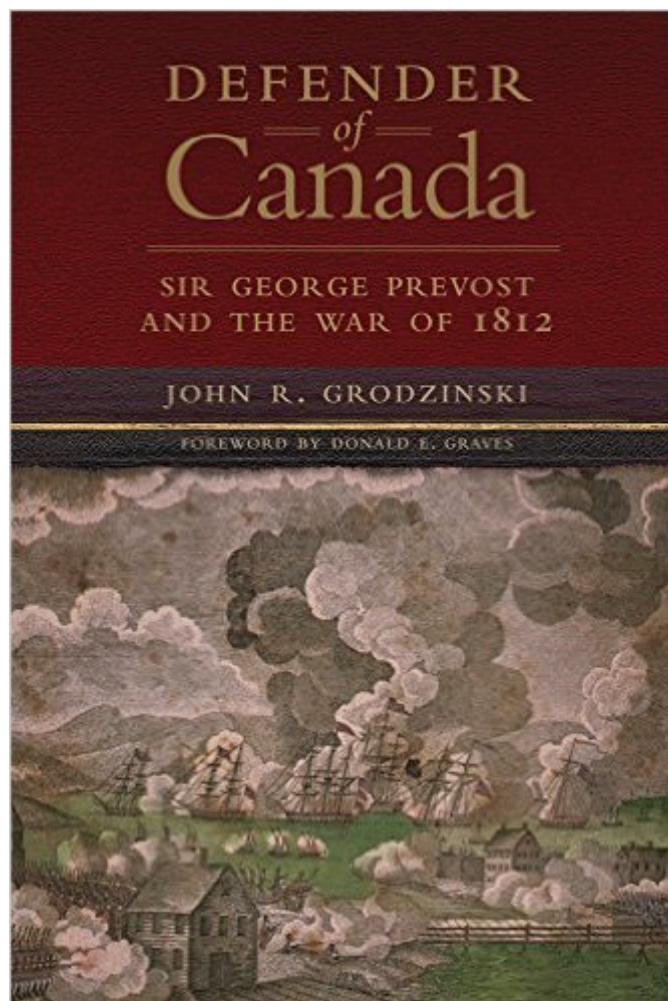


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Defender Of Canada: Sir George Prevost And The War Of 1812 (Campaigns And Commanders Series)



Synopsis

When war broke out between Great Britain and the United States in 1812, Sir George Prevost, captain general and governor in chief of British North America, was responsible for defending a group of North American colonies that stretched as far as the distance from Paris to Moscow. He also commanded one of the largest British overseas forces during the Napoleonic Wars. *Defender of Canada*, the first book-length examination of Prevost's career, offers a reinterpretation of the general's military leadership in the War of 1812. Historian John R. Grodzinski shows that Prevost deserves far greater credit for the successful defense of Canada than he has heretofore received. Earlier accounts portrayed Prevost as overly cautious and attributed the preservation of Canada to other officers, but Grodzinski challenges these assumptions and restores the general to his rightful place as British North America's key military figure during the War of 1812. Grodzinski shows that Prevost's strategic insight enabled him to enact a practicable defense despite scarce resources and to ably integrate naval power into his defensive plans. Prevost's range of responsibilities in British North America were daunting. They included overseeing joint endeavors with Indian allies, managing logistical matters, monitoring naval construction and personnel needs, supervising colonial governments, and commanding the defense of Canada. Tasked with protecting an extensive and complex territory, Prevost employed a mix of soldiers, sailors, locally raised forces, and indigenous people in taking advantage of the American military's weaknesses to defeat most of its plans. Following his recall to Britain in 1815 after the defeat at the Battle of Plattsburgh, Prevost would have been court-martialed had he not died unexpectedly. In carefully examining the charges leveled against Prevost, Grodzinski shows the general to have preserved the integrity of Canada, allowing diplomats to ensure its continued existence.

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ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, TABLES, APPENDICES, NOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX Sir George

Prevost was born at Hackensack, New Jersey, under the British flag on 19 May 1767. He was raised in Britain and attended the Lochee Academy in London and then another military academy in Colmar, France. Prevost received his first commission in the 60th Regiment of Foot in the British Army. After transfers back and forth, he was severely wounded at St. Vincent's and went to England to recover. On 1 January 1798, he was promoted to colonel and then to brigadier general on 8 March 1798. At the same time of his promotion, he was nominated as military governor of St. Lucia but ill health caused him to return to England. He was made a baronet in 1805 and promoted to major general later. In 1808, Prevost was promoted to lieutenant general and in 1811, he was made lieutenant governor of Lower Canada and appointed as commander-in-chief in Nova Scotia. The prospect of war was viewed with apprehension by the population north of the St. Lawrence River. They were in a weak position and they knew it. Few British regular troops were available for the defense (Great Britain was heavily engaged against Napoleon in Europe at this time) and the militia was too few in number, and in some cases too unreliable, to defend successfully a frontier extending from Maine to Michigan. Sir George Prevost therefore felt that the best strategy he could adopt would be to concentrate his principal strength in Lower Canada, leaving the outer fringes of the country to get along as best they could.

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