

PETER DRUMMOND

Drummond is noted as one of Daniel McAlpin's officers, who assisted in raising the American Volunteers [AV] (note: there is some disagreement whether this unit name is simply a generic one, or specific. My opinion is that it's specific.) Neil Robertson is another. I've found no mention of either man's pre-war militia career and no suggestion of earlier service in the Seven Years' War (Drummond is not found in the rolls of the New York Provincial Regiment,) so why they were chosen as officers eludes me.

Drummond and Robertson took the first contingent of the AV north, joining with the Jessup brothers on their way to join Carleton. According to a memorial to Haldimand dated 13Nov80, Drummond joined McAlpin in Sep76 and received pay from 25Oct76 onwards. i.e. the day when the AV party and the Jessups joined Carleton at Crown Point.

An excellent little book on the history of McAlpin's AV is J. Fraser's, "Skulking for the King, A Loyalist Plot" (Erin, ON: Boston Mills Press, 1985) Fraser cites two letters from Drummond to Haldimand. One dated 02Jul80, HP, AddMss21874, f.168 and the other dated 13Nov80, *ibid*, f.218. I have not seen these letters.

In Jessup's King's Loyal Americans' [KLA] earliest return dated 24Jan77 at Point Clair, Peter Drummond was listed as the lieutenant in Captain Edward Jessup's Company. Neil Robertson as ensign in Capt Jonathon Jones' Coy. This means that both men had been absorbed by Jessup in the absence of McAlpin. See, HP, B167, (AddMss21827, pt.1) pp.5-?

At Point Clair on 30Jan77, both men were listed as being sworn into Jessup's KLA by Major James Gray, 1KRR - Drummond as a lieutenant and Robertson as ensign. See MG13 (WO28/10, pt1)

On a subsistence roll of the KLA for the period 25Jun-24Oct77, both Drummond and Robertson were shown as ending their service with the regiment on 22Aug77. See HP, AddMss21827, pp.43&44.

A detailed list of the dispositions of the officers and men of Edward Jessup's Coy for the period 25Jun-24(Oct77?) does not even list Drummond. See, HP, AddMss21827. However, a Pay Roll of Jonathon Jones' Coy shows Ens Neal Robertson's pay ending 22Aug77. *ibid*, p.53.

From what I can see, both officers left the KLA and rejoined McAlpin's AV. LCol Eben Jessup referred obliquely to this event in a memorial to General John Burgoyne dated 17Jul78. He complained of Captain McAlpin as "Misconstering [sic] &c your good order of the 21st Augt for Incorporating or Classing Men in the Provincial Corps" as one of several reasons for being unable to complete the KLA. As both Drummond and Robertson left the KLA a day later, I see this as the reason for Drummond being ignored in Edward Jessup's detailed account.

On a Monthly Return of Volunteers dated 01Dec77 prepared somewhere in Quebec, the

following note was made. "Capt Peter Drummond taken Prisoner in the Field of Battle the 19th Sept. and is now confined in Irons in Albany." See MG13 (WO28/10, p.100) So, less than a month after leaving the KLA, Drummond was captured in action. This battle is known as 1st Saratoga to most Americans and as the Battle of Freeman's Farm to the rest of us.

The return also noted that Lieut Thos Fraser had gone to meet his family by McAlpin's leave. More on him later.

McAlpin expanded upon Drummond in his memorial to Haldimand dated Quebec 18Nov78. "Your Excellency's Memorialist did appoint Mr. Peter Drummond to be Captain of a Company and Several others Good Men to be Subalterns. Capt. Drummond had the Misfortune to be taken prisoner in the field of Battle on the 19th Sept 1777 when he was exerting himself in the Execution of his duty & he has Since Sufferd much being a long time Confined in Irons in a dungeon." See HP, AddMss21874, pp.79&80.

On an AV return dated Verchere 24Jan78, Neil Robertson was listed as senior lieutenant and having joined on 01Aug77. Little discrepancy there, but nothing unusual. William Fraser, brother of Thomas, was shown as 2nd senior lieutenant. More on him later as well. Neither Drummond nor Thos Fraser were listed, as both are still absent. See HP, AddMss21827, pp.138-40.

So, moving to an American source now. The minutes of the Albany Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies noted on 31Jul78, that Peter Drummond, who was confined last fall for being with the enemy was requesting to be "eliberated." This was agreed to "on his entering into Bond with a sufficient Surety until his Exchange can be procured."

On 03Aug78, Drummond and two other Tories were discharged from confinement and permitted to go at large after entering into a Recognizance for good behaviour and giving bail of 500 Pounds each.

On 10Oct78, Drummond appeared before the commission and requested a pass to go to Poughkeepsie to solicit New York Governor George Clinton to arrange an exchange for an officer of equal rank. A pass was granted.

On 27Nov79, the commission noted, "Resolved Peter Drummond be & is hereby discharged from the Recognizance by him entered into before this Board & that his Bails be discharged in Like Manner."

See "Minutes of the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York, Albany County Sessions, 1778-1781" (3 Vols, Albany, NYS, 1909)

I can no longer find my reference for the date of Drummond's exchange, but an order from Haldimand's HQ dated 05Dec80 set up two Independent Coys. One led by Lieutenant Peter Drummond with Lieutenant Niel Robertson and Ensign James McAlpin; the second commanded by Lieutenant William Fraser with Lieutenant Thomas Fraser and Ensign Gideon Adams. All of these officers were from the AV. It

is likely that the men were drawn from the AV as well as other small loyalist corps. See, Archives of Ontario, Jessup's Orderly Book, entry for 05Dec80.

This event shows Haldimand's great confidence in Drummond and Fraser, as many other Provincial officers would have yearned for this honour and active employment.

Oddly enough, I have not found any details of the assignments given to Drummond's Independent Coy. In contrast, there is much known about Wm Fraser's company, which participated in Capt John Munro's raid on Ballstown in Oct80, before being established as independent. Thereafter, Fraser's Independent Company manned the two Yamaska blockhouses on the river of the same name. The river's course was a key entry point for rebel spies and couriers and a potential route of invasion.

On 12Nov81, Haldimand combined all of remnants of Burgoyne's loyalist corps into a single battalion known as the Loyal Rangers under the command of Major-commandant, Edward Jessup. Drummond's and Fraser's companies were absorbed.

Of interest, on disbandment on 24Dec83, Wm Fraser was listed as the Loyal Rangers' 5th senior captain and Drummond as 7th. How William catapulted over Peter is a mystery.

On 13Oct84, Capt P. Drummond and a servant were shown as settlers at Royal Township No.6 (Edwardsburgh.) Norman K. Crowder, "Early Ontario Settlers, A Source Book" (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1993) 54.

I have not found a pension deposition by Drummond and, mysteriously, only one soldier mentions him by name in the hundreds of depositions on record. See, "United Empire Loyalists, Second Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario" and W. Bruce Antliff, "Loyalist Settlements 1783-1789, New Evidence of Canadian Loyalist Claims."

[By Gavin Watt]