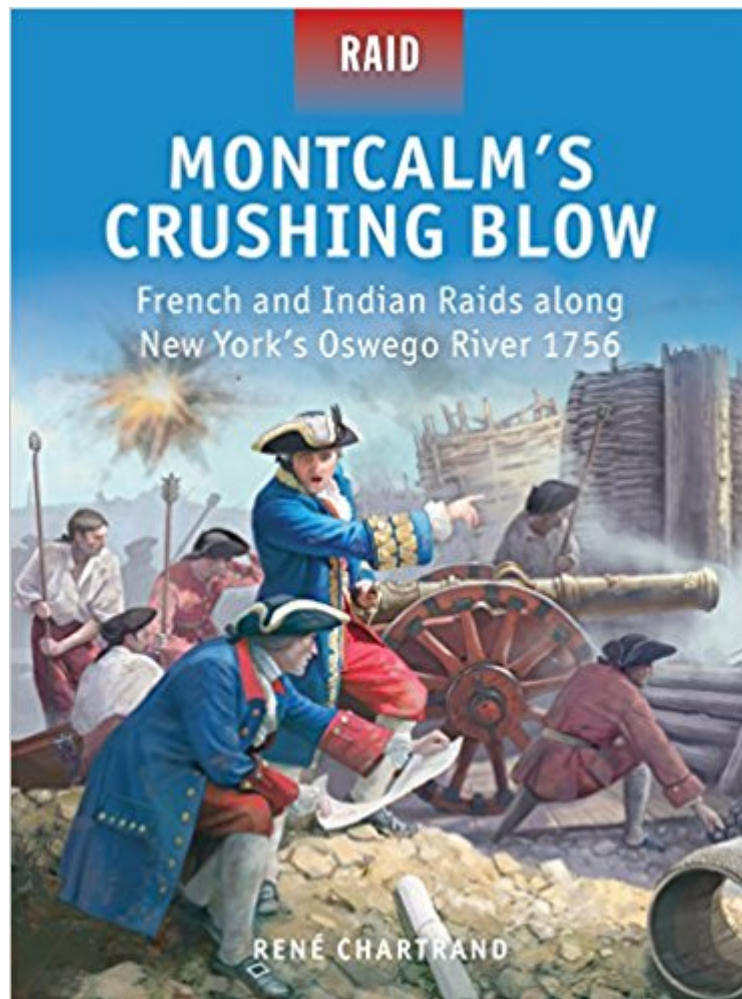


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Montcalm's Crushing Blow: French And Indian Raids Along New York's Oswego River 1756



Synopsis

With expert analysis and lively narrative, this engaging study of the Oswego raid casts light on a daring feat of arms at the height of the French and Indian War. The year 1755 saw the rivalry between Britain and France in North America escalate along the Great Lakes into open warfare as both sides sought to overcome the other's forts and trading posts. Lord Loudoun and the Marquis de Montcalm were sent from the mother countries to take charge, but the French lost no time in seizing the initiative, adopting Canadian-style "wilderness" tactics and planning a series of raids to keep the enemy on their toes. Amid the snows of March 1756, a 360-man French, Canadian, and Indian force stormed an Anglo-American outpost named Fort Bull in a surprise attack that left few survivors and the fort reduced to charred remains. Fort Bull's fall meant that the Mohawk River, the communication route between British-held Albany and the large and important Anglo-American post at Oswego, could now be cut off. Oswego, on the shore of Lake Ontario, had a formidable garrison based in three forts, named Pepperrell, George, and Ontario. The newly arrived Montcalm was tasked with the job of taking Oswego from the Anglo-Americans. In July and August 1756, Montcalm's 3,000-strong force - including a full train of artillery, 80 pieces strong - was transported in hundreds of sailing ships and craft. The Anglo-Americans failed to spot the approaching French forces until they had landed and secured their positions. Having surrounded and invested the forts, the French soon knocked out of action a number of British guns. The British evacuated Fort Ontario and then, at 9am on August 14th, a French cannonball killed the British commander, Colonel James Mercer. His successor, Colonel John Littlehales, did not have the stuff of a hero; an hour later, the white flag went up and Oswego surrendered just in time to avert a major onslaught. The Oswego raid was an outstanding French success; it denied the British a presence on Lake Ontario for the next two years, and relieved British pressure on Fort Frontenac. It demonstrated that the use of traditional European siege tactics in an American setting could reap great rewards, and had a great influence on the French's Indian allies too.

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Customer Reviews

The presence of several Anglo-American forts in and around Oswego on Lake Ontario in 1756 represented a challenge to French control of the Great Lakes and an intrusion into their lucrative trade with the Indian tribes in the area. French leadership in Canada resolved to remove the threat. The daring raids that followed are the subject of this new book. "Montcalm's Crushing Blow" is an Osprey Raid Series book, well authored by veteran historian Rene Chartrand, who has other titles from this period to his credit. The narrative concisely sets up the situation in 1756 in the context of the Seven Years' War/French and Indian War. The heart of the story is the daring initial raid against Fort Bull, to cut off British supplies and potential reinforcements to Oswego, followed by the raid against Oswego itself. Remarkably, a force of 3,000 French regulars, Canadian militia, and allied Indians transported themselves, their supplies, and the makings of a formal European siege from Montreal to Oswego, and achieved surprise at their objective. The actual siege seems almost anti-climactic. The narrative concludes with an excellent analysis of the raids and their aftermath. The text is nicely enhanced with a collection of period and modern illustrations, maps, and photographs. Highly recommended as a very good introduction to an often overlooked aspect of the French and Indian War.

Fort Bull is an important part of our local history (Rome N.Y.) I greatly enjoyed the Fort Bull Chapter and illustrations. A couple minor errors: 1. French dumped powder in Wood Creek not the Mohawk River (page 34) 2. Fort Stanwix was built in Rome, not Oswego (page 73) Alan J. Trombley - Retired History Teacher

The capture of Oswego in 1756 is not as famous as Braddock's defeat or Wolfe's victory at Quebec, but it was the Marquis de Montcalm's first victory in the French and Indian War. This book is very good like all other Osprey French and Indian War books.

Very well done. Narrative is good, maps too. Clear analysis. One of Osprey's best.

The book was unexpectedly good. It's chock full of maps and drawings of forts and uniforms. A splendid addition for the collector of F & I War information.

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