

It was then arranged that he was to take charge of the scouts, or bush-ranging service, and from that time these journals give the chief events that occurred within his own personal knowledge until the completion of his celebrated voyage in command of the first British expedition up the great lakes after the fall of Quebec and Montreal to take possession of the western French Forts of Detroit and Michillimakinak.

In the introductory chapter the writer of the journals remarks: "Should the troubles in America be renewed and the savages repeat those scenes of barbarity they so often have acted on the British subjects, which there is great reason to believe will happen, I flatter myself that such as are immediately concerned may reap some advantage from these pages.

"Should anyone take offence at what they may here meet with, they are desired to consider that it is the soldier, not the scholar, that writes and that many things here were written, not with silence and leisure, but in deserts, on rocks and mountains, amidst the hurries, disorders and noise of war, and under that depression of spirits which is the natural consequence of exhausting fatigue.

"This was my situation when the following journals and accounts were transmitted to the generals and commanders I acted under, which I am now not at liberty to correct.

"Between the years 1743 and 1755 my manner of life was such as led me to a general acquaintance both with the British and French settlements in North America and especially with the uncultivated deserts, the mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes and several passes that lay between and contiguous to the said settlements. Nor did I content myself with the accounts I received from Indians, or the information of hunters, but travelled over large tracts of the country myself, which tended, not more to gratify my curiosity than to inure me to hardships, and without vanity I may say to qualify me for the very service I have since been engaged in."

He mentions several 'scouts' that he was engaged in, in the neighbourhood of Fort Edward, and says "while I was on one of these, Baron Dieskau was defeated and made prisoner by Major-General Johnson on the 8th September, 1755, at the south end of Lake George."

This book gives the details of between 40 and 50 expeditions for reconnoissance and attack under his command, with parties varying in numbers from a small squad to several hundred men, and generally involving from 25 to 150 miles travel by land or water, by snowshoes through the bush, or on the ice.

In nearly all of these, more or less fighting occurred, but I shall only be able to refer particularly to a few instances by which I will try and show the connection of the particular branch of the service we are considering, with the general progress of the war during those campaigns.

Owing to the peculiar circumstances under which the war had to be carried on, the Ranger service was found to be indispensable.

They were the eyes and the ears of the army; the messengers for the conveyance of intelligence from one distant fortress or encampment to another, and the guides and protectors of the convoys of ammunition and provisions through the lonely forest roads and the exposed and dangerous waterways.

When information was wanted as to the movements, strength or intentions of the enemy which could not be gained by the ordinary methods of reconnoitering, it was customary for them to stealthily waylay and seize a prisoner from the outposts, or wherever they could be met with, and from these most valuable and reliable information was often obtained.