



2015-076

Steven M. Baule, *Protecting the Empire's Frontier: Officers of the 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment of Foot during Its North American Service, 1767-1776*. Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 2014. Pp. xii, 332. ISBN 978-0-8214-2054-6.

Review by Solomon K. Smith, Georgia Southern University (sksmith@georgiasouthern.edu).

Although a great deal has been written about the American Revolution, much about the conflict remains unclear. But given the many studies of prominent military leaders on both sides, it is surprising that a book exploring the leadership of one British Army regiment could offer such a plethora of new and interesting information. In *Protecting the Empire's Frontier*, military historian Steven Baule¹ highlights just how little is known about the officer corps in the British Army during the colonial and Revolutionary War periods.

The book compiles biographical materials for officers in the Eighteenth Regiment of Foot, also known as the Royal Irish. The Eighteenth served in North America from the 1760s to the 1770s, between the French and Indian and the American Revolutionary wars. The author asserts that "the officer corps of the Royal Irish was neither distinctive nor unique in 1767, when the regiment arrived in Philadelphia" (27). In fact, the most intriguing aspect of the volume is the normalcy of the officers included in the book.

Baule begins in chapter 1, "The Officer Corps of the 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment," with a brief history of the Eighteenth from its founding to its arrival in America. He relies heavily here on the standard regimental history,² but he has also consulted the relevant primary sources. The resulting review of the regiment's actions in America will greatly benefit scholars interested in the British military during the period. But the point of this background information is to contextualize the biographies that follow.

The book's other seven chapters are devoted each to a specific rank or type of officer.³ There are entries for eighty-four men in all, arranged alphabetically within the chapters. Hence, the manner of presentation is encyclopedia-like rather than a continuous narrative. Thankfully, the biographies do not portray Britain's "redcoated soldier ... as one of the greatest villains in American history" (1). The varying extent of available sources unavoidably results in jarring disparities in the length and detail of the essays. But, at the least, Baule indicates for each man the date of his commissioning and the places he served while with the Regiment. We do not, however, always get much sense of an individual officer's personality, life outside the regiment, or even his competence as a leader. When the sources allow for richer portraits, Baule records particulars of life, ranging from everyday personal and marriage problems and aspirations of a parent for a child to career events like promotions and duels. In short, the book opens many windows onto the lives of military men during the eighteenth century. Although the Eighteenth returned to England in late 1776, in a testament to their commitment to the British Army, many of its officers remained in the colonies or volunteered to return there to serve in the Revolutionary War.

A typical example of a fuller biographical entry is that of the Loyalist American Lt. John Peter DeLancey. The fourth son of the Governor of New York, DeLancey was educated in England and eventually entered Woolwich Military College under the care of his older brother. He was commissioned as an ensign with the Royal Irish in 1771 and remained with the unit until 1776. DeLancey's service ranged from quelling riots in Philadelphia to living on the Illinois frontier. After the Eighteenth was recalled to England in 1776, DeLancey soon volunteered to return to America; "when he arrived ..., William Howe appointed him lieutenant and

1. He is also the author of *British Army Officers Who Served in the American Revolution, 1775-1783* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2004).

2. George Le M. Gretton, *The Campaigns and History of the Royal Irish Regiment*, vol. 1: *From 1864 to 1902* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1911).

3. Viz., 2: "Field Officers," 3: "Captains and Captain Lieutenants," 4: "Lieutenants," 5: "Ensigns and Volunteers," 6: "Staff Officers," 7: "Absentee Officers," 8: "Other Officers Associated with the Royal Irish in America."

adjutant to Captain Patrick Ferguson's Corps of Riflemen" (156). As the war progressed, he commanded several Loyalist units that saw action across the colonies.

As an American in the British army, DeLancey offers us a glimpse of the sort of difficulties loyalists encountered, including attempts to confiscate the property he inherited from his parents and the financial straits caused by the ill-management of the property in his absence, as well as the animosity and abuse of people on both sides during the war. The quick-tempered DeLancey was eventually discharged from military service for participating in a duel with another officer while he was stationed at Gibraltar. Owing to this "dishonorable behavior," the King "had his name struck from the army list forever" (159). Surprisingly, DeLancey returned to New York in 1779 and lived the remainder of his life as an American, eventually seeking election as a warden and building a mansion known as Heathcote Hill. It is a fascinating story.

A typical example of a short entry (three paragraphs) is that of Lt. Marcus Paterson, the son of the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas Court of Ireland, as prominent an individual of the time as DeLancey's father. But, since the Paterson family papers do not include personal materials, we know little of Marcus Paterson's life beyond his record of promotions, postings with the Eighteenth, and pay and subsistence allowances. Thus, we cannot know whether his military experiences were like DeLancey's, how he felt about being stationed so far from home and family, and what his life beyond the military was like.

Protecting the Empire's Frontier is first and foremost a meticulously prepared reference book. It is packed with information that will assist military historians and students of the British Army and Empire under George III, life in the Old Northwest, the British in the American Revolution, and conditions in the larger Atlantic world of the era. Steven Baule is to be commended for giving his readers so many invaluable insights into the human side of a military organization.