

# Martin Balthazar dit St. Martin (1737-1797)

**Part Two—The Plains of Abraham**  
by Dr. Jim Paul

In the second installment in this three-part series, Balthazar describes a decisive battle in the French and Indian War.

Within 15 minutes on the morning of Sept. 13, 1759, the world changed for all of us. A momentous battle outside my Citadel fortress in Quebec on the Plains of Abraham claimed the lives of the opposing generals Wolfe and Montcalm, as well as 60 British and 200 French soldiers. Six-hundred British were wounded while we had 400 wounded. The sides were more or less evenly matched with forces of just less than 5,000 each. After a three-month summer long siege of Quebec by the British navy and several cat and mouse skirmishes outside the city, General James Wolfe decided on a gamble by ordering his forces to quietly scale the cliffs that opened onto the Plains of Abraham on the evening and night of Sept. 12 and 13. This plateau was just west of my fortress, the Citadel. By the time the sun rose over the Plains of Abraham, Wolfe's army had a solid foothold at the top of the cliffs.

You can imagine the shocked surprise of our commander General Louis-Joseph de Montcalm. He elected to confront Wolfe's forces directly. To an artillery officer named Montbelliard, Montcalm explained his decision thus: "We can-

not avoid action; the enemy is entrenching, he already has two pieces of cannon. If we give him time to establish himself, we shall never be able to attack him with the troops we have." And so I was called "To Arms!"

General Montcalm was one of the few mounted men on the field. He decided that a swift assault was the only way to dislodge the British from their position on the plain. Accordingly, he deployed all our forces available and prepared an immediate attack without waiting for further reinforcements. He arrayed our approximately 3,500 soldiers into place, our best regulars three deep, others six deep and our poorest regiment in column. At approximately 10 a.m., Montcalm, riding his dark horse and waving his sword to encourage us, ordered a general advance on the British line. As we advanced, the British held their line.

I learned after the battle that Wolfe had ordered his soldiers to charge their muskets with two balls each in preparation for the engagement. Captain John Knox, serving with the 43rd Foot of the British infantry, wrote in his journal that as we, the French, came within range, the regiments "gave them, with great calmness, as remarkable a close and heavy discharge as I ever saw." After the first volley, the British lines marched forward a few paces towards our shocked French force and fired a second general volley that shattered our attack and sent us into retreat.

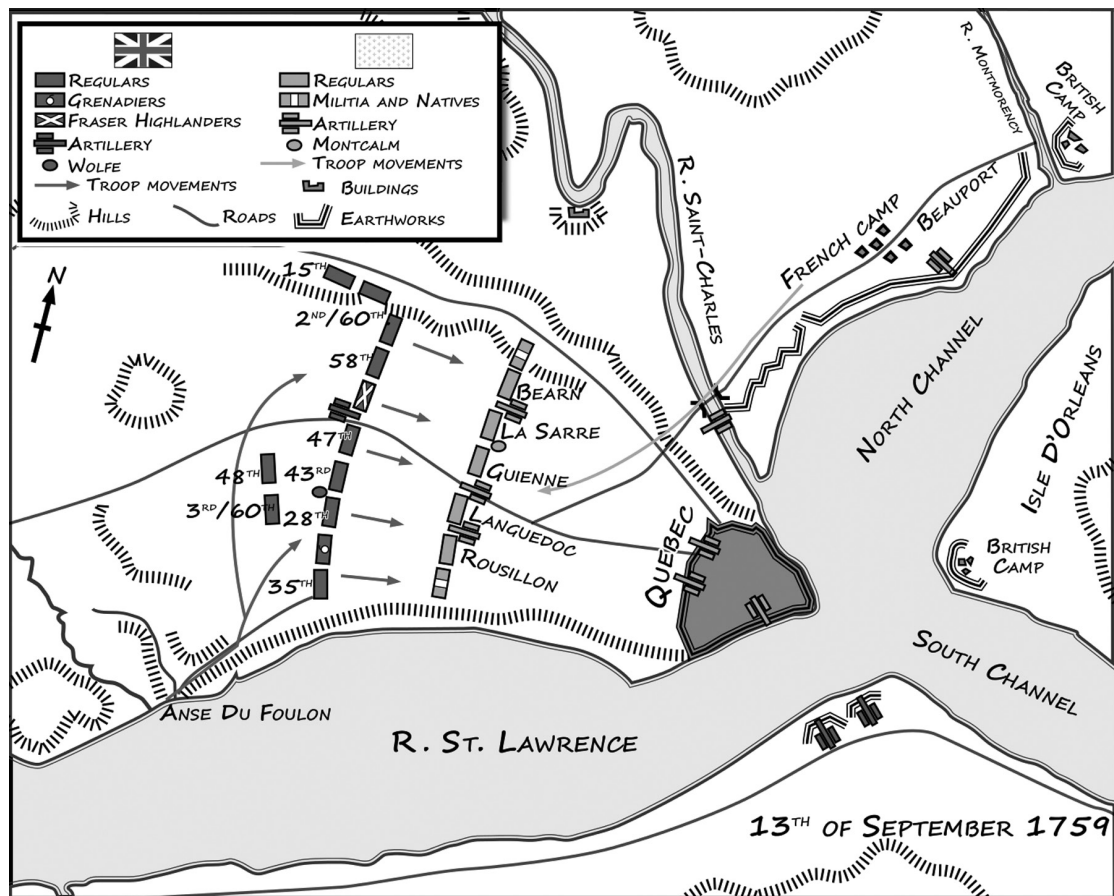
Their General Wolfe was struck with two shots, one low

in the stomach and the second, a mortal wound in the chest. Captain Knox wrote that one of the soldiers near Wolfe shouted, "They run, see how they run." Wolfe, on the ground, opened his eyes and asked who was running. Upon being told that we the French had broken, he gave several orders, then turned on his side and said, "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace," and then, he died.

During the retreat, our General Montcalm, still mounted, was struck by either a canister shot from the British artillery or repeated musket fire, and suffered injuries to the lower abdomen and thigh.

He was able to make it back into the city, but his wounds were mortal and he died early the next morning. He was buried in a shell crater left in the floor of the Ursuline chapel by a British shell. The battle was lost, and five days later on Sept. 18, 1759, the city of Quebec was turned over to British control.

This article is from a presentation by Dr. Paul at the Spirits of Theatiki event, French Canadian Heritage Museum at the Stone Barn in Kankakee, on Aug. 23, 2014. Martin Balthazar dit St. Martin is the ancestor of virtually all Balthazar/Balthazor families in the U.S. including descendants of Francois Balthazar from Le Petit Canada near Davis Creek. Many thanks to Dave King's extensive research on this part of local history.



Map of the battle of the Plains of Abraham

Map/graphic courtesy of Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0, Wikimedia Commons, Hoodinski, dated May, 19, 2011.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history.

Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month, March to December. Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. on the first and third Sundays of each month, March to December or by appointment. Visit [bourbonnaishistory.org](http://bourbonnaishistory.org), [facebook.com/bourbonnaisgrove](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaisgrove) or call 1-815-933-6452.

## Fill the Bus event collects toys to benefit area children



Photo courtesy of State Rep. Cloonen's office

As a part of her continuing efforts to guarantee that area children in need have a present to open this holiday season, State Representative Kate Cloonen, joined by Lisa Dugan and family teamed up with Legends Sportsplex, the Kankakee County Soldiers basketball team, Linman's McDonald's, River Valley Metro and WVLI Radio for a successful "Fill the Bus" toy drive event held Saturday, Nov. 28, 2015. Local families donated more than 1,200 toys to "Fill the Bus" and all the donations from the event will be donated to the Salvation Army for their annual toy drive. "Thanks to the generosity of area families and my local partners, we are able to create a memorable holiday season for hundreds of local children," Cloonen said. "This event could not have been a success without the kindness of the people who donated, and I am grateful for their efforts to make a difference for so many less fortunate families this holiday season." State Representative Cloonen (right) and Danielle Dugan (second from the left) accepted a donation from an area resident during the event.

## MOPS host Cookie Grab

The Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) at St. Paul's Lutheran Church will host their We Bake—You Take Christmas Cookie Grab on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2015 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Paul's Lutheran School, 1780 Career Center Rd. in Bourbonnais.

The We Bake—You Take Christmas Cookie Grab is a Christmas cookie bake sale with more than 50 varieties of homemade Christmas cookies.

Community members are invited to mix-and-match Christmas cookies at a cost of \$3.50 per dozen. Containers will be provided. Pre-orders can be arranged by calling 1-708-417-7018.

## Super Crossword

### Answers

A	S	T	R	I	D	E	S	A	Y	E	S	T	A	B	R	U	P	T
D	A	R	E	N	O	T	T	R	A	D	E	R	N	O	O	D	L	E
Z	H	E	N	G	Z	H	O	U	C	H	I	N	A	Y	O	N	D	E
E	L	S	A	E	O	N	S	T	S	I	W	O	D	E	A	R		
	M	O	R	S	E	L	Z	O	L	T	A	N	K	O	R	D	A	
R	I	C	E	S	G	A	L	E	N	A	L	E	I					
A	D	O	L	E	G	V	E	E	B	Y	E	L	E	T	I	T		
Z	E	N	O	O	F	E	L	E	A	Z	O	E	S	A	L	D	A	N
R	A	C	Y	G	O	E	R	D	O	R	S	A	L	G	I	N	S	
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Z	O	O	A	T	L	A	N	T	A	Z	U	B	I	N	M	E	H	T
I	N	F	E	R	C	T	S	S	E	A	D	E	E	T	I	M		
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E	R	R	S	U	N	O	H	M	O	O	U	I	O	R	A	L		
B	R	I	T	O	N	Z	O	O	M	L	E	N	S	C	A	M	E	R
R	O	B	E	R	T	O	N	M	E	D	S	T	A	L	E	N	T	S
A	L	E	R	T	S	S	T	E	R	E	O	O	S	P	R	E	Y	S