The first full-length analysis of the 1758 raid that innovated a winning water-borne strategy

John Bradstreet’s Raid, 1758
A Riverine Operation of the French and Indian War
By Ian Macpherson McCulloch

A year after John Bradstreet’s raid of 1758—the first and largest British-American riverine raid mounted during the Seven Years’ War (known in North America as the French and Indian War)—Benjamin Franklin hailed it as one of the great “American” victories of the war. Bradstreet heartily agreed, and soon enough, his own official account was adopted by Francis Parkman and other early historians.

In this first comprehensive analysis of Bradstreet’s raid, Ian Macpherson McCulloch uses never-before-seen materials and a new interpretive approach to dispel many of the myths that have grown up around the operation. The result is a closely observed, deeply researched revisionist microhistory—the first unvarnished, balanced account of a critical moment in early American military history.

Examined within the context of campaign planning and the friction among commanders in the war’s first three years, the raid looks markedly different than Bradstreet’s heroic portrayal. The operation was carried out principally by American colonial soldiers, and McCulloch lets many of the provincial participants give voice to their own experiences. He consults little-known French documents that give Bradstreet’s opponents’ side of the story, as well as supporting material such as orders of battle, meteorological data, and overviews of captured ships. McCulloch also examines the riverine operational capability that Bradstreet put in place, a new water-borne style of combat that the British-American army would soon successfully deploy in the campaigns of Niagara (1759) and Montreal (1760).

McCulloch’s history is the most detailed, thoroughgoing view of Bradstreet’s raid ever produced.

Ian Macpherson McCulloch is a Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) in the Canadian Army and the author or editor of four books, including Highlander in the French & Indian War, 1756–63.