

A Matter of Honour

The Life, Campaigns and Generalship of Isaac Brock

Jonathon Riley

Foreword by Donald E. Graves

On the morning of 13 October 1812, in one of the first major actions of the War of 1812, the general in command of all troops opposing the American invasion of Upper Canada was killed doing the job of a captain, leading a company of the 49th Foot in a counter-attack on the American lodgement atop Queenston Heights. How this came to be is a question that has intrigued author Jonathon Riley since he received a book about Brock in childhood.

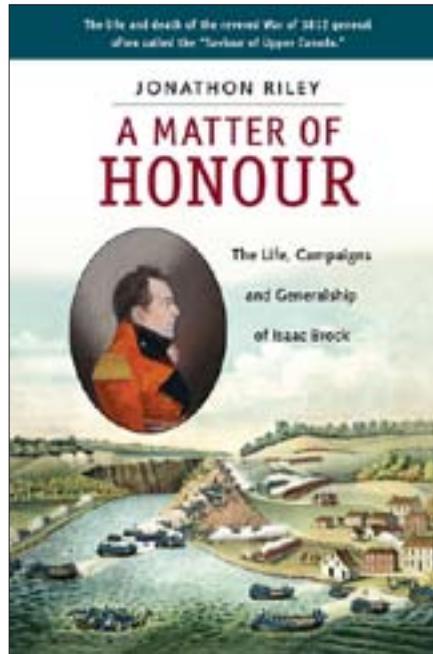
"Riley demolishes many of the myths that have grown up around Isaac Brock.... It is Riley's assessment of Brock as a soldier that is the core of this biography, however, and its most important aspect.... The result is an informative new biography of one of the major figures of the War of 1812 that will be read with profit by anyone interested in that conflict and the art of military leadership." From the Foreword by Donald E. Graves.

Although Brock died and his uphill charge against the American muskets failed, the invasion was repulsed soon afterwards. Brock is famous not just for this action but for his victory at Detroit. Schoolchildren in Canada learn about him and his monument, as high as Nelson's column in London, that stands on Queenston Heights today. He is also

commemorated by a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Isaac Brock was the British general responsible for defending the long frontier of Upper Canada with meagre forces in the opening days of the War of 1812. He is best known in Canada for his vigorous measures to defend against the invading Ameri-

can forces and for the daring exploit at Queenston Heights in which he died. Brock was a resourceful field commander who believed in offensive measures to keep his opponent off-balance, and he is best known in the United States for managing to cow U.S. General William Hull into surrendering Detroit, to that general's eternal shame.



Jonathon Riley describes Brock's upbringing in the Channel Islands, his family life and his military career in Europe and the West Indies, including his service at Den Helder and Copenhagen in the war with France. He covers in detail how Brock prepared Britain's Canadian provinces for the impending conflict with the United States, the events of the stunning victory at Detroit, as well as the Battle of Queenston Heights, which cost Brock his life but from which he emerged as a major historical figure.

The book's focus is on Brock's qualities and successes as a military commander and also as a civil administrator, since he was responsible for the government of Upper Canada as well as being the commanding general. Jonathon Riley's book is not only a fine biography of General Sir Isaac Brock but also a study in generalship by an experienced general.

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Lieutenant-General Jonathon Riley, CB, DSO, PhD, MA spent 36 years in the British army, latterly as Deputy Commander of NATO ISAF in Afghanistan. Before that he held commands on operations in the Balkans as a battalion and brigade commander, in Sierra Leone as Joint Task Force Commander, and in Iraq as Divisional Commander. He was appointed Master of the Armouries in 2009, responsible for the Royal Armouries collection of arms, armour and artillery on display at the Tower of London and other major UK museums, and resigned from that office in 2012. He now divides his working life between acting



as an expert for the International Criminal Court; acting as visiting professor, lecturer and external examiner at King's College London, Birmingham University and Cranfield University; consultancy in military, defence and security issues; and historical writing. He has an MA and a PhD in history and has published 14 books, the most recent being *1813: Empire at Bay. The 6th Coalition and the Downfall of Napoleon* (2013).

Jonathon Riley's book on General Isaac Brock is not only a fine biography of the "saviour of Upper Canada" but also a study in generalship by an experienced frontline general.