

The battle did not end with the fall of Dieskau. A body of three hundred New Hampshire men, commanded by McGinnis, crossing from the fort to the lake, just at nightfall, fell in with three hundred Canadians who were retreating in a body, attacked and dispersed them, capturing all their baggage. The victory was an expensive one, for it cost the life of their brave commander.

Instead of following up an enemy no longer capable of resistance, and capturing the forts here and at Crown Point, Johnson took his army to the foot of Lake George, and wasted the autumn in building a wooden fort, subsequently known as Fort William Henry. The French, whose power of recuperation, then as now, exceeded that of any other nation, profited by his inaction to fortify themselves at Ticonderoga. We shall see, hereafter, how costly to the American Colonies was this introduction of the waiting policy in war.

Although the year 1756 passed without any general engagement, almost every week witnessed a scout, an ambush, or a skirmish. The main body of the Americans remained near Fort William Henry, where, about the first of July, Shirley, who had succeeded Johnson, gave up the command to Abercrombie. During this summer, Montcalm arrived from France, hastened to this place, and assumed command of an army of about five thousand men. He did not here enter upon any active operations against the English; but, having made himself familiar with the locality, and greatly improved its defenses, hurried to Oswego, which, by an energetic attack, he captured. This year was signalized by the commencement of operations by the Rangers, under Rogers and Stark, who were constantly engaged in annoying the enemy and cutting off his detached parties. In the French market, English scalps produced sixty livres, or about twelve dollars, each; and English prisoners found a ready sale, in Canada, at sixty crowns.⁽⁹⁾

⁽⁹⁾ I. Rogers' Journal, pp. 13-37.