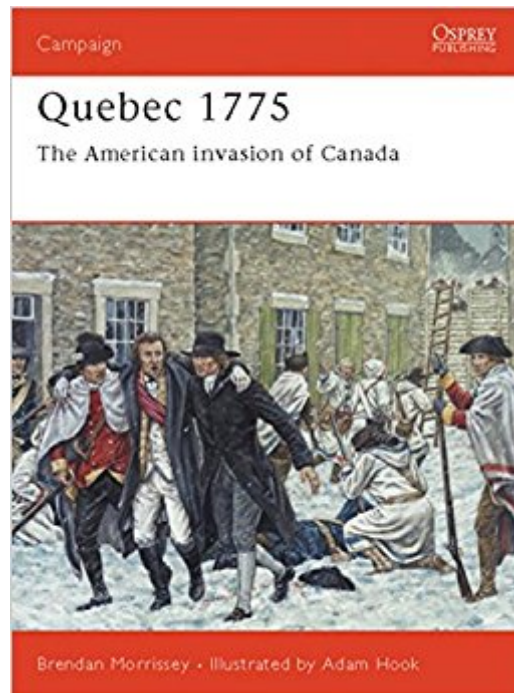




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# Quebec 1775: The American Invasion Of Canada (Campaign)



## Synopsis

The American attack on Quebec in 1775 was a key episode in the American War of Independence (1775-1783). Capture of the city would give the Americans control of Canada – a disaster for the British. The subsequent campaign involved a 350-mile trek across uninhabited wilderness, a desperate American attack on the city of Quebec that left one American general dead and another wounded, and a British counterattack that culminated in a brutal naval battle off Valcour Island on Lake Champlain. In this book Brendan Morrissey details the events of this ferocious struggle whose results would have such momentous consequences at Saratoga in 1777.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Books in Osprey's 'Campaign' series stand out at both secondary and college levels as works that will engage and sustain student interest ... sophisticated maps and comprehensive graphics complement the texts without overwhelming them.

Highly visual guides to history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics, and experiences of the opposing forces throughout each campaign, and concluding with a guide to the battlefields today.

The American invasion of Canada in 1775 rarely gets much coverage in American history for a variety of reasons. Americans like to think of their forefathers defending home and hearth against

British tyranny, spearheaded by the dreaded Redcoats, not invading a territory that did not want to be part of their new nation. The fact that the campaign also ended in ignominious failure further discourages attention. However perhaps the greatest impediment to American study of this important but neglected campaign is the fact that the hero of the hour was none other than Benedict Arnold, the most despised figure in American history. Brendan Morrissey, the British PR consultant who did three earlier volumes for Osprey on the American Revolution, brings the Quebec campaign into sharp focus in Osprey's Campaign #128. In particular, this volume on Quebec 1775 would also make a useful campaign study for military officers. Quebec 1775 begins with a 5-page introduction that provides background on the Quebec Act, a four-page section on the geography, people and political issues and a campaign chronology. The sections on opposing commanders and opposing forces are decent, but Morrissey provides no order of battle for either side (in particular, he omits British ground and naval forces in Nova Scotia). The campaign narrative itself is 60 pages long, and includes separate sections on the initial battles, Arnold's journey across the Maine wilderness, the American retreat from Canada and the Battle of Valcour Island. The author also provides an interesting section on the battlefields today and an annotated bibliography. The campaign narrative is supported by five 2-D maps (North America and the Quebec Act; Lower Canada on the eve of war; Montgomery's advance into Canada; Arnold's march to Quebec; Sullivan's retreat from Canada), three 3-D "Bird's Eye View" maps (the siege of St Johns; the attack on Quebec; the Battle of Valcour Island) and three color battle scenes (the siege of St Johns; Arnold is wounded at Quebec; the Hesse Hanau artillery in action at Valcour Island). All in all, the graphic presentations are effective and make this volume a useful supplement to any study of early military operations in the American Revolution. Morrissey is a good storyteller and he relates the facts of the campaign with both precision and accuracy. However, Morrissey does not really attempt any military analysis and readers should be cautioned to treat the authors' opinion with some circumspection.

Throughout the text, Morrissey defends Major General Sir Guy Carleton, the British commander in Canada, from accusations of over-caution and even timidity. Yet it is pretty obvious that the British army in Canada had gotten into a peacetime rut after nine years of quiet garrison duty in Montreal and neither the troops or commanders were up to the demands of mobile warfare. Carleton's decision to commit the bulk of his regulars to a "die-in-place" mission at St. Johns on the border rather than to conduct a delay or launch a spoiling attack was a major mistake. Indeed, the passivity of the British regulars in the first six months of the campaign is truly amazing - they virtually sat immobile and then just fell over like ninepins at the first strike - and it goes a long way toward explaining American initial successes. Morrissey considers the siege of St Johns as a valiant effort

that delayed the American invasion for two months but the defense did not save Montreal from occupation and Arnold did not reach Quebec until nearly two weeks after the surrender of St Johns. With the loss of Montreal and nearly 70% of the British regulars in Canada at the cost of fewer than 200 American casualties, the British were on the verge of losing in weeks what had taken years of hard fighting to conquer in the Seven Years War. Like most historians, Morrissey goes along with the notion that the American assault on Quebec on New Years Eve 1775 was foredoomed to failure. Granted, the Americans were attacking a fortified position held by an enemy that outnumbered them 2-1, but Morrissey does not credit the American advantages in morale and maneuver warfare. The British rag-tag force of militia (French and English), sailors and a few remaining regulars was willing to wait behind their defenses and they were commanded by men who leaned toward caution. Arnold and Daniel Morgan, the commander of the riflemen, typified the aggressive and anything-is-possible type mentality that represented the real military capability of the American patriots in 1775-1776. Morrissey fails to note that the American plan of attack - a pincer effort - was fairly sophisticated and came fairly close to success. Had the Americans made more effort in dealing with the British obstacle plan, the defenses might have been breached and the polyglot British force probably would have surrendered (certainly the Canada militia would probably have decided not to risk their lives for the British). As it was, the failure of the attack and the loss of much of the American army did not entice the slightest aggressiveness from Carleton. After leading the New Years Eve attack with Richard Montgomery and being wounded, Arnold remained in Canada to rally the now-dispirited Americans. Once British reinforcements arrived in 1776 and the American army began to retreat, Morrissey notes that Arnold was the last American soldier to leave Canada. Arnold then threw himself into the construction of a fleet on Lake Champlain and fought the Battle of Valcour Island that helped to delay a British counter-invasion of northern New York. All in all, Arnold's performance in the Quebec campaign between May 1775 and October 1776 was one of the amazing displays of dynamic tactical leadership ever seen by an American commander. Unfortunately, as Medal of Honor winner "Pappy" Boyington once said, "show me a hero and I'll show you a bum," it was never more true than in the case of Arnold.

Brendan Morrissey is an exceptional historian. He has the talent and scholarship to take the complex history of the battles of the American Revolution and summarize them into a compact, accurate, unbiased and immensely readable short format for the Osprey Campaign Series. His choice of artwork strongly supports the text and often includes uncommon artwork and illustrations. He consults with the major experts and keeps a neutral perspective concerning the combatants. I

have all of his books in my collection. Col. Kim R. Stacy, Savannah, GA, USA His contribution to the Osprey Campaign Series includes: Monmouth Courthouse 1778: The Last Great Battle in the North (Campaign) Saratoga 1777: Turning Point of a Revolution (Campaign) Quebec 1775: The American Invasion of Canada (Campaign) Boston 1775: The Shot Heard Around the World (Campaign) Yorktown 1781 The American Revolution: The Global Struggle for National Independence On to Victory: Guilford Courthouse and Yorktown 1781 (The History Channel, American History Archives)

Great for history buff! Happy customer!

The volume covers the 1775 military campaign that attempted to conquer Canada and make it the 14th American colony. The fact that a majority of the Canadians were French Catholics and that the Catholic religion was held in very low esteem by the American political establishment appeared to have been conveniently overlooked. There are several characteristics of these books that I found quite admirable and would recommend to an individual considering a purchase. The authors make extensive use of double page drawings, full-page maps and numerous period illustration and photographs. In addition timelines, an index and a very helpful section titled "The Battlefield Today" make this a very useful volume for the student or the armchair general hidden within many of us. I will add one caution, due to limited pages count, 96 for this volume, the text is compressed to detailing facts - dates, events, what happened, how many were killed, captured etc. Those generous author narrations that explore motives, personalities and detailed backgrounds are missing. In conclusion I found this book an excellent supplement to other books I have read on the American Revolution and Benedict Arnold and recommend it on that basis.

I was hoping to find anything on my ancestor, Timothy Conner, a rifleman from Pennsylvania who marched under Arnold to Quebec, but found nothing in the book.

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