

French and Indian War ^[1]

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From Onset to Braddock's Defeat

On February 18, 1754, Governor [Robert Dinwiddie](#) ^[3] of Virginia issued a call to the colonies for assistance in driving French forces from encroachment in the Ohio Valley and the Virginia frontier. [Matthew Rowan](#) ^[4], presiding over the administration of the colony of North Carolina until Governor Designate [Arthur Dobbs](#) ^[5] arrived from England six months later, heard Dinwiddie's call. In an [address to the North Carolina Board of Trade](#) ^[6] on March 19, 1754, Rowan reiterated Dinwiddie's appeal to "dispossess the French of a settlement they have made at the Ohio [River] within the undoubted limits of Virginia where they have imprisoned His Majesty's Subjects, confiscated their goods, built a strong fort and intend to build five more with designs to secure all the waters of the Mississippi which waters come close to our settlement." (Rowan 1754)

Rowan was able to rally a militia, and shortly thereafter, in [a letter dated March 23, 1754](#) ^[7], Dinwiddie expressed his gratitude for North Carolina's decision to send troops to Virginia's aid and his pleasure that the North Carolinians were to be led by Colonel James Innes. Innes's troops were to march to Virginia's Ohio Valley frontier (present day West Virginia) to join several hundred Virginians, and to await the arrival of units from New York and Pennsylvania. (Dinwiddie 1754)

Rowan's proposed force never materialized, however. From Dinwiddie, he learned that Virginia had barely enough money and material to support its own troops, let alone North Carolina's. Furthermore, Rowan realized that the £12,000 of Proclamation money (part of £40,000 loaned by wealth landowners, including Innes, to support North Carolina's militia) could not keep them in the field for long because the currency was non-tenderable beyond its own border. This forced the North Carolinian force—now just 450 men—to bring with them cattle and swine as both food and as a source of barter for supplies. Despite this inauspicious start, the state was accorded a singular honor when its commander, Colonel James Innes, was made Commander-in-Chief of the entire expeditionary force to the Ohio.

Innes and his forces arrived in [Winchester, Virginia](#) ^[8], from North Carolina in early June 1754. From the beginning, the troops were undisciplined and displayed a penchant for mutiny. This culminated in a rebellion by the North Carolina men on July 27th at Augusta Courthouse, Virginia, which caused Governor Dinwiddie to write to President Rowan of Colonel Washington's July 3rd rout from Fort Necessity in Pennsylvania: "If Y'r regim't had joined our Forces in Time as might have been expected, they [the French] w'd not have got this Advantage. The monstrous Delay of Y'r People I cannot acc't for." (Brock 1971)

Innes's troops finally arrived in Wills Creek, Maryland, on July 5th. It was only there that they met up with Washington, and learned the news of the loss of [Fort Necessity](#) ^[9]. Washington quickly set off to [Williamsburg, Virginia](#) ^[10], to raise support for more troops, leaving Innes to command the colonial forces. His troops, along with those commanded by Innes, spent the fall of 1754 building what would be called "Fort Cumberland" and preparing the defense of Virginia's frontier.

Arthur Dobbs arrived in North America on October 6, 1754, to take his post as governor of North Carolina. Dobbs landed in Williamsburg, Virginia. Dinwiddie called for a meeting between the two men and [Governor Sharpe](#) ^[11] of Maryland to discuss a concerted military action against the French. To this meeting, Dobbs brought instructions from England commissioning Governor Sharpe as commander-in-chief of all forces to "be raised on this part of the Continent to protect his Majesty's Dominions from the Encroachments & Devastations of his presumptuous Enemies." (Browne 1883) In addition to this commission, Dobbs brought £10,000 in specie (a credit from Parliament for that sum in real coinage), and a gift of 1,000 muskets for North Carolina from the King. He also told the governors that British Regulars—well disciplined and experienced soldiers—were already sailing to the Colonies under the command of General Edward Braddock. This conference also produced a preliminary plan upon which the three colonial leaders agreed: A force of one thousand troops would be assembled and an attempt made to capture [Fort Duquesne](#) ^[12], located on the convergence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers and headwaters of the Ohio River (in what is now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). With the capture of this key strategic location, the British reinforcements would have an ideal location from which to launch attacks in the Ohio Valley to the East. With the addition of Fort Cumberland, 140 miles southeast from Duquesne, Braddock would have a powerful grip on the entire valley.

After the meeting in Williamsburg, Dobbs departed for his own capitol in North Carolina. Arriving in [New Bern](#) ^[13] at the end of October 1754, Dobbs called into session the assembly and sent out letters to all the militia commanders in the colony for an assessment of the readiness of their forces. What he received from the militia captains was disheartening. Militia captains from [Bladen](#) ^[14] to [Pasquotank](#) ^[15] Counties responded that their troops had "no equipment" (Clarke 1957) or "Arms nor Ammunition belonging to his Majesty's Stores in said Regiment." (Murden 1754)

The assembly convened in New Bern only six weeks later—on December 12—and on the verge of war. Dobbs was ready with a powerful speech that stressed the grave state of North Carolina's defenses, and reminded the representatives' of their duties to protect the Protestant church, their allegiances to the King, and the defense of His Empire. Upon completion of his address, the normally politically divided assembly united to approve an appropriation of £8,000—with £5,000 dedicated to raising a force of one hundred men against the French under the command of Dobbs's son Edward Brice Dobbs ^[16].

Until his appointment in North Carolina, Captain Edward Brice Dobbs was on leave from the British Army serving his father and gaining military experience in the Colonies. In the early spring of 1755, Captain Dobbs set sail for Alexandria, Virginia ^[17], with only 84 men under his command, having been unable to raise the full 100 called for in the assembly's appropriations. Landing at Alexandria in late April of 1755, Captain Dobbs immediately set out on foot to Fort Cumberland where troops were massing for a major attack on Fort Duquesne. They reached Fort Cumberland on May 30, 1755, the last of the colonial provincial companies to arrive.

Among the officers and companies the North Carolinians joined at Fort Cumberland was General Edward Braddock ^[18], hand-picked by William Augustus ^[19], The Duke of Cumberland, to command the colonial troops in America. Braddock had arrived in Virginia on February 19, 1755, with two regiments of British regulars, the 44th Foot and 48th Foot. Also at Fort Cumberland were companies of Virginia militia as well as 80 men from Maryland. In addition, Braddock assembled at Cumberland a corps of regular artillery, comprised of eight twelve-pound cannons, and a company of thirty-six sailors from British Commodore Augustus Keppel's fleet. (Nichols 1947)

With forces massing and plans for attack well under way at Fort Cumberland, desertion and troop numbers continued to be a problem for North Carolinians. General Braddock's return (essentially, a tallied list) for June 8, 1755, reported that Dobbs's North Carolina forces totaling 81 men, and still needing another twenty-eight to complete their complement. (Braddock 1755)

In early June, Braddock began his march towards Fort Duquesne ^[12]. The soldiers were dressed in the prescribed uniforms of the colonial provincial companies (blue breeches and coats faced with red) although Braddock did allow modification for wilderness campaigning.

"The Soldiers are to leave their Shoulder Belts, Waist Belts and hangers behind and only to take with them to the field one spare shirt, one spare pair of Stockings, one spare pair of Shoes and one pair of Brown Gater's." (Braddock 1878)

At Little Meadows, on June 18, Braddock split up his troops. He took an advance column to meet the French forces at Fort Duquesne. The French and Indians were commanded by Captain Daniel Liénard de Beaujeu, and consisted of over 800 French regulars, Canadian militia and Indian allies. (Gipson 1965) Captain Dobbs's Independent Company, which included the North Carolina troops, deployed as rangers at the rear supply column under the command of Colonel Thomas Dunbar. Because they proceeded so slowly to Fort Duquesne, they would manage to avoid battle completely.

On July 9th at the Battle of the Monongahela ^[20], during which the commanders on both sides were shot (and ultimately killed), the British and colonial militias were decidedly defeated. Colonel Washington took control of the retreating men, whose numbers were greatly diminished during the battle, and along with the dying Braddock, they made their way back to Dunbar and the supply group. Braddock would die near the ruins of Fort Necessity on July 13.

Dunbar took the lead of the retreating forces from Washington and headed back to Fort Cumberland to regroup. There, he left 400 sick and wounded, including Captain Dobbs, under the care of Colonel Innes, who had been appointed Governor of the Fort. Dunbar, fearing the expedition was lost, took the remaining 1,200 troops and headed to Philadelphia for the remainder of 1755.

From Braddock to Final Victory

Not to be thwarted by Braddocks' defeat at the hands of France, Governor Dobbs called a meeting of the assembly to address the growing threat France posed. Convened on September 25, 1755, Dobbs alerted the assembly to the danger North Carolina faced with the destruction of Braddock's force. Upon the completion of this address, the assembly once again reached deep into their pockets and approved a supply of £10,000 for the raising of three companies of foot, "to protect the Frontier of this Province and to assist the other colonies in Defense of His Majesty's Territories." (Connor 1919)

Captain Edward Brice Dobbs, now promoted to the rank of Major, was ordered to march his company out of Fort Cumberland and join this new battalion. Taking command, Major Dobbs was then to move his force to New York to reinforce the force being assembled there under the new Commander-in-Chief of all British forces in America, John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun ^[21]. Dobbs indicated that he sent his troops to New York, under the belief that had he left them at Fort Cumberland they would be used to defend the Virginia wilderness.

Having consolidated his force at Fort Cumberland, Dobbs marched his troops northward, arriving in New York on May 31, 1756. In New York, North Carolinians helped to shore up the defenses of Fort Oswego ^[22], which had been reduced by disease during the previous winter. Fighting under the overall command of Colonel James Mercer, the fort was overwhelmed on August 16, 1756, by the forces of Joseph Louis, Marquis de Montcalm. However, no mention is made in the original records of North Carolinians being garrisoned inside the doomed fortress. Their fate is disclosed by Lord Loudoun in a letter dated August 26, 1756. In it he states that he had sent "Major Dobbs and his troops to recover missing

powder," and that he had left Major Dobbs's people at the little Carrying Place..." (Hamilton 1965, vol II, p. 351) Having escaped destruction at the hands of Montcalm, the remaining provincial companies were disbanded. However, rather than just letting them wander off, the soldiers of these provincial companies were encouraged to enlist in the 62nd Regiment or one of the Regular British Infantry Regiments.

With the culmination of another disastrous year for British arms, Lord Loudoun called for a conference of the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia to be held in Philadelphia on February 17. Arriving late on March 14, Lord Loudoun informed the Governors that with most of the French forces invested around the New England frontier; British forces were to concentrate there. However, in the minutes of the meeting the governors expressed the concern that; "there is a danger of the Enemy making an attack on the Province of South Carolina, either by sea from St. Domingo or from Alabama fort in the Creek Indian on the head of the Mobile." According to these same minutes Lord Loudoun made it known that; "he was willing to leave for the Defense of the Southern Provinces on Battalion to be compleated to One Thousand Man and the three Independent Companies in South Carolina of one hundred Men which may amount to 200 effective men."

Completing this conference in Philadelphia, Governor Dobbs returned to North Carolina to ask the Assembly for yet another contingent of men and supplies to keep them. Once again, the Assembly agreed to Dobbs's request and promised the amount of £5,300 to raise and supply for six months, two hundred men. This force under the command of Captain John Payne was to be sent to South Carolina to augment the troops already garrisoned there. An additional force of two hundred men was to be raised to defend North Carolina's own frontier. Although this expeditionary force to South Carolina was authorized on paper, the company itself never materialized. (Kimball 1906)

In early 1758, Pitt had re-deployed Bouquets Southern Army north to augment the force forming under Forbes. On July 31, 1758, General Bouquet ^[23], in a letter to Forbes, indicated that; "Two North Carolina Companies are arriving at the camp [Rayston, Pa.] reduced to 96 men, including countless invalids and tomorrow we shall have the third, from Cumberland 46 men strong. They are waiting for some recruits said to be at Cumberland." (Stevens 1951) By August 8, the contingent of North Carolinians, augmented by a marginal force from Maryland, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel John Dagworthy, amounted to 300 men. Under the command of Major Hugh Waddell ^[24] of North Carolina, these 300 men were kept active building entrenchments, relieving garrison guards at Fort Littelton and acting as scouts for Forbes's army.

Having his army, Forbes lost no time in putting it to use. On September 7, Forbes ordered Major James Grant of the 77th Highlanders to lead a scouting party to Fort Duquesne to ascertain the enemy's strength. Departing on September 11th, Grant took eight hundred regulars from the 60th and 77th foot and a strong contingent of provincial troops including Waddell's North Carolinians. Early on September 14, Grant ordered Major Andrew Lewis of the Virginia Regiment to lead a force of 300 regulars and 100 Virginians to attack the Indian posts in front of the Fort. Returning after only a short time, Lewis informed Grant that the approach was too difficult and had thrown his men into some confusion. As Lewis was communicating this information to Grant, they were surprised by an overwhelming force of Shawnee, Delaware and members of the five Nations. Waddell's troops acting as scouts were engaged but were able to successfully defend themselves and survive the attack. Grant's Highlanders however were not so lucky, taking the brunt of the attack. The Pennsylvania troops, rather than fight ran into the woods, while the remainder of Grants command retreated back to Loyalhanna, where Forbes was encamped. (Gipson 1949)

Maintaining and augmenting his force at Loyalhanna, Forbes spent the next few months sparring with French-allied Indians. On November 12, Forbes ordered Colonel Washington to take his Virginians and Lieutenant John Armstrong to march his Pennsylvanians towards Duquesne in order to clear the way for the main body of Forbes's army. Acting as a screen for this advanced column was Hugh Waddell and his 300 North Carolinians. During the four day approach to the Fort, Waddell's Carolinians were involved in a sharp engagement with Indians allied to the French. In the ensuing fire-fight, Serjeant John Rogers was able to capture two of the Indians. These Indians provided vital information regarding troop strength and deployment at Fort Duquesne. Arriving at the Fort on the 24th, Waddell and the rest of the army met with a scene of total destruction. Attempting to keep the fort out of the hands of the English, the outnumbered French garrison had evacuated the fort and then detonated a large quantity of powder, totally devastating the fort.

With the capitulation of Duquesne, the war in North America turned northward, and the southern colonies were given a brief respite with which to catch their breath. Waddell and his North Carolinian returned home to defend the frontier, no longer needed to augment British might in the north. By 1760, the war between France and Great Britain was over. However, the Cherokee Nation ^[25], having been insulted at the treatment they received at the hands of both the French and British went on the warpath in South Carolina. Fort Dobbs ^[26] in North Carolina was attacked by Cherokee Indians on February 27, 1760. The battle resulted in the deaths of one or two colonists and possibly as many as twelve Cherokees. It was not until 1763 that the Cherokee were stopped and the fighting in North America ended.

Although not involved in many of the major northern engagements, North Carolina had contributed men and supplies consistently to the Great War for Empire not only as an equal but as an early leader. Governor Arthur Dobbs and the colony proved adamant supporters of Britain's claim to North America, determined to help lead the fight to support this claim of empire.

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