions, it was as though the gun had never been introduced. With the psychology of terror at work,, this apparently rash approach was not only practical but relatively bloodless. So successful could this be that John Cleves Symmes generalized that frontiersmen must, like Indians, have a "tomahawk" so as to have the ability to charge in the woods also.¹⁸

In contrast to the rushing frontal assault, Indians proceeded methodically against adversaries who would not be spooked. Norton compared this second type of an Indian advance to "blackbirds." That is, there was a rhythmical alternation of Indians reloading while moving slightly ahead of companions who had just shot to cover them. When retreating, the blackbird process was, as we've seen, reversed.

15 Elaine Breslaw, "A Dismal Tragedy," *Maryland Historical Society* 75 (1980), 139.

16 B. Van Cleve, 18. A white Indian summarized the battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 in which he had just participated as a "captain" in command of about 50 Indians: "...[W]e tried to out flank them and surround them, but to our astonishment the whites out flanked us...." *Westward into Kentucky*, ed. Chester Raymond Young (Lexington: 1981), 141.

17 W. Smith, VIII, 44; J. Norton, 185.

18 J.C. Symmes, 99.

The practical difficulties of these sorts of maneuvers later led the military historian J. F. C. Fuller to argue that Indian-style (light infantry) fighting was necessarily of a higher order than the usual military discipline. Indeed, Fuller provocatively labeled Indian-style practice a "new discipline."¹⁹

But when did Indians decide which charge to use? Whether it was a concern for not losing the lives of those under their command or simply solid military sense, tactics varied according to circumstances in this matter of an all-out charge or a controlled pace of advance. On the

'Maneuverability necessary for the half-moon formation became a norm because of a facility acquired in communal hunts.'

one hand, a small hunting party could be particularly difficult to destroy by simple frontal assault. Even a small militia or frontier unit might possess cohesiveness and would be able to coordinate their response to an Indian charge. On the other hand, if the group was a large militia unit, Indians might charge wildly. They did this successfully for a while against the Virginians in 1774 at Point Pleasant. Larger Ohio Valley militia units often contained a number of crack marksmen, but as a group were ill-disciplined. A good Indian commander, by the last half of the eighteenth century, charged militia. As Norton mentioned, militia had a tendency to run since the shock technique worked best against units that lacked cohesion.

From what kind of battlefield formation, then, were these Indian commanders working? Norton, whose work is a distillation of Iroquois war practices, described an encounter between some woodland Indians and their enemies: "The two flanks extended in advance in the form of a half moon."²⁰ More generally, Adair pictured southeastern Indians posting "themselves in the most convenient place, in the form of half-moons." If suddenly alerted to the presence of the enemy, they "draw their wings toward the center." Or again, according to Norton, the ambush at Blue Licks, Ky., also occurred along "the two flanks

¹⁹ J.F.C. Fuller, 241.

²⁰ J. Norton, 21; J. Adair, 414. For a very early reference to the half-moon, see Lion Gardener, *Gardener's Pequot Warres* in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* III (Third Series, 1833), 143.

extended in advance in the form of a half moon."²¹

The half-moon formation is thus designed to facilitate the usual flanking and surrounding movements. Adair also generalized that this half-moon formation was particularly lethal when used in connection with an ambush, for it gave "victory at one broad-side." The annihilating effect of this formation can be seen in the account of Braddock's defeat where one report speaks of "two ambuscades" which "did incredible execution" since the advance guard came "between three fires."²²

Observers have often critiqued the Indians for not chasing Braddock's forces more intensely. Since the Indians on this occasion had fought intelligently and energetically, this failure to detect and stop a retreat seems unprofessional. If it is assumed that the half-moon formation was designed to permit the surrounding of the other group, escape routes should have been cut off. However, the point of the half-moon formation was not to encircle; at least, not to culminate always in an absolute circle of entrapment. In a number of known engagements the Indians did not completely surround the troops. Rather, they held them in the half-moon formation. In *A Treatise on the Mode and Manner of Indian War*, James Smith presented a schematic drawing of how he thought an army on the move should react to an Indian attack. What is noteworthy about this schematic presentation is that Smith assumes that only "three squares of the army" will be attacked (see drawing #1). A recent redrawing of the 1763 Thomas Hutchin's map of the action at Bushy Run makes it very obvious that Bouquet was being held in a half-moon formation (see drawing #2).

In various documents there seems to be no explanation ever given for why, on these occasions, the half-moon formation wasn't drawn

²¹ James Adair, 413-414; Norton, 21. Because of a reliance on secondary sources, H.H. Turney-High, a standard anthropological source for military history for many years, did not find much tactical sophistication in the ethnographic literature of the Northeast. Turney-High was bothered, though, by his negative analysis of American Indian tactics vis-a-vis the sophistication of African ones and he openly wondered if there might not have been some reason to think that the Indians were wiser than the ethnographers have reported. In reality, the fulsome praise he gave the Zulus could also have been truly spoken of the northeastern fighting tribes. The half-moon exactly paralleled the famous crescent of the Zulus and equally required that combination of heroic and disciplined soldiers, commanded by knowledgeable officers following definite tactical practices. Part of the problem is pointed out by Turney-High's provocative observation that "it would be hard to find a more worthless literature than that produced by American Army Officers on Indians." Harry H. Turney-High, *Primitive War* (Columbia: 1949), 22.

²² J. Adair, 413; Neville Craig, *The Olden Time* (Millwood, New York: 1976), 70.

This line is the Light-Horse & Light-Infantry, surrounding the

Indians.

This line is the Indians surrounding three squares of

the army.

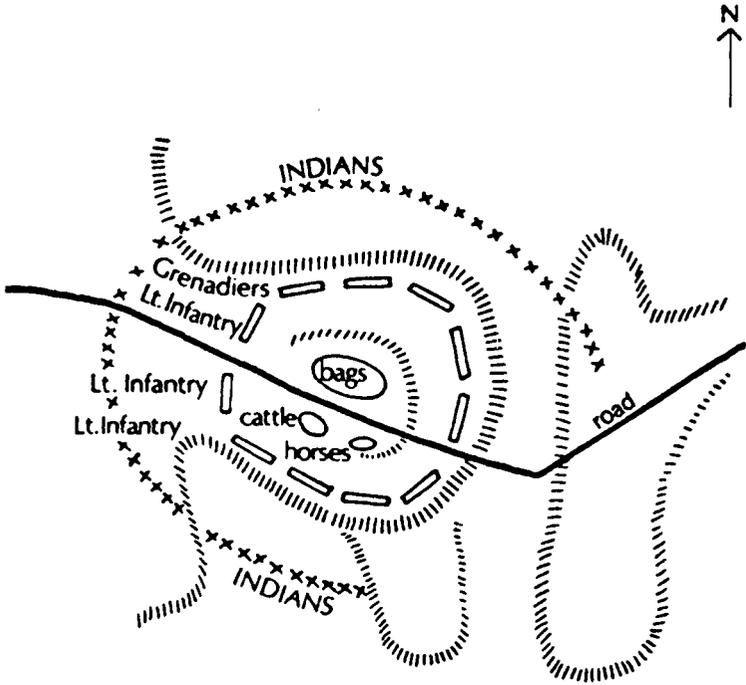
When those in the outside make the attack behind the Indians let the three squares advance speedily

The Light-Horse and Light-Infantry. The baggage here in the centre, & Light Infantry and Light-Horse.

the other corner to meet and surround.

This line is the Light-Horse and Light-Infantry sallying out from

into a circle for completely enclosing the troops. The explanation is found in the same demographical situation that led, as we have seen, to a number of corollaries to reduce deaths. Indian armies followed a system in which running was preferable to dying, but dying was preferable to surrendering. Thus, a formation allowing an avenue of retreat



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would cut down on desperate, casualty-creating stands taken by the defeated.

Maneuverability necessary for the half-moon formation became a norm because of a facility acquired in communal hunts. The thousands of variables present on any battlefield always require a high order of group interaction. Indian groups possessed cohesiveness as a result of

years of hunting, often in areas where enemy groups might well be present. More importantly, Indians possessed a communal hunting technique peculiarly relevant to the battlefield situation. In shape and purpose, Norton felt the Indian battlefield flanking motion most nearly resembled the particular communal hunting formation that was evidently used by many eastern Indians on certain important communal occasions and by large war parties for provisioning. According to Norton, the hunting line could extend for several miles with spaces of 100 to 200 paces between each man and with two flanks generally projecting a little in advance. This technique differed from the more commonly reported ambushing technique in which a line of people (often women and children) pushed animals toward a narrow ravine or pound where the helpless animals could be slaughtered with ease by waiting hunters. Applied to the battlefield, the hunters' partly enveloped all the game, with the exact place of envelopment dependent on the changing circumstances. James Adair's 1775 anecdote from the Southeast shows this hunting technique in a petite war situation. In his story, the men of a village organize a number of neighboring villages to form the half-moon, so that they can locate in the woods the two very elusive Mohawk enemies who had been terrorizing their village.²³ James Smith, who was a captive of the Algonquians, also assumed this Indian skill. His diagram in his *Treatise* shows Indians attacking in the communal hunt's half-moon or horse shoe formation.²⁴

A moving half-moon formation could act as a form of "ambush." John Norton, in his account of traditional Iroquois lore, has a relevant passage that helps explain why the quick forming Indian envelopment was often viewed as an "ambush." Actually, this speedy enveloping motion was preferred over the carefully laid-out passive ambush which needed the enemy to walk conveniently into its field. Rather, the Indian formation operated as a self-adjustive and active form of encirclement:

[in the presence of the enemy] . . . they either take post in some advantageous position, by which the enemy must pass or march to attack him, which method has been more generally attended with success. In marching to the attack, they advance by files, leaving such intervals between each, as may enable them to

23 J. Norton, 182; J. Adair, 412-413. Norton particularly stressed (126-28) the general value of hunting in the training of a soldier. P. Malone (20) notices, "Many of the techniques of killing animals for food were similar to those used by the Indians against their enemies." Malone's examples, though, are of the simpler passive type of pushing animals toward waiting hunters.

24 J. Smith, *A Treatise*, 14.

outflank him. As soon as they come in contact, they will run up, and form; not so exact perhaps as regular troops, but sufficiently so as to support each other.²⁵

A British defeat outside present day Pittsburgh is one important battle that illustrates several of the points just made about Indian tactics. On July 9, 1754, English military forces under General Edward Braddock, Commander of the British army in America, lost a battle six miles from Fort Duquesne in which 900 of his 1,400 men were killed or wounded. A recent authoritative account illustrates the usual historical puzzle concerning this battle.²⁶ But my main reason for focusing on Braddock's forces is that I feel, as many have during the past two centuries, that this was a battle lost, rather than won. How could the invaders have thrown away the great advantages they held in manpower and weaponry? This is the basic question I hope to answer.

Other recent reviews of the battle also emphasize this question that has puzzled colonial contemporaries and military historians through the years: why did the English lose? These recent revisionists have systematically intensified the mystery by eliminating certain plausible traditional answers. The officers, recent writers argue, had personal European experience in irregular, guerilla-style warfare. Many British soldiers of the rank-and-file, moreover, were also acquainted with irregular style war. These soldiers, in any case, rose at the start above battlefield fear that day on the Monongahela. Thirdly, there is a general agreement that the American colonials who accompanied Braddock performed creditably that day. If Braddock's officers understood their job, if their men were courageous, if their colonial allies were heroic and knowledgeable, then the question must be: how did the other side do it?²⁷

The battle must not be viewed simply through the relevant English or French accounts. The former are full of excuses; the latter full of self-praise. The battle must be looked at as a fight between English regu-

25 J. Norton, *Journal*, 129-130. One French account (Godefroy's) of Braddock's defeat mentions what may be a characteristic detail. The account pictures the Indians moving in two separate groups that join just before battle. Paul E. Kopperman, *Braddock on the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh: 1977), 259. James Grant noticed at Duquesne that the Indians came out to attack him "in different parties." H. Cleland, 207.

26 Kopperman, xxvi.

27 For example, Louis M. Waddell, "The American Career of Henry Bouquet, 1755-1765," *Swiss American Historical Society Newsletter* XVII (1981), 34-35; E. Breslaw, 122-23, 133; Peter E. Russell, "Redcoats in the Wilderness: British Officers and Irregular Warfare in Europe and America, 1740 to 1760," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 35 (1978), 629-630; Robert L. Yaple, "Braddock's Defeat: The Theories and a Reconsideration," *Army Historical Research* 46 (1968), 194-201.

lars and Indians and their allies. The battle was not planned in almost any precise sense. It just occurred when the enemies suddenly met. For that reason, the battlefield reaction of numerous lower-ranking soldiers to this rather unexpected meeting place was absolutely crucial. Tactically, the combatants had no choice but to react in traditional ways.

James Smith's *Narrative* briefly records his perception of what was happening in Fort Duquesne as the French and Indians awaited Braddock. He was the prisoner of Indians and his account leaves very little room for the French. It is, therefore, a faithful Indian viewpoint:

Some time after I was there, I was visited by the Delaware Indian already mentioned, who was at the taking of me and could speak some English.... I asked him what news from Braddock's army? He said the Indian spied them every day, and he showed me by making marks on the ground with a stick, that Braddock's army was advancing in very close order and that the Indians would surround them, take trees, and (and as he expressed it) "shoot um down all one pigeon." I observed some of the old country soldiers speak Dutch, as I spoke Dutch I went to one of them, and asked him, what was the news? He told me that a runner had just arrived, who said that Braddock would certainly be defeated; that the Indians and French had surrounded him, and were concealed behind trees and in gullies....²⁸

In some sense, every historian would agree that this Braddock debacle was an Indian victory. For one thing, there were almost twice as many Indians as French and Canadians combined. Braddock, secondly, had been warned by the Duke of Cumberland that his troops must "be particularly careful that they be not thrown into a panic by the Indians." If a key part of the battle was the fear shown by British troops in the presence of yelling Indians and Indian-style fighting, then it's obvious that Indians were important. Perhaps for that reason, a recent work labeled the chapter on the actual battlefield fight as "The Indians Was Upon Us!" On the other hand, this same historian concluded his study:

As we shall see, much of the controversy surrounding Braddock's Defeat revolves around the behavior of the troops, particularly the British regulars. By and large, our eyewitnesses claim that the enemy carried the day because the men panicked and refused to follow orders.

In the end, we are faced with a choice of connotations. Were the men to "blame" for Braddock's Defeat, in the sense that we, like Wolfe, believe that they should have performed more bravely than they did? Or were they merely "responsible"? Either way, the weight of evidence places the onus on them, rather than on Braddock or other officers.²⁹

28 J. Smith, *Scoouwa*, 24-25.

29 Kopperman, Chapter IV, 120-21.

While necessary as battlefield participants, Indians are tactically quite unimportant for either the cowardly soldiers or the incompetent officers' explanations. Since there were so few Indians fighting on the English side, this disinterest in the role of Indians may not be unexpected.

More surprisingly, this ignoring of any possibility of Indian leadership and this slighting of the Indian warrior as relatively unimportant also holds true for the French accounts. The central account of Jean Daniel Dumas insists:

And in the first moments of combat, one hundred militiamen — one-half of our French forces — shamefully turned tail, shouting "Every man for himself!" This retreat encouraged the enemy to resound with cries of "Long Live the King!" and they advanced quickly toward us. Their artillery, having been prepared during this time, commenced firing. This terrified the Indians, who fled. On the enemy's third discharge of musketry, M. de Beaujeu was killed.... It was then, Monseigneur, that by word and gesture I sought to rally the few soldiers who remained.... and the Indians, seeing that my attack had caused the enemy to stop shouting, returned to me. Now I sent... to tell the officers in charge of the Indians to seize the enemy's flanks.³⁰

Dumas, in short, claimed that he kept the Indians from fleeing and that he directed their attack in the flanking of the English. If the account were literally and exactly correct, then the plan and key moment of bravery in the action has to go to that French officer. But this report, we are told, is "extremely self-interested."³¹ After interviewing Canadians, the veteran woodland officer Pierre Pouchot gave a rather different interpretation:

After the death of M. de Beaujeu, who was killed on the first fire, M. Dumas took command of the French, or rather, they (the various French officers) continued each one to do his best in the place they were in.³²

³⁰ Kopperman, 251-52.

³¹ Kopperman, xxv.

³² Kopperman, 263. Pouchot here simply passes along the version he heard. On the other hand, and based on his many years of woodland war, he stated in his *Memoir* more generally of the French-Canadians: "As they engaged in no war without the help of the Indians, the latter directed in all their operations, as well as on the march, as in an attack." Perhaps not surprisingly, this observation brought a vigorous editorial rebuttal in the original printing. Nevertheless, the point is clear: the veteran commandant of forts Niagara and Levis understood the widespread leadership role of the Indians. M. Pouchot, *Memoir upon the Late War in North America Between the French and English 1750-60*, trans. and ed. Franklin B. Hough (Roxbury, Mass.:1866) I, 37.

Pouchot, however, gives the same account of Indian behavior as Dumas: they start to flee, see French steadfastness, and so return to the battlefield. Both French accounts infer that the tactical maneuver that led to victory was the decision of French officers. Indian leadership is not a significant part of any first-hand French accounts of the victory.

Nevertheless, an Indian scenario must be considered. When suddenly confronted with the enemy, Indians began to move from tree to tree in the flanking movements of the very traditional horseshoe tactic. Harry Gordon, an engineer at the very front of Braddock's forces, gives a first-hand account which shows Indians immediately and astutely doing their duty:

As soon as the enemys Indians perceiv'd Grenadiers, they Divided themselves & Ran along our right and left flanks. The Advanc'd party Coll: Gage order'd to form, which Most of them Did with the front Rank upon the Ground and Begun firing, which they continued for several Minutes, Altho' the Indians very soon Dispers'd Before their front & fell upon the flank partys, which only consisted of an officer & 20 men, who were very soon Cut off. The Indians Making their Appearance upon the Rising Ground, on our Right, where they confusedly form'd again & a Good many of their Officers were kill'd and wounded By the Indians, who had got possession of the Rising Ground on the Right. There was an Alarm at this time that the Enemy were attacking the Baggage in the Rear, which Occasion'd a second Retreat...³³

Gordon's analysis is corroborated in the particularly perceptive observations of one of the two ordinary soldiers who have left accounts of the battle. According to Chomely's Batman:

Moreover, for those brought up on English accounts of Indian groups, a further general observation by Pouchot provides an excellent corrective: "These Missisaks (i.e. Mississauguas, the largest group by far of the Indians fighting on the side of the French) are more dangerous than the Iroquois, because they live by chance alone." (I. 83) Much of the English writing on the Iroquois reminds one of Southern writers extolling General Robert E. Lee. Like Lee, the Iroquois lost their "most serious war," (Norton, 105) in this case against the Algonquians for the possession of Ontario. See Leroy V. Eid, "The Ojibwa-Iroquois War: The War the Five Nations Did Not Win," *Ethnohistory* 26, (1979), 297-324. Kopperman (25) estimates that 90 percent of the Indians facing Braddock came from this same Great Lakes Area group. In addition, there is no reason to suspect that their Ohio Valley allies (both Algonquian and non-Five Nation Iroquois) who fought Braddock were amateurs. Rather, such Ohio Valley Indians as the Wyandot, Shawnee, Mingo, and Delaware warriors (to list the tribes Bouquet mentioned as having fought at Bushy Run) had earned, as Bouquet wrote, the right to be "recon'd and think themselves the best Warriors in the Woods." Mary C. Darlington, *History of Colonel Henry Bouquet* (New York: 1971), 196.

33 Kopperman, 199-200.

But we had not got above a mile and half before three of our guides in front of me above ten yards spied the Indians lay'd down Before us. He immediately discharged his piece, turned Round his horse [and] Cried, the Indians was upon us. My Master Called me to give me his horse which I took from him; and the Ingagement began. Immediately they began to Ingage us in a half Moon; and still Continued Surrounding us more and more!]³⁴

In short, this 1755 Monongahela encounter is instructive because the Indians were just as surprised as Braddock's forces at the exact meeting place. Nevertheless, almost as an instinct, Indians soon enveloped a great portion of Braddock's forces (see drawing #3).

The "American" (and Canadian) explanation of Braddock's defeat centers on a critique of the general for not adapting to the American woods environment and its Indian-style fighting. In particular, the general is savaged by his Colonial American critics for failing to allow his troops to hide behind trees. Secondly, many traditional military experts have decided over the years that the Indians should have been beaten at the Monongahela because a simple bayonet charge would necessarily have forced the undisciplined Indians to flee.³⁵

Both analyses are as flawed as the assumptions on which they build. The valor and expertise of the Indians at Braddock's defeat can only begin to be appreciated if the judgment of the historian Robert L. Yaple is accepted: "...the charge of cowardice levelled at the British soldiery...who stood for two and half hours against the restless musketry of an unseen enemy — must evaporate in the light of reason alone."³⁶ Whether the British officers in command should alternately be judged peculiarly incompetent is, I would argue, doubly doubtful.

Why couldn't Braddock have won if he had simply allowed his troops to fight from behind trees? This would certainly have cut down on the ease with which Indian and Canadian sharpshooters could kill Redcoats. Nevertheless, the overall results could have been the same. Only if Braddock had devised an unusual plan was there a chance that the Indians and their allies could have been beaten. Pouchot's informants pointed out an instructive distinction in standard Ohio Valley Indian military tactics. The French, according to Pouchot's account, "jumped behind trees, while the Indians passed to the right and left of

34 Kopperman, 182.

35 For the battle itself, e.g., R. Yaple, 199; more generally, J. Mahon, 257, ("bayonets...a decisive weapon") and 275, (bayonets "brought power to bear which the Indians were not able to match"). General Wayne's straightforward charge in 1794 at Fallen Timbers, Ohio, is often given as the proof of the total efficacy of a disciplined bayonet charge.

36 R. Yaple, 198.

No. 2.

A SKETCH OF THE FIELD OF BATTLE, SHEWING THE DISPOSITION OF THE TROOPS ABOUT 2 O'CLOCK, WHEN THE WHOLE OF THE MAIN BODY HAD JOINED THE ADVANCED AND WORKING PARTYS, THEN BEAT BACK FROM THE GROUND THEY OCCUPIED AS IN PLAN NO. I.

EXPLANATION.

A, The French and Indians skulking behind Trees, round the British.

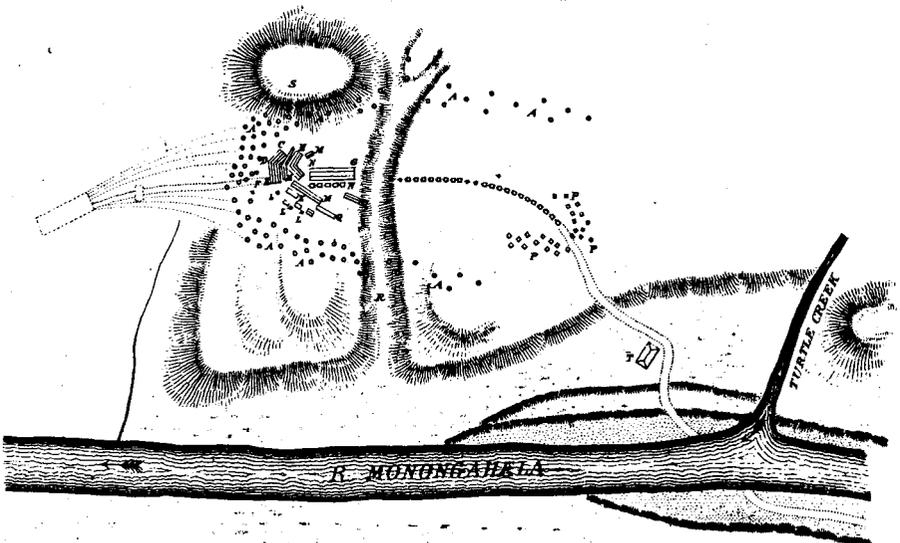
F, The two Field Pieces of the advanced Party abandoned.

C, D, E, H, K, M, N, Q, The whole Body of the British joined with little or no Order, but endeavouring to make Fronts towards y^e Enemies Fire. *L*, The three Field Pieces of the main Body. *P*, The rear Guard divided (round the rear of the Convoy now closed up) behind Trees having been attack'd by a few Indians.

N.B. The Disposition on both Sides continued about two hours nearly as here represented, the British endeavouring to recover the Guns (*F*) and to gain the Hill (*S*) to no purpose. The British were at length beat from the Guns (*L*). The General was wounded soon after. They were at last beat across the Hollow Way (*R*) and made no further Stand. The Retreat was full of Confusion and Hurry, but after a few Miles there was a Body got to rally.

(Signed)

PAT. MACKELLAR, Eng^r.



the hill (where the two sides first met)."³⁷ That is, to win the woodland battle, the successful woodland army must begin to make a flanking movement by going swiftly from tree to tree, as Indians did against Braddock. His troop's first option of hiding behind trees would not work for any length of time. Simply protecting oneself behind a tree is not enough. That static move invites disaster, or at best a stand off. Sharp-shooting Virginians, as at the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774, could stay in place and still force the Indians to back off. In contrast, Braddock's immobile and inaccurate fire power was no match for Indian and Canadian accuracy.

Speed and adaptability were, it must be added, even more essential if the half-moon formation was to be held against the bayonet charges of troops, the second option Braddock possessed at the Monongahela. As Gordon's description implies, the half-moon enveloping movement requires principles of advance and retreat by disciplined soldiers under good command. Historians have lost sight of Indian attention to these requirements because of another Pennsylvania Indian-British Redcoat engagement. Col. Henry Bouquet in 1763 badly defeated the Indians in the Battle of Bushy Run when his troops, on the second day of battle, decisively charged with bayonets.

After his defeat, and immediately before his death, Braddock is supposed to have prophesied: "We shall better know how to deal with them another time."³⁸ Several years after Braddock's death, General Forbes revealed his interest in this point when he wrote to his subordinate officer, Henry Bouquet: "And I must confess in this country, we must comply and learn the Art of Warr, from Ennemy Indians or anything else who have seen the Country and Warr carried on in it."³⁹ The 1763 rout of the Indians at Bushy Run surely appears as proof that the British Officer Corps had learned "how to deal" with woodland Indian battlefield technique! The historian of the British army glorified Bushy Run: "...the history of the Army can show few finer performances on its own scale than this victory of a handful of English, Highlanders, and Germans under the leadership of a Swiss colonel."⁴⁰ Bouquet

37 Kopperman, 263.

38 Captain Orme, one of Braddock's Aides de Camp, to Benjamin Franklin. Found, for example, in N. Craig, *The Olden Time*, II, 222, and quoted in many secondary accounts.

39 *Writings of General John Forbes*, ed. Alfred P. James (New York: 1971), 125.

40 J.W. Fortescue, *History of the Army*, (London: 1911) III, 18-19. For the impossibility of knowing in detail how this woodland battle evolved, see the recent closely studied account of the confusing documentation of Bushy Run: Don Daudelin, "Numbers and Tactics at Bushy Run," *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 68 (1985), 153-179.

showed here how a truly desperate situation can be turned around by an innovative plan. A general awareness of this victory unfortunately has led to the misleading generalization that Indians never could handle a desperate charge of professionals trained in the European style. So, did the battlefield turn-about result primarily from the use of a bayonet charge by disciplined troops?

For readers not familiar with the Bushy Run battle, it must be emphasized that on the *second* day of the battle, Bouquet found himself waterless, surrounded and badly mauled. Bouquet then pretended retreat and lured the Indians into a decisive trap. Bouquet understood how close he was to disaster at Bushy Run. In the same month as the victory, he wrote two candid letters to fellow officers.⁴¹ In neither letter does he gloat over the battlefield trick that won the day. To Maj. Gladwin, he sketched his position before the rout of the Indians as "we were excessively distressed by the total want of water, we marched immediately to the nearest Spring without inquiring into the loss of the enemy...." At the end of the engagement: "Our loss is very considerable." As for the Indians, they "must have suffered greatly by their repeated and bold attacks in which they were constantly repulsed." There is no hint that Indian losses came primarily as a result of any enclosing movement of bayonet-charging Highlanders. To Lt. James McDonald, he mourns for "such of our Officers and Men who have had the Misfortune to fall in their hands." Bouquet says of the Indians that they "fought with the greatest bravery and resolution for two days." To overcome them, the Swiss commander emphasized that "the Highlanders are the bravest men I ever saw, and their behaviour in that obstinate affair does them the highest honor." In the next paragraph, Bouquet rather slides into a judgment that may well have been his overriding one: he calls the victory "this Luky blow."

This sigh of relief resulted mostly, I think, from the success finally achieved after numerous and fruitless attempts to chase the Indians out of their horse-shoe battle formation. Bouquet surely had been shaken at the end of the first day of the battle. He realized that after en-

41 Found in Mary C. Darlington, 195-97, 202. The use of bayoneting tactics by trained troops occurred in the defeat of St. Clair in the Ohio woods. A recent account emphasizes the irony of the official professional view that, in Henry Knox's words, "It is presumed that disciplined valor will triumph over undisciplined Indians." The view was repeated by St. Clair 10 days before his disastrous battle: "Discipline has often been found superior to numbers, even sometimes 10 to 1." Wiley Sword, *President Washington's Indian War* (Norman: 1985), 181. Actually, the statement may be correct. What was ignored, though, was that Indians did have discipline, albeit of a different kind.

ergetic action by his advance guard had seemingly chased the Indians off the surrounding heights — the maneuver that didn't happen at the Monongahela — that his position remained perilous:

The moment the pursuit ended, they returned with renewed vigour to the attack. Several other parties, who had been in ambush in some high grounds which lay along the flanks of the army, now started up at once, and falling with a resolution equal to that of their companions galled our troops with obstinate fire.

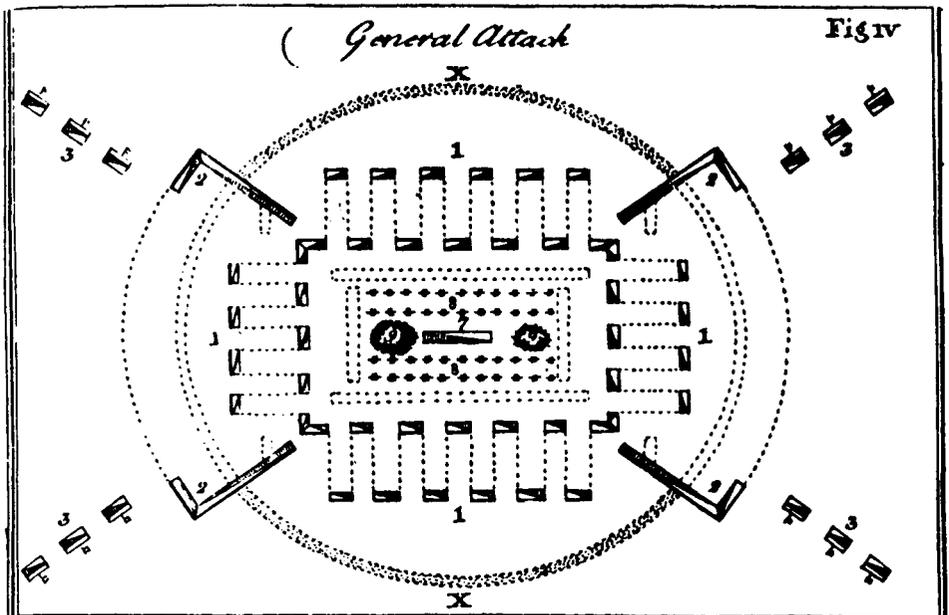
It was necessary to make a general charge with the whole line to dislodge them from these heights. This charge succeeded; but still the success produced no decisive advantage; for as soon as the savages were driven from one post, they still appeared on another, till by constant reinforcements they were at length able to surround the whole detachment, and attack the convoy which had been left in the rear.⁴²

This inability to corner the Indian is important because, traditionally, it has been popular to contrast the successful action of Col. Bouquet with the disaster of Gen. Braddock. The comparison is relevant; the British leadership is quite different. Assumptions usually made about the Indian response are unrealistic, though. The lesson of the *first* day at Bushy Run is that well-led Indians neither allowed themselves to be trapped into a bloody engagement nor allowed the enemy to slide out of the encircling half-moon formation. Action that first day shows the core of Ohio Valley 18th century Indian battlefied tactical expertise in large-scale wars: the flanking movements accompanying the half-moon attack formation and the maintenance of that formation through an ability to charge and retreat according to battlefield circumstances. In addition, since soldiers were not noted for accuracy at long range, Indians followed Norton's principle already quoted.

Something very unusual had to happen before a traditionally led army would be able to break that pattern. An important diagram in William Smith's work accompanies a theoretical discussion usually ascribed to Bouquet for trapping Indians⁴³ (see drawing #4). Even if the diagram correctly pictures what happened at Bushy Run, it reveals no real idea of why the Indians were trapped. That is, this key theoretical diagram fails to suggest, much less underscore, the fact that the two enveloping movements that are called for in the diagram will be useless athletic exercises without an additional stratagem for luring the Indians into the enveloping trap. The stratagem at Bushy Run was only possible on the premise that Indians believed that the besieged

42 W. Smith, viii.

43 W. Smith, 7, Figure IV; Bouquet's 1764 *Orderly Book*, ed. Edward G. Williams (Pittsburgh: 1960), 17.



From William Smith, Expedition Against the Ohio Indians (*Ann Arbor*: 1966), 6-7 for the diagram, 59 for the explanation.

GENERAL ATTACK, Fig. IV.

THE Regulars (1) stand fast.

THE hunters (2) fall out, in four columns, through the intervals of the front and rear of the square, followed by the light horse (3) with their bloodhounds. The intervals of the two columns who attack in the front, and of those who attack in the rear, will be closed by the little parties of rangers (5) posted at the angles of the square, each attack forming in that manner, three sides of a parallelogram. In that order they run to the enemy (X) and having forced their way through their circle, fall upon their flanks; by wheeling to their right and left, and charging with impetuosity. The moment they take the enemy in flank, the First Firing of the regular troops march out briskly and attack the enemy in front. The platoons detached in that manner from the two short faces, proceed only about one hundred yards to their front, where they halt to cover the square, while the rest of the troops who have attacked pursue the enemy, till they are totally dispersed, not giving them time to recover themselves.

soldiers were, in fact, on the verge of fleeing for their lives. In any case, the greatness of Bouquet's military turn-about on Day 2 can only be appreciated if one realizes his troops did not just sally out of camp and irresistably drive pell-mell "undisciplined" Indians before them.

Thus, Bouquet's experience makes the following judgment quite plain. Braddock's forces would have found themselves in dire straits even if their advance guard had taken that hill on the right that features so prominently in the accounts of the battle. In the words of William Smith's account of Bouquet's difficulties on the first day at the battle of Bushy Run, "...the most lively efforts made no impression upon an enemy, who always gave way when pressed; but who, the moment the pursuit was over, returned with as much alacrity as ever to the attack." Thus, Braddock's forces, like Bouquet's, would have found themselves continually "surrounded by a circle of fire, which like an artificial horizon follows him every where."⁴⁴

So the conclusion for Braddock at the Monongahela was that his troops were at a great disadvantage that day, even if the officers and men from the beginning had begun to imitate Bouquet's men that first day at Bushy Run. Whether Braddock had tried the Americanists' suggestion of allowing his troops to hide behind trees or the professional suggestion of a simple bayonet charge, Bouquet's first-day experience indicated that Braddock would still have found his condition parlous. Since there was no second day of battle at the Monongahela,

⁴⁴ W. Smith, 44. On the second day of the Bushy Run battle, Bouquet's surrounded, waterless, and badly mauled troops lured the Indians into a decisive trap by a pretended retreat. Bouquet has generally been assumed to have been the mastermind of this classic maneuver, but a small number of contemporaries gave the credit to a Virginian named Lemuel Barrett. E.g., J. Smith, *Treatise*, 6-7, 21; John Ormsby, a Pittsburger who kept the first ferry over the Monongahela, as found in N. Craig's *The Olden Time*, II, 4; Cyrus Cort (claiming the family tradition of the settler who ran the relay station for express riders at Bushy Run) in his *Col. Henry Bouquet and His Campaigns of 1763 and 1764* (Lancaster, Pa.:1883), 41. What is undoubtedly true is that before Bushy Run, Bouquet had been assured by Major James Livingston that Barrett led the "best woods men" in the area around Cumberland. Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, *The Papers of Col. Henry Bouquet* (Harrisburg:1942), Vol. 11, 2.

Bouquet's complex description of the ruse at Bushy Run is, I think, simply unreal. One doesn't suddenly jerry-build the sort of tactic Bouquet sketched. It's axiomatic that only simple plans have a chance to succeed on a battlefield. Rather, his men got behind the Indians, who then, following their standard practice, fled like rabbits. In particular, see the Ormsby account. Having once been outwitted somehow, the Indians prudently showed no taste for further large-scale action. For these sorts of reasons, I think that James Smith's crude theoretical diagram on how to catch Indians expresses better what essentially happened at Bushy Run.

then there was never a chance for Braddock to try to engineer something similar to Bouquet's "Luky blow."

"So What?" is the provocative title of the chapter in which Paul Kopperman tries to show that his study of Braddock's defeat is more than antiquarianism and trivia. Likewise, it's a fair question: why notice how Indians behaved in such large-scale battles? This military question offers, I would briefly suggest, fundamental insights into both Indian and American history.

Northeast woodland Indian society cannot be understood if the ideal of the soldier — "warrior," if one prefers — is ignored. Without appreciation for these "national" wars, the social fabric of that society will be downgraded. Here, as always, war shows a society's highest quality of practical organization. Before disintegration brought on by defeat, Indian men served their families, close kin, and participated in a larger political setting by engaging in wars, both petite and national. Thus, war had to follow rules that would keep deaths within acceptable social limits. Indians almost necessarily had to collapse in time before armies of more populous nations. These nations were ready to lose a large proportion of their troops to win. It is the glory of the Indian military apparatus that it succeeded so long in keeping that ultimate defeat from happening.

Secondly, eighteenth century America was partially shaped by the Indian wars. "Petite" Indian war, in particular, helped form that spirit of violence that was integral to the personal spirit of the frontier. While this is well known, the influence of "national" Indian war is less known and more important. This kind of war forced larger social changes. Braddock's defeat, for example, initiated American doubts about British invincibility. St. Clair's defeat in the Ohio woods forced American politicians to face the bleak prospect of a West lost. George Washington's cabinet unanimously argued that America should not send another army into the Ohio Valley. Washington, however, exercised the presidential prerogative and overruled the cabinet.⁴⁵ The ensuing defeat of the Indians at Fallen Timbers by an army under Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne opened up the Old Northwest, bequeathed a mythology of easy success for "disciplined" army forces, and seemed to verify that Indian military efforts were amateurish. Nevertheless, only an awareness of Indian military sophistication can explain why it took so long for a populous and militant people to humiliate the Indians of the Ohio Valley. ■

45 Richard C. Knopf, "'Cool Cat George' and the Indian Wars in Ohio," in *The Historic Indian in Ohio*, ed. Randall L. Buchman (Columbus, Ohio: 1976), 25.

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