

# An Historical Sketch

OF THE  
**64TH (SECOND STAFFORDSHIRE) REGIMENT**  
AND OF THE  
**CAMPAIGNS THROUGH WHICH THEY PASSED**



**BY MAJOR H. G. PURDON**

## Chapter 1. Formation and First Services of the Regiment

Disagreements having arisen between the Courts of St. James's and Versailles, with regard to the fulfillment of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle - certain mutual acts of aggression having taken place in North America and on the seas - preparations were made for war, which was proclaimed against France on the 18th May, 1756. In January of the latter year, Lord Barrington, Secretary of State for War, laid estimates before the House for additional forces to be raised, and amongst other augmentations fifteen of the infantry regiments were authorised to raise second battalions from the 25th August, 1756, which were afterwards constituted separate regiments. In this year accordingly, the 11th Regiment was increased to twenty companies, which were divided into two battalions. [The 11th was at Southampton when it formed its 2nd battalion, and then moved to Newcastle-on-Tyne. In 1758, when the second battalions were formed into distinct corps, they were numbered from sixty-one to seventy-five.]

By this arrangement the second battalion of the 11th Regiment became the 64th Regiment on the 21st April, 1758, under the command of Colonel The Honourable John Barrington, from the 2nd Foot Guards.

[Shortly after they were formed, King George II decreed that the new regiments should be given seniority as from the date of their formation as 2nd Battalions, and thus, in common with the others, the 64th officially dates from the year 1756.]

The following officers were appointed to commissions in the 64th Regiment on its formation, from the 21st April, 1758:-

Colonel: Hon. John Barrington

Lieut. Col.: Wollaston Pym

Major: Thomas Bell

Captains: Hon. Alexander Leslie, Alexander Symmer,  
John Wedderburn, David Dickson, Watson  
Powell, Bernard Rice

Captain Lt: Nicholas Tench

Lieutenants: William Maxwell, Charles Townshend,  
William Morrison, John Roberts, Thomas  
Acklom, Thomas Walker, Curtis Farran, Peter  
Calder, John Williams, Gerard More, George  
Bell, Mansell Andrews, Bertles Gilland,  
Robert Kingston, Robert Hoyes, George Brown

Ensigns: William Ellison, William Tidswell, John  
Nolan, William Irwin, Robert Lofty, Charles

Bell, William Abington, John Townsend  
Chaplain: Robert Bell  
Quartermaster: John Roberts  
Adjutant: Charles Townshend  
Surgeon -- Douglas  
Agent: Mr. Fisher, Axe Yard, Westminster

The Regiment had not been many months in existence when they were ordered on active service. The Government had decided on the reduction of the French West India Islands, and an expedition was accordingly fitted out for the purpose. The troops detailed consisted of the 3rd, 4th, 61st, 63rd, 64th. and 65th Regiments under Lieutenant-General Hopson with Major-General The Hon. John Barrington (colonel of the 64th Regiment), an experienced officer, as second in command. [The 64th marched from Newcastle to Chatham, where the main force was concentrating, before marching to Portsmouth under Major Thomas Bell (or Ball. Sources vary).] The force embarked at St. Helens, Isle of Wight, on the 12th November, 1758, and sailed for Barbados, under the escort of eight ships of the Line. They arrived at Carlisle Bay on the 3rd January, and were joined by part of the 38th Regiment from Antigua, and seven companies of the 42nd Highlanders; a battalion of Marines and 500 artillerymen were also included in the expeditionary force, which numbered some 6,800 men. The troops were divided into four brigades, commanded by Colonels Armiger, Haldane, Trapand, and Clavering.

The whole armament sailed from Carlisle Bay on the 13th January, and on the 15th entered the Bay of Fort Royal, Martinique. Next day three ships of the Line engaged and speedily silenced Fort Negro, which was situated some three miles north of the citadel of Fort Royal. A battery at Casdenaviers was next silenced, when the troops landed at Negro Point, and a camping ground having been selected in an open space between two ravines, the force here spent the night formed in a square. At dawn on the 17th it was reported that the enemy had advanced and were entrenching themselves about a building near the camp. The Grenadiers were sent forward, and they soon drove the French back to Morne Tortueson after a smart skirmish, in which the British sustained a loss of sixty-three in killed and wounded. Morne Tortueson was an eminence in the rear of Fort Royal. which overlooked the town, and said to be the most important post in the Island.

The French had given up the idea of further resistance. and were about to ask for terms, when General Hopson thought proper to desist from further action. It was found that heavy guns from the fleet could not be conveniently landed in order to reduce the citadel, and the force being considered insufficient for the enterprise, the troops were reembarked and the attack on the Island abandoned.

The fleet in the meantime had reconnoitered the town of St. Pierre in the north of the Island, but found the place too strong to attack. So it was decided to undertake the conquest of the rich Island of Guadeloupe [Guadeloupe is in fact two islands, Basse Terre to the west, and Grand Terre to the east, the two being divided by a narrow channel]; sail was made accordingly and the fleet appeared off Basse Terre the capital of the western island. On the 23rd the ships of war stood in and opened fire on the citadel and fortifications of Basse Terre. The action was maintained with great vivacity until evening, when the place was in flames and the magazines blown up. During the engagement the Ripon, commanded by Captain Jeckyll, having run aground under two batteries, had a narrow escape of being destroyed. At dawn on the 24th the troops landed when the defences were found abandoned; the Governor D'Estriel having retired to the hills, some six miles inland, with the garrison, where they fortified themselves, and arming the negroes, continually harassed the British by their petty warfare. The work entailed on the troops holding the advanced posts was excessive, and the sickness caused thereby great. By the end of January 1,500 men (a quarter of the force) were on the sick list, and 600 had been invalided to Antigua in the hope that they might recover.

Towards the middle of February Commodore Moore, who was in command of the ships of war, sailed round to Grand Terre, where he found a good harbour at Fort Louis. On the 13th he bombarded the fort defending the place, for six hours, when the Marines and Highlanders landed and carried it.

[Toward the end of February part of the 64th under Major Bell was sent round to this place probably to relieve the Marines.] By this time 1,800 officers and men had died or were in hospital, and General Hopson, who had been suffering from a mortal disease, died on the 27th February, when the command devolved on Major-General Barrington, who resolved to prosecute the war with vigour. Leaving the 63rd Regiment to garrison the citadel in Basse-Terre, he embarked the remainder of the force and made sail for Grand Terre, the richest of the two islands. After five days at sea the transports arrived on the 11th March off Fort Louis, when the troops disembarked. It took a fortnight to put the defences of the place in order, and General Barrington, who had formed a plan to carry on the war by detachments, dispatched Colonel Crump, of the 4th Regiment. with 600 bayonets to reduce the French settlements in Grand Terre.

The latter landed between the small towns of St. Annes and St. Francis, both of which he destroyed, this being accomplished with small loss. On the 29th General Barrington sailed from Fort Louis with 300 men and landed at Le Gosier, a few miles to the east, where he fell on the French stationed there and drove them out, then making his way back to Fort Louis by land, he attacked the enemy who had commenced to beseige the place, and captured a battery of 24-pounders which was to have opened on the fort next day. Most of the settlements in Grand Terre having been destroyed, General Barrington resolved to proceed in the same manner in the Island of Basse Terre. So, early in April, Brigadier Clavering with 1,300 men and six guns landed near Arnouville in the north of the island, unopposed, the enemy having retired and taken up a strong position behind the River Licorne.

Here Colonel Clavering attacked them on the 12th April with the 4th and 42nd regiments, and drove them out of their entrenchments, although the natural obstacles to be overcome were great; the British loss amounted to sixty-five killed and wounded. The enemy then retreated southward and took up another position behind the River Lezarde. However, on the 13th their flank was turned, when they retired abandoning their guns. They then attempted to make a stand at Petit-Bourg on the coast, but were driven out of the place by the fire of a bomb vessel sent there for the purpose by General Barrington. At Petit-Bourg the British halted, but Colonel Clavering moved out on the 15th and drove the French from Gouyave, where they left seven guns. On the same day Colonel Crump, who had been transferred with his detachment to Basse Terre, was sent with 700 men to Mahault Bay, where he destroyed a vast quantity of stores, and then proceeded to join Colonel Clavering at Petit-Bourg. Leaving 250 men to garrison the latter place, Clavering marched on the 18th and moved southwards towards St. Mary's, where the French had collected all their forces in order to resist the further advance of the British. On arriving before the place Colonel Clavering turned it with a detachment, on which the enemy retired to a position further back, where entrenchments had been thrown up. Here another flanking movement being made, the French quitted their lines to oppose the design, when they were attacked and utterly routed with the loss of all their cannon. On the 19th the troops entered the rich district of Capesterre, and the inhabitants, dreading its destruction, sent two deputies to General Barrington for the purpose of inquiring what terms would be granted them, if they surrendered. These were settled without delay; the small islands of Deseada, Los Santos, and Petit Terre being included in the capitulation, and this success was followed by the reduction of Marie-Gallante.

In these operations the British (including the Royal Navy) lost 12 officers killed and 23 wounded, besides 21 who died of disease; 85 non-commissioned officers and men were killed, and 215 wounded. The number that died of disease is not recorded, but was very great. Lieutenants Bell, Southouse, and Maxwell, of the 64th Regiment were wounded, while Captain Walker, Ensign Irwing, Surgeon Webb, Mates Robinson and Hudson, succumbed to the effects of disease. Only one rank and file of the 64th Regiment is stated to have been killed, and four wounded. The 4th, 63rd and 65th Regiments were left to form the garrison of Guadeloupe, and Colonel Crump was made governor of the island, which was evacuated in 1763. General Barrington, with the remnants of the 3rd, 61st and 64th Regiments sailed for England in June under convoy of the *Roebuck* man-of-war.

[The campaign earned the Regiment its first Battle Honour GUADELOUPE 1759, although it had to wait until 1909 before it was awarded. Curiously enough it was also the first awarded to the 38th Foot, later the 1st South Staffords, with whom the 64th were to amalgamate exactly 200 years later.]

The 64th landed in Portsmouth, and a monthly return dated 8th August, 1759, gives the strength of the Regiment on arrival as follows: 1 Lt. Col, 1 Major, 5 Captains, 14 Lts., 6 Ensigns, 1 chaplain, 1 adjutant, 1 quarter-master, 1 surgeon, 31 serjeants, 15 drummers, 2 fifers, 89 rank and file fit for duty, and 58 sick; wanting to complete 3 drummers and 787 rank and file.

From Portsmouth the headquarters and 5 companies moved to Landguard Fort, 3 companies were detached at Woodbridge, and one at Saxmundham and Wickham. In a return dated 29th November, 1759, 133 recruits are shown as having joined; 79 came from London. The Regiment did not remain long in Suffolk, as in 1760 the headquarters and 5 companies were stationed at Fort William in Scotland, and 4 companies at Fort Augustus. In 1761 the whole Regiment was quartered at Fort George, but in the latter part of the year one company was detached at Forres in Elgin. During 1762 the headquarters and 5 companies were again stationed at Fort William, and 4 companies at Fort Augustus, where they remained until March 1763. All the companies were present at Fort William when the rolls were signed on 3rd May 1763, previous to their departure for Ireland.

The Regiment remained in Ireland for 5 years, but no muster-rolls or monthly returns are extant for that period. When orders were received to proceed to America they were quartered in Cashel [County Tipperary], and from there they marched to Cork Harbour for embarkation. A return signed at the latter place on the 5th September 1768, gives the strength as follows:

Return of the 64th Regiment lying on board of four transports in Cork Harbour: 1 Colonel, 1 Lt. Colonel, 1 Major, 7 Captains., 9 Lieutenants., 8 Ensigns, 1 adjutant, 1 surgeon, 1 mate, 18 serjeants, 9 drummers, and 423 rank and file.