

# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 12 No. 2 July 2008

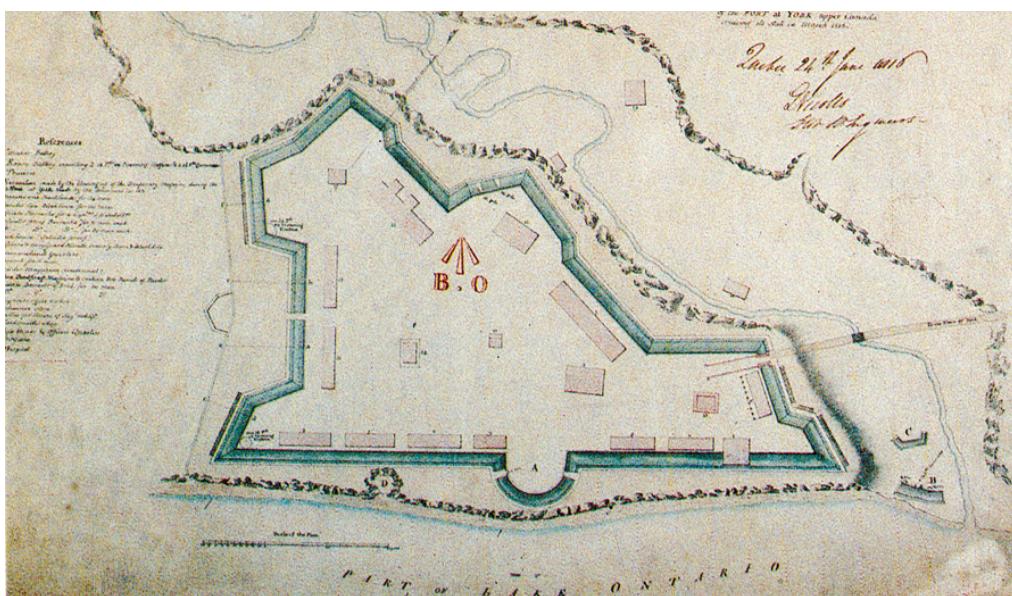
## Contents



- 1** The Explosion of the Grand Magazine
- 3** Archaeological Legacies at Fort York
- 3** The Best of Times
- 4** In Review
- 5** A Tribute to Robert Nurse
- 6** On Guard: A Short History of the Fort York Guard, 1934-1978
- 8** Upcoming Events

## *Ka-Boom!!! The Explosion of the Grand Magazine*

by Robert Malcomson



Plan of Fort York 1816, by G. Nicolls. The crater left after the explosion of the Grand Magazine is illustrated as a circular indentation along the south west embankment directly south of the southern ramparts. (LAC, NMC 23139)

with stones, rafters and clay,' wrote artillery officer Major Abraham Eustis. Aide-de-camp to Major General Henry Dearborn, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Conner, referred to 'Cart loads of stone, and an immense quantity of iron, shell and shot.' Some of the Americans thought the British had laid a mine beneath the approach to the garrison for the purpose of destroying a marching column. General Dearborn's opinion was that his enemy had built an 'immense magazine... so contrived as to discharge much of the greatest portion of stones in the direction our columns were advancing.' Dearborn was closer to the mark, although there is no proof that British engineers designed a magazine with the destruction of an enemy in mind. In fact, very little is actually known about the construction of the building that blew up that afternoon.

Every military garrison and any warship needed to have a secure storage space for the types of black powder used in cannon and small arms. The record shows that 'A Powder Magazine of square Hemlock Logs was built in 1795' at York and in 1811 Major General Isaac Brock referred to it as the 'small wooden shed not sixty yards from the King's house which had served as a magazine for some years.' The 'King's house' was the residence of the lieutenant governor situated on the west side of Garrison Creek opposite the stockaded garrison, blockhouse, and barracks. If it had survived time, the building would have stood about the centre of Historic Fort York today, where the location near the magazine has been marked since May 1968 by a memorial maple tree.

By 1 pm on Tuesday, 27 April 1813, the American force attacking York had victory within its grasp. And then an explosion ripped the earth and rained death upon the advancing column as the grand magazine near the British garrison blew up. A stone block ended Brigadier General Zebulon Pike's career with a fatal blow. Thirty-eight others were killed and 224 were wounded, some of whom survived for only days.

Descriptions of the debris that fell on the American column provided the first information about the actual construction of the magazine. 'At first the air was darkened

After the declaration of war in June 1812 work began to improve the fortifications at York and continued through to the following spring. It resulted in the construction of four batteries west of Garrison Creek, initial work on the rampart on the west side of the modern site, and a new magazine. But engineering plans for each of these structures have yet to come to light.

There is only one detailed description of the magazine, located in the Amasa Trowbridge Papers held by the U. S. Library of Congress. Trowbridge was an American surgeon who helped treat the wounded after the battle. He must have viewed the nearby vast crater where the magazine had been and then discussed its structure with local men. In the mid-1850s he wrote a full description as part of the account that he sent to Benson Lossing who was collecting recollections from veterans for his *Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812* (published in 1868). With some minor clarifications, Trowbridge's description follows:

*[A] little farther west [from the Government House Battery] stood their principal magazine, being about Thirty feet [in size] with solid mason work and stone, 30 feet deep in the earth and [with] an entrance at the bottom from the lake. Over this stood a large stone building with apparatus for elevating military stores from the bottoms, different apartments were formed and arranged for the reception of military and naval stores. It was admitted that there were five hundred barrels of powder on the first floor and the other rooms filled with fixed ammunition and the stone Arsenal above well-filled with the same material. All of an explosive character.*

This sort of structure was typical of designs used during the period to erect storage buildings with magazines securely protected in their lower portions. Colonel Cromwell Pearce, who held command briefly after Pike fell, must have talked to someone who knew about the structure because he wrote that it was 'considerably below the surface of the ground... and lined to keep the powder dry and arched with large stones.'

Ordnance reports for March 1813 show that a very large amount of ordnance was in storage at York, much of which must have still been in the magazine on 27 April. These included over 300 barrels of powder, 10,000 round shot, 600 grape shot, 700 common case, 750 shells, and 40,000 prepared musket cartridges.

There were very few British or Canadians wounded by the detonation, but nearly all of them were well out of range when the detonation took place. Casualty reports for the regiments located further back in the American column and remarks by the survivors suggest that the debris field extended about 500 yards from the magazine. Another explosion of black powder that took place on 12 January 1807 in the town of Leiden, Holland, supports this contention. A transport vessel carrying 369 barrels of black powder was docked alongside the canal in the centre of Leiden when it accidentally blew up, resulting in the death of more than 150



A 19th century engraving of Brigadier General Zebulon Montgomery Pike, commanding officer of the American forces at the Battle of York. He was killed by falling debris from the explosion of the Grand Magazine. (artist unknown)

people and the injury of 2000 others. It destroyed 220 homes, flattening structures within 185 yards, damaging others up to 530 yards away, and breaking windows at a distance of nearly 1700 yards. Most of the debris from the ship fell within 500 yards of the canal although an anchor landed nearly 1000 yards away. It is estimated that the fireball achieved a temperature of 1650 degrees Celsius and that the explosive force was equal to that produced by about 9 tons of TNT.

No participant at York ever referred to debris that damaged the town, which is not surprising since its western edge was more than 1000 yards in the distance. Only rare comments like that of Ely Playter's indicated the sad state of the garrison. In his diary he noted that the place was 'shattered and rent by the [artillery] balls and the explosion of the magazine, not a building but shewed some marks of it and some all torn to pieces.'

Late in 1813 work began to remove the ruins of the garrison, the lieutenant governor's residence, and other buildings. Construction included a magazine inside the new fort while the crater where the old magazine had been was eventually filled in and the description of the building more or less forgotten.

Perhaps someday a researcher will uncover the British engineering plan for the lethal magazine that ruined Pike's victory and another question about the battle of York will be answered.

*Robert Malcomson's latest book, Capital in Flames: The American Attack on York, 1813, was recently published by Robin Brass Studio and will be published by Naval Institute Press in the USA in fall, 2008.*

# *The Crater Wakes: Archaeological Legacies at Fort York*

by Andrew Stewart

Fort York National Historic Site encompasses 43 acres of structural foundations, earthworks, burials, and a battlefield. The structures built, altered, torn down, burned down, and blown up before and after the War of 1812 include buildings, batteries, stockades, and palisades. Traces of pre-19th century camps remain, perhaps, in the clay ground under one or more layers of fill. Even without buildings, activities are sometimes visible from physical alterations to the soil. Distinctive artifacts make it possible to track the presence of individuals, regiments, and First Nations. At the foot of slopes around the fort, and in slight depressions, discarded objects are preserved.

The complexity of this record has been tackled by various archaeologists over many years, work usually limited to mitigating disturbances in the land as underground services were installed. But with plans forming to commemorate the War of 1812 Bicentennial, might there not be a renewed role for archaeology at Fort York? The opportunity arises specifically from plans to construct a visitor interpretation centre on Fort York Boulevard, on the south flank of Garrison Common, and from plans to extensively improve and interpret the landscape around the fort. It also seems logical to consider archaeology as part of any plan to commemorate the Bicentennial at related sites, including that of the first parliament buildings burned during the American occupation in 1813. (See: <[www.archaeologyservices.on.ca/project\\_6.htm](http://www.archaeologyservices.on.ca/project_6.htm)>)

Archaeology itself is a form of commemoration, an active exploring of events involving people from the past and their contexts. It is creative in that any evidence found requires interpretation. The remains are given meaning as we bring perspective to them from a viewpoint unavoidably grounded in the present. Archaeology is a test of our generation's power to recreate the past.

The site of the grand magazine explosion, the crater, can be explored archaeologically but understood in many ways: as an enhanced natural feature (the hollow where it was originally sited); as a building (the magazine itself); as an event (the explosion); as a site of possible burial and commemoration in the aftermath of this gruesome event; and as an accumulating midden (the filling-in of the crater by garbage throughout the 19th century). Ground hogs might ultimately frustrate archaeological ambitions, however, at least on the ramparts where the crater is situated: their constant burrowing is known to mix archaeological deposits, making it difficult to interpret stratification.

A properly designed research programme of archaeology, involving excavation, curation, and interpretation, is an expensive, long-term investment. Any archaeological

exploration would undoubtedly begin with extensive geophysical survey of the area for whatever information about sediments could be gleaned with as little disturbance as possible. This is a key principle of archaeology: excavation is destructive and the resource non-renewable. It should follow a detailed management plan and be used extremely carefully. Our exploration of evidence is only as good as current thinking, practice, and technology allow. Once removed from the ground, there is no possibility of re-examining the context and relationships of artifacts, soil features, and structural remains. Techniques improve over time (e.g., the ability to recover and analyse DNA from organic residues on artifacts) so staging an excavation over years, or decades, improves the chances that new methods will be applied to the evidence.

The early railcut under the Gardiner Expressway brings an opportunity for archaeological interpretation: it slices through the original Lake Ontario shoreline, the Garrison Reserve, and the battlefield. If exposed, the cut's long, deep profile might be an exciting window on the past – a cross-section through a landscape and its archaeological deposits.

The finding of the Queen's Wharf in lakefill south of the original shoreline in 2006, and the current exploration of the Garrison Creek mouth under the Bathurst Street bridge, remind us that the lakebed itself is an archaeological site. Lake-filling in stages along the shore since about 1850 has created the conditions for deep burial and sometimes spectacular preservation of deposits that would otherwise have rotted or been removed.

Archaeological evidence relating to the fort's history extends well beyond the National Historic Site boundaries. To the west, the grounds of Exhibition Place, backyards in Parkdale, and the embankment north of Lakeshore Blvd near Sunnyside, now emblazoned with corporate names, are all part of the battlefield of 27 April 1813, which extends from Fort York to the east side of Humber Bay. Topographic features are part of this archaeological landscape. Whereas earthworks were constructed to define the western edge of the fort, other defensive features were natural. The western battery in the grounds of the CNE, for instance, was sited on the edge of a ravine, now buried, but possibly containing sediment and material from 1813.

The grand magazine crater lies at an epicentre – both of the events of that day in 1813 and of an archaeological landscape today.

## *The Best of Times*

City-building is exhilarating, if sometimes messy, but those connected closely with Fort York have seldom had ten days packed as full of constructive dialogue about projects on the fort's perimeter as they experienced during the last half of June.

On June 17 the Urban Design Section of the City's Planning Division held a public meeting where a presentation was

made to show eight different ways to separate road and railway traffic at the level-crossing on Strachan Avenue south of Wellington. Each option had its pros and cons, and all involved some road closings. But it was an inspired piece of work on the City's part to prepare for an Environmental Assessment (EA) study by GO Transit to expand the rail corridor, provide better commuter service to Georgetown/Milton, and create a rail link to the airport.

The next day, June 18, brought a glimpse of a less-inspired idea when the TTC Commissioners adopted a report recommending a streetcar line to serve the Western Waterfront be built under the Gardiner Expressway where it crosses the Fort York site, cutting it in half. This report drew our immediate attention. Not only would the line breach the integrity of the National Historic Site, a place of provincial archaeological significance, and city-mandated heritage conservation district (whew!), but also it would make a mockery of several existing Council resolutions requesting UNESCO recognition of Fort York and fostering plans for a Visitor Centre. The report was silent on how much harder it will be to take down the Gardiner, when that time comes, if there's a streetcar line running underneath it.

Still, the Friends of Fort York remain committed to the Transit City concept and to working with the TTC to find an as-yet unexplored solution to a century-old problem: how to improve traffic circulation in an area where the street grid is pinched and discontinuous. Earlier this year we supported a TTC proposal for a streetcar along Fort York Blvd. west of Bathurst so long as it stayed within the street allowance. The Commission's frustration with service delays arising from road traffic and signal lights is very real, but the solution doesn't lie in lacerating Fort York.

Then back to some good news: at its meeting on June 23-24 Council approved an increased budget for an EA study on the pedestrian bridge proposed to link Fort York with the Stanley Park north of the rail corridor. Shortly the City expects to sign a contract for the study with Stantec and Montgomery & Sisam.

Finally on June 26, the City's Urban Design Review Panel had its first look at designs for the new five-span Bathurst [Sir Isaac Brock] Bridge. Extending 115 m. south from the iconic steel-truss heritage bridge over the rail corridor, the new structure will be an important gateway to the downtown from the west. But it must necessarily have a low profile to play a complementary role to the heritage bridge and to conform to the TTC's operating requirements on maximum slope. The Design Review Panel put its finger on several things it hopes can be improved in the next round, most of them having to do with the Public Realm such as better presence, wider sidewalks, good lighting, and more headroom under the bridge, particularly at the south end.

## In Review

by Douglas Dodds

Robert Malcomson

*Capital in Flames:*

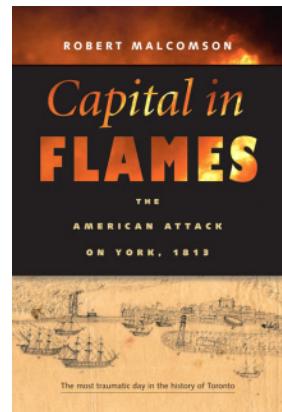
*The American Attack on York, 1813*

Montreal: Robin Brass Studio;

Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute

Press, 2008. xxii, 490p. ISBN

9781896941530. \$39.95



The story of the American capture and occupation of York in April

1813 is not an edifying one. Quite apart from marking a defeat for British and Canadian arms, it was a stew of inappropriate strategic plans, weak leadership, disloyalty, faction, and bad luck. This is the story told in brimming detail in Robert Malcomson's worthwhile new book, *Capital in Flames: The American Attack on York, 1813*.

York did not live up to the dream of its founder, John Graves Simcoe, to become a formidable military and naval post. A lack of investment by the British government and an unsuitably shallow harbour worked against it. Nevertheless, York was the capital of Upper Canada, and by the time war with the United States became certain in 1812 it had a population of about 700. Malcomson sets the stage well, describing the layout, architecture, and life of the town and introducing the personalities who, as actors and memoirists, animate his narrative. This section is wonderfully illustrated with contemporary sketches, surveys, and charts, some of Mrs. Simcoe's watercolours, and modern aerial photographs of the Toronto lakefront overlaid with the shoreline and other features of 1813 York.

Delegated in 1811 to assume military responsibility for Upper Canada, Major General Isaac Brock revived Simcoe's plan of establishing a dockyard at York and of improving the town's fortifications. Brock was killed in October 1812 at Queenston Heights, however, and his place was taken by Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe. As Malcomson sketches Sheaffe's career there are early intimations of his unsuitability. Even after his careful leadership permitted British and Canadian forces to recover from the crisis of Brock's death and turn the battle at Queenston into a brilliant victory, Sheaffe was plagued by rumour and gossip about his qualifications, his abilities, and even his loyalty. This is the man who will command the defenders of York when the Americans arrive in April 1813.

The dilatoriness and infighting that plagued shipbuilding at York contrasted badly with the industry and initiative of U.S. Commodore Isaac Chauncey in his station at Sackets Harbor, New York. Prior to 1813, the Americans had had a dismal war. Early British and Canadian victories at Michilimackinac, Detroit, and Queenston had embarrassed the army and the government. A victory was required. In this context, Malcomson introduces the American personalities: Chauncey; the old and slow Major General Henry Dearborn; the zealous

and popular Brigadier General Zebulon Pike; and many other officers, soldiers, and sailors. Serious planning went into the determination of new strategic goals, which included an attack on the town and dockyards at Kingston. Uncertain weather conditions argued against such an undertaking, while rumours of ships building and increased naval activity at York suggested it as an easier target with equal attractions. The die was cast.

Before the Americans attack, Malcomson pauses to provide a comparison of the social composition of the British and American armies, and a primer on their uniforms, armament, drill, and discipline. He has already described the social and organisational structure of the Canadian militia, and the reader's understanding of what is to come benefits from this digression.

The heart of the book is the three chapters in which Malcomson reconstructs, minute-by-minute, the American attack and the British and Canadian defence on April 27, from the time that the American armada is sighted from Scarborough Bluffs late the night before to the minute that Sheaffe retreats to Kingston with what remains of his regular troops, leaving the townsfolk and militia to negotiate what terms they can with the invaders. This section is particularly well done, balancing the need to reconcile various and sometimes differing accounts, to provide reasoned speculation where information is lacking, while still keeping the flow of a compelling narrative. The tale is well supported by maps. At one or two points his subject tempts Malcomson into overly literary flights, but these are brief distractions.

The story, of course, does not end with Sheaffe's withdrawal. The Americans occupied York for six days, during which they petulantly negotiated terms of capitulation with Canadian militia officers, bickered amongst themselves about who should receive credit for the victory, seized and carried off public goods, and invaded and plundered private homes. For their part, many citizens of York openly expressed pleasure at the American success and abetted the occupiers in their depredations. And somebody burned the provincial parliament buildings.

Malcomson has done exhaustive research in archives and private sources in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom as well as through published primary and secondary sources, and his fidelity to detail is evident throughout the book. This does not distract from the story, although occasionally his obsessions show through. Malcomson himself wonders in his preface about 'overdoing it with too much detail in the notes,' and one is inclined to agree with his misgivings.

Still, this is a generous sin, and the payoff is in the book's nine appendices. In an impressive display of patience and scholarship, Malcomson has attempted not only to calculate the strengths of the two forces at York on April 27, but to list the name, rank, and status of every individual who was present for duty that day: Canadian, American, and British, soldier, sailor, militiaman, or citizen volunteer. The only place where his sources and diligence cannot help is in listing the Native

warriors who were the first to meet the American landing. Other appendices outline the subsequent history of Fort York, from the day after the Americans left to current plans to enhance the historic site; survey monuments to and graves of the participants in the battle on both sides; calculate the amount of gunpowder in the Grand Magazine when it exploded; and provide transcripts of the various versions of the Terms of Capitulation of the unhappy town of York. The corollary to Malcomson's concern with detail is his compelling desire to get things right. This leads him to correct some of the mythology generated by the events at York, and in so doing to address briefly some persistent flaws in the historiography of the War of 1812.

Malcomson is nevertheless modest in his preface about the reach of his book. He expects that others will make their own enquiries and 'paint a more elaborate and truer picture.' This is likely - no history is ever static - and Malcomson's research does indeed, as he hopes, lay out the ground for researchers who might come after. For all such future discussions and explorations, Malcomson appears to have produced the essential point of departure.

*Douglas Dodds has a Ph.D. in Military History and, having worked at Fort York in 1973 and 1974, retains a deep interest in fort-related matters.*

## A Tribute To Robert Nurse

by Richard Dodds

We were saddened in April this year by the loss of our colleague, true Friend, and former Board member Bob Nurse.

Bob had a great interest in Canadian history, and it was his strong feelings for the preservation of historic sites and buildings that brought him to the Friends of Fort York. His involvement began as a member of what was then called the Membership and Fundraising Committee, under the Chairmanship of the late John Barclay. Bob successfully raised a substantial sum which enabled the early launching of the 'Soldiers' Trade' exhibit.

He was invited to join the Board of the Friends, where his wise counsel coupled with a quiet but jovial sense of humour contributed greatly to Board deliberations.

Bob was a regular attendee with his lovely wife Margaret at our Georgian Mess Dinners, and it was a pleasure to share with him his joy of those occasions.

His death notice in the newspapers invited gifts to the Friends of Fort York to be made in his memory. To date \$3000 has been received. It is earmarked for highly-visible improvements to the vestibule and main reception room in the Blue Barracks.

Truly, he will be missed.

*News From*

# *The Birthplace of Toronto*

*Contributions from the Staff at the Fort*

## On Guard: A Short History of the Fort York Guard, 1934-1978

by Kevin Hebib, Program Development Officer

The history of the Fort York Guard extends over several decades and through various incarnations. A full narrative could fill volumes since its stories are as diverse as the hundreds of members included in its ranks. I had the privilege of being with 'The Guard' from 1980-85 when it mustered its highest numbers and boasted a very multidisciplinary staff.

In use from the 1950s, the title 'Fort York Guard' was given until 1999 to the combined interpretive/animation staff of Fort York, comprising both full and part-time employees. Since 1999, the name has been adopted by the summer animation squad and drums that field at Fort York annually, courtesy of the tireless fundraising efforts of the Friends of Fort York.

The Guard's lineage can be traced back to the fort's opening as a public museum in 1934 when serving members of the Queen's (York) Rangers paraded as a commemorative unit of the Queen's Rangers c.1793. Period photos show uniforms that were poor replicas based largely on erroneous 20th century understanding of 19th century military garb. Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that this small corps was the genesis for costumed animation at the fort, and the first Canadian military re-enactment unit. The Ranger section was supported by a small group of the Royal Regiment of Canada who donned equally spurious uniforms intended to replicate those of the Incorporated Militia of Upper Canada. Though neither section was considered official fort staff, they did demonstrate the public's appreciation for commemorative pageantry at the fort.

Beyond this 1934 appearance of the recreated Queen's Rangers, several watershed periods in the evolution of 'The Guard' cemented it in the annals of Toronto history.

In 1952, Toronto City Council made the Toronto Civic Historical Committee (forerunner of the Toronto Historical Board) responsible for the administration and operation of Fort York. Under the supervision of the THB's first director, Brigadier-General John A. McGinnis, four senior high school students were hired in the summer of 1953 to act as site

guides. In true military fashion, they were dressed in a shirt and tie with a green blazer, grey flannel trousers, and a green beret. They also carried a malacca stick suitable for pointing out details in displays and room settings! Green was considered the signature colour for Fort York and was likely chosen as a nod to the official colour of the Queen's (York) Rangers, the Canadian Army reserve regiment which McGinnis went on to command from 1954-58.

However, the true birth of the Fort York Guard as costumed interpreter/animation staff occurred in 1955 when four young men donned a '50s interpretation of the famous red coatee and grey trousers of Upper Canada's Incorporated Militia from the War of 1812. In detail, the uniforms were dodgy at best, but they passed the 'all-important five-yard test' for authenticity. The uniforms were featured only during demonstrations and the green blazer and grey flannels were worn when 'guiding' into the late '50s. As a squad, the Guard remained relatively small until 1957 when it doubled to eight members.

By the early 1960s, museum projects across Canada began to receive extended funding for exhibits, events, and restorations in anticipation of the 1967 Canadian centennial year celebrations. This nation-wide interest in history brought change to Fort York and the Guard was a beneficiary. A few years earlier, in 1960, the Toronto Historical Board (THB) had been established by an act of City Council, replacing the old Toronto Civic Historical Committee. This highlighted the importance of heritage in Toronto and, as a result, the status of the Fort York Guard was elevated as its members took on an additional role as civic ceremonial emissaries. The Guard grew to the point that it was able to field twenty members in a week-long route march that led from Fort George at Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto for the opening of the 1967 Canadian National Exhibition. Along the way, the Guard performed tactical demonstrations at various towns and community events.

Between 1967 and 1969, when the Guard had established itself as the premier attraction at Fort York, it was determined that additional, large-scale events were needed to showcase its military entertainment value and draw revenue. Music was added as were artillery demonstrations using the site's large garrison guns and a small iron 1-pounder mounted on a diminutive field carriage. Over the next few years the fort enhanced its famous Fort York

Festival on Victoria Day weekend; Simcoe Day on August civic holiday weekend; and William J. Stewart Trophy Day in mid/late August. (The Stewart Trophy, named for a major supporter of Fort York who served as mayor during the restoration, recognized 'Outstanding Guardsman' and awarded promotional rank certificates to other members). All of these days featured large scale tactical demonstrations, activities that were publicized and covered widely in the local media.

As a result of these popular public events, demand for the Fort York Guard escalated across the city and beyond. By 1970, the Guard had become a 'must-see' attraction in Toronto and the rest of the province, along with similar presentations at sites such as Fort Henry in Kingston.

In 1973, the Guard expanded once again to support the centennial of the RCMP. A special 16-man detachment of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) c.1873 was formed with financial support from the RCMP and David Macdonald Stewart. The unit trained and paraded at Fort York with serving members of Canada's national police. Soon after, in 1974, a 12-man section of the Guard was sent to Los Angeles on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism to promote Canada as a travel destination.

In what was perhaps the most important decision taken about the appearance of the Fort York Guard, plans were approved in 1977 to move the Guard away from a generic 1812 militia unit to the recreated Grenadier Company of the 8th (King's) Regiment c.1813. The Grenadier Company, of course, had distinguished itself during the Battle of York on 27 April 1813 and the decision to commemorate the

unit was greeted with great enthusiasm. Since none of this was taken lightly, permission to field as the 8th was sought and granted by Britain's Ministry of Defence and the King's Regiment.

As a result, new and more authentic woollen uniforms and equipment were completed for issue in 1978, courtesy of a \$12,000 donation from the Royal Insurance Company of Canada combined with a matching grant from Wintario lottery - all facilitated by THB board member Lieutenant-Colonel Norman Wright, a retired executive vice-president of the Royal Insurance Company of Canada. (The fact that Royal Insurance was headquartered in Liverpool, home to the King's Regiment, undoubtedly helped move the paperwork along!) Lieutenant-Colonel Wright worked tirelessly to promote the Fort York Guard to the business community and beyond. As a result, the Guard soon found itself at every major event across the city and began making annual trips to US sites such as Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Full and part-time Guard staff took the responsibility of representing the 8th very seriously. Cleanliness, deportment, and period grooming were paramount so the Guard turned itself out in 'Class A' condition always. Skill-at-arms, drill, and field evolutions were practiced daily from early May until Labour Day to the point where it would have rivalled its War of 1812 predecessors.

*Read about the expansion of the Guard in the 1980s in the next issue of The Fife and Drum.*



*The staff of Fort York in 1983 standing in front of the reproduction 'Simcoe Tent' in the north bastion. Not all were present when this photograph was taken, however. The staff expanded beyond these numbers for the City of Toronto's Sesquicentennial celebrations in 1984. Notable are Acting Curator Elmer Lemaire (centre); author to his left; and Curatorial Assistant/Site Manager Tom Arnold (far right). Members of the 78th Fraser's Highlanders—who joined The Fort York Guard in site animation—can be seen on the far left. (Photograph by Scott Watson, author's collection.)*

# 2008 Upcoming Events Historic Fort York

Compiled by Melanie Garrison

## JULY

### Canada Day – Annual Event Tues. July 1, 10 am to 5 pm

Come see those other redcoats, the Fort York Summer Guard, perform musket and artillery drill as well as fife and drum music. Tours all day, and lots of fun for the family.

*Regular admission*

### Fort York Ongoing Summer Programming Daily throughout July (except closure noted below) 10 am to 5 pm

Thrill to the booming of the cannon, the firing of muskets, the vibrant colours of the uniformed guard, and the lively music of fife and drum. These are the sights and sounds of Fort York this summer. Visitors will enjoy hourly demonstrations of military music, drill, musketry and artillery performed by students representing the Canadian Fencible Regiment that was garrisoned at the fort at the end of the War of 1812. Highlights include the cannon firing at 12:30 pm and the music of the Fort York Drums (a fife & drum corps) in the afternoons.

*Regular admission*

### A Fort York Historic District Walking Tour: 'Toronto's Changing Lakefront.' Tues. July 1, 1:30 to 3 pm

Starting and ending at the canteen at Fort York National Historic Site, this special walking tour explores the evolution and history of Fort York and the nearby Lake Ontario shoreline. The tour traces the development of the Lakefront from the early British colonial era to the present day. Learn about the origins of Fort York, the fortification of the harbour, local railway & road building, and the subsequent industrial and recreational development of this vital area. Free. Rain or shine.

*Free admission to Fort York following tour*

### Waterfront Regeneration Trust Walking Tour – The Friends of Fort York and David Crombie Sun. July 6, 9:30 am

Meet to cheer on the cyclists participating in the 680km Niagara to Quebec tour of the Waterfront Trail before joining the Friends of Fort York and David Crombie for a historic walking tour of the central waterfront (a 5 km walk from FY to the Distillery District).  
[www.waterfronttrail.org](http://www.waterfronttrail.org)

### Closure for Rogers Picnic (Outdoor Concert) Sat. to Mon. July 19, 20, 21

Summer in the city means a concert event at the fort. The fort itself will be closed to regular visitors for set-up, take-down, and for the event itself, which is on Sunday July 20. Tickets for the concert are available through Ticketmaster among other locations. See [www.rogerspicnic.com](http://www.rogerspicnic.com) for line-up, tickets and other concert info.

## AUGUST

### Fort York Ongoing Summer Programming Daily throughout August (except closure noted below) 10 am to 5 pm

Thrill to the booming of the cannon, the firing of muskets, the vibrant colours of the uniformed guard, and the lively music of fife and drum. These are the sights and sounds of Fort York this summer. Visitors will enjoy hourly demonstrations of military music, drill, musketry and artillery performed by students representing the Canadian Fencible Regiment that was garrisoned at the fort at the end of the War of 1812. Highlights include the cannon firing at 12:30 pm and the music of the Fort York Drums (a fife & drum corps) in the afternoons.

*Regular admission*

### Simcoe Day – Annual Event Mon. August 4, 10 am to 4 pm

Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe founded the town of York (Toronto) in 1793 and served as the first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada (Ontario). Come learn about the birthplace of Toronto and thrill to the sounds of musketry, cannons, and the fife and drum. The Fort George Guard joins us for this great day.

*Regular admission*

### Closure for Toronto Festival of Beer Tues. to Mon. August 5 through 11

Fort York's regular activities are suspended during this weekend as the fort itself will be closed to regular visitors for set-up, take-down, and for the event itself, which takes place August 7, 8, 9, and 10. See [www.beerfestival.ca](http://www.beerfestival.ca) for event and ticketing info.

## SEPTEMBER

### Dance and Danceability Sat. September 20, 7:30 to 10 pm

Learn how to dance Jane Austen style. Everyone is welcome to try some English Country Dancing at Historic Fort York. Neither experience nor partners are necessary. Refreshments served.

*Pre-registration is required \$10 per person.*

### A Fort York Historic District Walking Tour in association with Heritage Toronto: '200 Years of Lakefront Development' Sun. September 28, 1 to 2:30 pm

Explore the history and evolution of Fort York, the Garrison Common, and the nearby Lake Ontario shoreline from the early British colonial era to the present day. Hear about the origins of the Fort, the fortification of the harbour, and the subsequent transportation, industrial, and recreational development of this vital area. Meet in the canteen.  
*Free admission to Fort York following tour*

*Regular admission to Fort York (effective 1 June 2008) is Adult: \$8 (\$7.62 + GST); Senior (65+): \$4 (\$3.81 +GST); Youth (13 – 18 yrs.): \$4 (\$3.81 + GST); Children: \$3 (\$2.85 + GST)*

