

Comparing Wolfe to Montcalm

By Felix

Introduction

James Wolfe and Louis-Joseph de Montcalm were generals for the opposing sides during the Seven Years War from 1756 to 1763. Wolfe's allegiance was towards the British and the same for Montcalm and the French. Wolfe was in service to his military from 1740 to 1759, and Montcalm was in service from 1721 to 1759. Both joined at a surprisingly young age that isn't allowed in our modern military today.

In this presentation I will be comparing the two generals' lives and tactics. I will also be identifying their similarities and differences.

Could you imagine joining the military at the age of 9?

Wolfe's early life

James Wolfe was born on the 2nd of January, 1727, in Westerham, Kent. Wolfe and his family had roots in Ireland. He had a younger brother, and his father Colonel Edward Wolfe, was a veteran soldier of Irish origin. His mother was named Henrietta Wolfe. His uncle was Edward Thompson, an esteemed and well-known politician. Wolfe's original childhood home in Westerham, has been now preserved for him in his memory.

The Wolfes were said to be close to the Warde family, whose house was located in Squerryes Court, Westerham. Wolfe's childhood best friend was George Warde who achieved fame as Commander-in-Chief in Ireland later.



1. James Wolfe's childhood home

Montcalm's early life

Louis-Daniel de Montcalm and Marie-Thérèse de Pierre were the parents of Louis Joseph de Montcalm. He was born in Vestric-et-Candiac, France, 1712, and enlisted in the french army in 1721 at the very young age of 9. He started as an ensign in the Régiment de Hainault. When his father died in 1735 he became the Marquis de Saint-Veran. Along with this he inherited the honours rights and debts of that position. After his marriage to Angelique Louise Talon du Boulay, he soon saw an improvement in his finances. They continued their marriage eventually having a large amount of children and five managed to live to adulthood. He fought in many battles before his involvement in the seven years war. Some examples could be: The siege of kehl, or the siege of phillipsburg which happened a year after.



2. Louis joseph de montcalm's residence in quebec.

The Seven Years War

The Seven Years war was a conflict between the French, English and First Nations that spanned from 1756-1763. The English and the French were competing in this war for control over the colonies of North America.

The Seven Years War was an important part of canadian history, and each win and loss impacted our lives today. Wolfe and Montcalm were huge faces of the war, being the commanding leaders of possibly the most impactful battles of the whole war. Montcalm had commanded the troops in three major battles already. And Wolfe had some battle experience as well.



3. The battle of quiberon bay during the seven years war

Wolfe in the Seven Years War

When Wolfe was first chosen as the commander to attack Quebec many people in charge questioned it, as they believed Wolfe to be a “strange” and “mad” commander. And Wolfe was indeed different. An example of this could be: The fact that when he wished to punish a soldier for acting up or not meeting standards, Instead of whipping them he would dress them up as a woman and parade them around the camp. (nowadays punishments in the military are a lot different)

During the Seven Years War Wolfe lead a daring attack during the siege of Louisbourg, which resulted in him being promoted to major general.

Wolfe started the attack on Quebec with fire mortars, burning much of the city. Soon after his troops morale was low,,most of the food had spoiled in the heat of the burning city and the rains of summer drenched his troops which lead to sickness affecting many of them. Wolfe eventually decided to make a unusual risky move and surprise montcalm by having his troops sail along the saint lawrence river to scale 50 meter cliffs and draw out the french..



4. General wolfe

Wolfe in the Seven Wars war cont.

While Wolfe was scaling the cliffs he had the British navy attack from a different angle leading to Montcalm being forced to split up his troops. After Wolfe had secured the cliffs he started the attack on the Plains of Abraham. He set up his troops in two ranks instead of three, so they could stretch out farther. Wolfe decided his troops would fire all at once leading to a more devastating, but slower volley. It seems his tactics were bold and very unexpected, and lead to his victory. But death eventually found Wolfe in this battle when he took 3 shots and perished.



5. The death of general wolfe

Montcalm in the Seven Years War

Before the battle of Quebec Louis Joseph de Montcalm was already in three major battles in the Seven Years War, all of which he did well. He was experienced and overall a great commander. One of his most notable victories was the Battle of Carillon where Montcalm was sent to make an attempt at stopping a British attack with 6000 British regulars and 9000 provincial militiamen. They managed to delay the push by killing the British second in command, which gave them enough time for Canadian reinforcements to arrive bringing his number of troops to around 3600. He was able to hold the garrison partly due to the British general in command having errors in his attack.

He eventually continued to his final battle on the Plains of Abraham where although the city was being destroyed by the British, he still managed to fight off the British forces from fully invading. When Wolfe assembled his troops on the plains of Abraham, Montcalm made his final mistake. He decided to try to stop the British forces from fortifying a position, instead of waiting for more troops to arrive and bolster his numbers.



6. Louis-joseph de montcalm

Similarities and differences

Similarities: Both were born into wealthy families with some members being esteemed politicians.

Both joined service at a young age (although it was more typical back then)

Both successful commanders that earned honor and recognition in the seven years war.

Differences: Wolfe's tactics were more experimental and original, whereas I believed Montcalm went for a traditional approach most of the time.

Wolfe was British and Montcalm was French.

Wolfe had a greater advantage because of his number of troops, which could be the reason he tried new unexpected tactics. And Montcalm probably wanted to play it safer with less troops.

Based on my presentation, what are some other differences you can think of?