

**LAWRENCE McKENZIE, SOLDIER AND UE LOYALIST, 1740-1807**  
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Twice in his lifetime did Lawrence McKenzie answer his King's "Call to Arms".

Lawrence was born in Ireland around 1740, and it was in Ireland, around 1756, that he heeded his King's "Call to Arms" for the first time. War had been declared by Britain against France on the 18th of May, 1756. The King's older established regiments were being augmented to full strength, and young men everywhere were being enlisted upon their oaths (and with the prepayment of "his Majesty's Bounty-money") to serve in the King's army.

Lawrence McKenzie enlisted for a ten-year term in Colonel Blakeney's Inniskilling Regiment. The earliest surviving muster lists identify him as a private soldier in Captain Josiah Martin's Company. Within a few months of his enlistment McKenzie and his comrades found themselves debarked at New York and ultimately engaged in Abercromby's failed assault on Ticonderoga in 1758. They overwintered in the Hudson River valley and carried through northward to help take the remaining French forces in Quebec in 1760. The men may have been in Nova Scotia in 1761, and were certainly active in the West Indies at Barbados, Martinique, Grenada and Havana, in early 1762. The Regiment was returned to Montreal and Trois Rivières to perform garrison duty after Havana fell. McKenzie was one of only a handful in his company who survived the ravages of disease in the West Indies. British soldiers fell there by the score, and McKenzie may have contracted malaria there - it's a fact that he spent two pay periods in hospital at Trois Rivières, before being furloughed and then discharged at Quebec on the 25th of January, 1767.

We have to wonder where and how he picked up the skills but - still in America, Lawrence McKenzie next found employment as a stonemason at Skenesborough. Col. Philip Skene had gained fame and renown with his commanding breach of the Havana seige in 1762. Previously he'd served as a Captain in Blakeney's Inniskilling Regiment. Skenesborough was a large block of land, located at the bottom of South Bay, Lake Champlain, that was granted to Skene. It was here that he erected an estate home, office, farms, buildings and mills. Skene published offers to settlers in the New York Gazette as early as 1765, and Lawrence McKenzie's name appears in some of Skene's old records, one of which shows that he was in Skene's employ as a stonemason for three years, between 1766 and 1769, at the rate of £50 per annum.

By 1770 McKenzie's status had changed - he was now living on 100 acres of land, and improving it, with right of a life lease from Skene. This is probably about the time that McKenzie married. He's believed to have had at least five children during his years at Skenesborough, the oldest born some time around 1769 or 1770. Lawrence, with his wife and children behind him, would have seen military force re-enter his life again in about 1775. First small rebel and then British forces seesawed back and forth for control of the Lake Champlain corridor, as the colonial rebellion spread from New England. The couple must have witnessed the total ransacking and destruction of Skene's estate and offices which occurred after Skene was arrested in Philadelphia. Immediately upon his debarking a ship from England Skene was found to be bearing honours

conferred on him by the King. The rebels trundled him off to prison in Hartford and ransacked his estate. Skene was soon exchanged, however, and McKenzie and his family must have been pleased to see Skene and British sensibilities return to Skenesborough with the swelling arrival of General John Burgoyne's large army in 1777. It was at this time that Lawrence McKenzie answered his King's "Call to Arms" for the second time.

Burgoyne's army passed through Skenesborough, on their drive south, and McKenzie swore to uphold his King and Burgoyne through Philip Skene. McKenzie served his duty by gathering intelligence, and was paid for his services during this period from Skene's personal accounts.

Despair must have been deep in McKenzie's heart when Burgoyne's expedition foundered and capitulated later in 1777. Shortly after the capitulation, in November, Lawrence must have been forced to whisk his wife and children from their home, bearing only what they could carry, because their arrival at Montreal as refugees was duly noted.

McKenzie was officially employed as a labourer at Montreal through 1779, but he was also active, in the 1777-1779 period, gathering intelligence under the guidance of Dr. Samuel Adams, of Vermont. With the reorganization of the King's provincial forces in the Northern Department in 1780, McKenzie mustered in Captain Azariah Pritchard's company of the King's Rangers. During the period of McKenzie's King's Rangers service his wife and children were barracked at Machiche, and at least one child was born there and baptized in the garrison church at Trois Rivières.

Governor Frederick Haldimand announced staging grounds and procedures for the settlement of Loyalist refugees in the spring of 1784. McKenzie moved his wife and children to Quebec, where they awaited transport to the new settlement at New Carlisle, on the Bay of Chaleurs. The family embarked the brig 'St. Peter' and they sailed toward their new home on the 9th of June. Storms kept them aboard, sometimes backtracking to Bic and Perce, until the 28th of June, and a drawing for Lots of land, laid out according to surveys completed by William Vondenvelden, took place at New Carlisle on the 3rd of August 1784 (exactly 220 years ago as I'm writing this!).

McKenzie swore another oath to serve his Majesty's interests and, having besides himself a wife, two sons, aged 7 and 11, and three daughters, aged 9, 12 and 15, he drew his entitlement of 400 acres at New Carlisle.

McKenzie's life after 1784 is shrouded in as much mystery as is his life before 1756. The names of his two sons are not currently known, although there are a few candidates for the honour. The child born in Machiche seems not to have survived. The oldest daughter, Margaret, herself bore several children and probably died around New Carlisle some time after 1830 - as the 'Widow Rafter' (she apparently cohabited with Samuel William Allen from about 1811, and bore one son by him in 1814). The middle daughter, Eleanor, married another soldier/loyalist named William Thompson, and by about 1800 they and their relations had moved to the Eel River Settlement on the New Brunswick side of the Chaleur Bay. The youngest surviving daughter, Bridgit, married Joseph Mash or Marsh, and seems to have moved with her husband back to his native England.

Lawrence McKenzie died in the spring of 1807, and was buried - after converting to the Roman Catholic faith, near the St. Bonaventure parish church in Quebec's Gaspé District. He was described at the time of his burial, on the 30th of March, 1807, as a fisherman, aged 67 years.