

Brief Regimental History

H.M. Royal Fencible American Regiment of Foot was raised in 1775 at the beginning of the conflict between England and the Colonies. "Fencible" means in "defense of" and the regiment was raised in defense of Nova Scotia. The troops were recruited in Nova Scotia, New Found Land, Prince Edward Island and the Boston area. They were raised in Halifax and then sent to garrison Fort Cumberland.

The fort was located in Nova Scotia on the Bay of Fundy, which today is now the New Brunswick border. It was felt that should there be an attack from the colonies by land, this would be the first line of defense. This area also had a local group of patriots sympathetic to the colonies. The commander of the Fencibles was Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Goreham, a seasoned soldier who began his military career as a lieutenant in his brother's regiment, Goreham's Rangers during the French and Indian war.

The fort was indeed attacked in October/November of 1776. Colonel Jonathan Eddy a local patriot raised approximately 200 men and held the fort under siege for five weeks. The Fencibles held the fort until the end of November when two companies of British Marines sent from Halifax to reinforce the fort arrived.

The following morning the two companies of Marines and two companies of Fencibles (Approximately 200 soldiers) marched on the Patriots and attacked them in the early hours of dawn. Many of the leaders were arrested and their homes burned. Goreham was lenient and let the enlisted men leave with their freedom.

George Washington kept an eye on what took place in Cumberland and had the Patriots been successful in taking the fort, it is quite conceivable that he would have sent reinforcements to join Eddy's group and likely then to march on Halifax. One can only speculate what would have happened had the Fencibles not successfully defended the fort. Perhaps Nova Scotia would have become the 14th colony?

In the winter of 1780 the Fencibles were recalled back to Halifax. They made the march on snowshoes, and in 1783 at the end of hostilities, they were disbanded.

Our mandate as re-enactors

As re-enactors we try to portray as closely as possible, the lives of men and women during this period in history. Our goal is to provide a living history experience to our members and visitors. If you wish to learn more about the Regiment and our history, please feel free to visit our encampment behind the Yarmouth Public Library. We welcome all visitors to our site, so step back in time with us and enjoy a living history experience.