

## *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot in the War of 1812* by John R. Grodzinski

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thor's theory and his conclusion, this is a book that makes one think about what exactly the dual seaway/power project represents. Was it simply a grand scheme to improve the economy and boost national pride, or was it part of a broader scheme to create a new social and economic order in Canada? Certainly this book is aimed at an academic audience, with its extensive

discussion of theories of national development, but the casual reader should not be put off by this. The story of the seaway and power project is an intriguing one, and Daniel Macfarlane tells it well.

Ronald Stagg

Author, *The Golden Dream: A History of the St. Lawrence Seaway*

## *The 104th (New Brunswick) Regiment of Foot in the War of 1812*

By John R. Grodzinski

Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions & New Brunswick Military Heritage Project, 2014. 220 pages. \$18.95 paperback. ISBN 978-0-86492-447-6

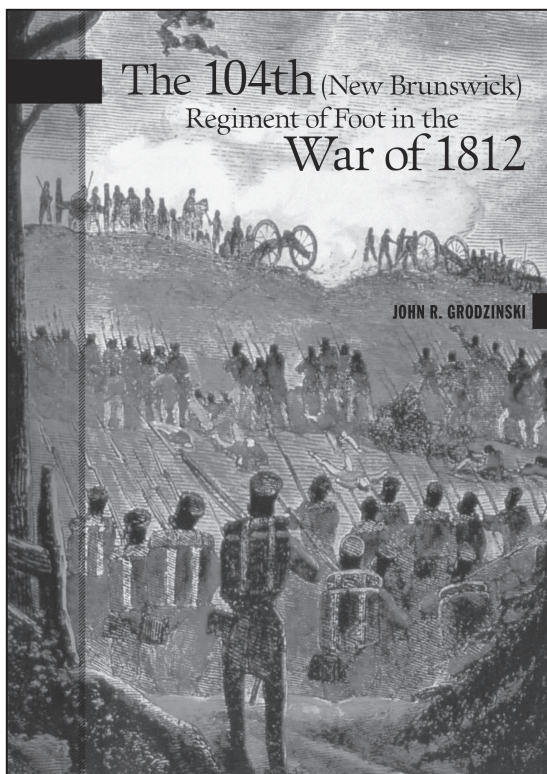
In his new work John Grodzinski tackles the incredibly rich story of the New Brunswick Fencible Infantry, the singular regular regiment recruited from within British North America. The regiment was ultimately established and served as the 104th Regiment of Foot. In the 145 pages of text (plus appendices and endnotes) he distills the essence of the unit's organization, campaigns, exploits, and accomplishments, and introduces the reader to many colorful and significant individuals who helped shape what I would term a Canadian story.

The train of facts, figures, places, and persons appearing within such a short work are perhaps Mr. Grodzinski's significant contribution; the well-detailed endnotes and bibliography attest to the depth of his research and point the reader to the greater understanding of this premier unit.

In the book's Foreword, Donald E. Graves, speaking of the author, states: "He admirably dissects the complexities of the British Army's arcane system of organization, recruiting, and promotion." One can see this in Dr. Grodzinski's examples from

deep within the British Army's regulations, orders, and instructions, covering recruitment, enlistments, and transfers; the inclusion of foreigners and foreign deserters, convicts, and prisoners of war in the regimental structure; and the citing of physical characteristics to be possessed by a regimental soldier. He introduces the reader to the rations, provisions, baggage, boys, fifers, buglers, drummers, musicians, bands, and the wives and children who would accompany the regiment.

The book's initial chapter presents the atmosphere and times in which the unit was 'born' and discusses its fateful fifty-day mid-winter march from Fredericton, New Brunswick to Kingston. The February 1813 march, often termed "A March Upon Snow-shoes," to assist British forces fighting the Americans, found the regiment covering a distance of 1,100 kilometers (500 miles) in the harshest of winter conditions, trudging through the snow with the aid of common snow-shoes, dragging their supplies, weapons, and rations behind them on toboggan. Here the author introduces the reader to Lt. John LeCouteur, through



whose eyes and diary entries Grodzinski, in a large part, chronicles in subsequent chapters the significant exploits and circumstances experienced by the regiment. The regiment's exploits are chronicled, from its arrival in Kingston and the subsequent embarrassing result from the May raid on Sacket's Harbor to the unit's transfer to the Niagara Peninsula, where it participated in the American defeats at Stoney Creek, Ft. George, Beaver Dams and its the return to Kingston at the close of the 1813 campaigns.

The appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel William Drummond as commander of the 104th and his influence on the regiment's health and military readiness lead Grodzinski's discussion of the first six

months of 1814. The battlefield experiences of the 104th in the doomed August attack on Ft. Erie and the deaths of William Drummond and militia commander Lt. Col. Hercules Scott, as presented in LeCouteur's journal, the unit's final action at Cook's Mill, and its disbandment at Montreal complete the story.

The appendices consist of an informative compilation of the 104th command returns over its existence, additional organizational details, and a helpful discussion of A.W. Playfair's 1862 comparison of the 1813 winter march of the 104th to the 1837 march of the 43rd Light from New Brunswick, to assist in the Rebellion of 1837.

I found my read of Dr. Grodzinski's work to be similar to watching a series of slides flashing, rapid-fire, before my eyes, the objects of which I may be knowledgeable of or have been exposed to in the past: a feeling

experienced, perhaps, through the presentation of a large amount of material in such a short work. That said, I recommend this work to any serious student of the War of 1812 as a compact and concise treatment of the 104th and an excellent reference thereto.

For the novice, there is enough elementary information, such as short passages discussing the "Brown Bess" and other weapons, people of colour, First Nation's involvement, etc. to entice the reader to press further, adding this work to the shelf for future reference.

Keith Herkalo  
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