

BRADDOCK'S MARCH ON FORT DUQUESNE

Amy Hissom
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After the British loss of victory at George Washington's Fort Necessity on May 28, 1754, which started the seven-year French and Indian War, a new campaign was formed with General Edward Braddock chosen to command.

General Braddock was to lead over two thousand men to carry out this campaign that took place in the summer of 1755. This was the largest military force to form on the North American Continent up to this point in time. He tried to recruit some of the Indians to join his army, but only convinced a very few. Most of the Indians were on the side of the French because they got along better with them.

Braddock was to go to Pennsylvania and take over Fort Duquesne. George Washington joined Braddock's force as an aide. This was good for Braddock because Washington had already traveled the particular route they were taking several times. He knew the way. The march to Fort Duquesne relied on the building of a road that Braddock and his men constructed by using an old Indian path called Nemaquin's Path, which gave them a route through the Allegheny Mountains. It took them a little over a month to build this road, which was 12 feet wide and 110 miles long and 50 years later, financed by Congress as the first National Road. This road is now called U.S 40 and is still here today.

Braddock had little disciplinary control over his troops because they were constantly frightened of what would happen to them if they encountered any French Indian allies along the way. The French used their Indian friends to keep track of Braddock's regiment. The stories of Indian war tactics that included scalping along with news of two families being killed by Indians near Fort Cumberland had an overwhelming mental effect on them.

On July 9, during Braddock's second crossing of the Monongahela River west of Turtle Creek, his troops collided with a French army led by a French Captain named Beaujeu. Beaujeu's army consisted of 900 men, most of which were Indians. Because of surprise of colliding into each other and the war screams of the Indians that more than likely enhanced the mental state of Braddock's troops, the French were stronger and more powerful. The French won this battle with only 8 percent casualties. The 66 percent of British casualties included the Death of General Braddock. He was shot in battle on July 9, but did not die until July 13. He was buried on July 14 in the road near the head of the column. The site for his burial was chosen to prevent the French and Indians from desecrating his grave. Washington had two horses shot out from under him and bullets pierced his clothes, but he came out with not one scratch on him. In the end and after other battles, the British won the French and Indian war. That is why we speak the English language.

MY OPINION

I think that this was a very good and detailed story. As for Braddock, I definitely think that he and his superiors should have dealt with the upcoming psychological and disciplinary problems of their troops before this campaign was to start. If they would have, the outcome may have been totally different. Braddock's regiment was over double the size of the French in this battle. I do, however, believe that even though the British lost this battle due to the number of casualties, they won in terms of other areas. They won because of the lessons George Washington learned from this battle causing the British to fix these problems for upcoming battles and they won because of what the road to the Ohio Valley did for the settlers.