

From Colonel Macdonell to Colonel (later Major General) Sir Isaac Brock, as reprinted in J.A. MacDonell, Sketches Illustrating the Early Settlement and History of Glengarry in Canada (Montreal: Wm. Foster, Brown & Co., 1893), pages 100-101

Glengarry, January 28, 1807

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose you the proposals for raising a corps of Highland Fencibles in this County, which were submitted to your perusal. The alterations you made are adopted, with very few exceptions: should they meet with your approbation, you will be pleased to send them to the War Office.

The permanent pay asked for the Field Officers and Chaplain may be considered unusual, but in this instance it is necessary and expedient for carrying the proposals into effect. The Field Officers must undergo a vast deal of trouble, and their time will be as much occupied as if the Corps were constantly embodied.

The County is almost entirely inhabited by Highlanders and their descendants, naturally brave and loyal as subjects, and firmly attached to the British Constitution and Government, yet from their situation and circumstances, being in general possessed of some landed property and the high run of wages in the County, they are reluctant to quit these natural advantages to become soldiers. Nothing but a scheme of this nature, headed by gentlemen whom they know and respect, would induce them on any consideration to put themselves under the restraints of military discipline. The Chaplain having served in that capacity in the late Glengarry Fencibles in Great Britain, Ireland and Guernsey, has a claim to the favour of Government. He conducted a number of these people to this country, and having rendered himself useful in many respect to the people at large, has gained so far their confidence that his services in urging and forwarding this matter will be very essential. The adoption and successful issue of the present plan will greatly facilitate any future project of raising troops for a more general and extended nature of service.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

J. Macdonell,

Lieutenant of the County of Glengarry.

From Isaac Brock to William Windham, Secretary for War, as reprinted in J.A. MacDonell, Sketches Illustrating the Early Settlement and History of Glengarry in Canada (Montreal: Wm. Foster, Brown & Co., 1893), pages 101-102.

Colonel Brock to the Right Hon. W. Windham.

QUEBEC, February 12, 1807.

I have the honor to transmit for your consideration a proposal of Lieut.-Colonel John Macdonell, late of the Royal Canadian Volunteers, for raising a corps among the Scotch settlers in the county of Glengarry, Upper Canada.

When it is considered that both the Canadas furnish only two hundred militia who are trained to arms, the advantages to be derived from such an establishment must appear very evident.

The militia force in this country is very small, and were it possible to collect it in time to oppose any serious attempt upon Quebec, the only tenable post, the number would of itself be insufficient to ensure a vigorous defence.

This corps, being stationed on the confines of the Lower Province, would be always immediately and essentially useful in checking any seditious disposition, which the wavering sentiments of a large population in the Montreal district might at any time manifest. In the event of invasion, or other emergency, this force could be easily and expeditiously transported by water to Quebec.

The extent of country which these settlers occupy would make the permanent establishment of the staff and one [surgeon]* in each company very advisable. I shall not presume to say how far the claims of the field officers to the same indulgence are reasonable and expedient.

In regard to the Rev. Alexander McDonell, I beg leave to observe, that the men being all Catholics, it may be deemed a prudent measure to appoint him chaplain. His zeal and attachment to government were strongly evinced whilst filling the office of chaplain to the Glengarry Fencibles, during the rebellion in Ireland, and were graciously acknowledged by his royal highness the commander-in-chief.

His influence over the men is deservedly great, and I have every reason to believe that the corps, by his exertions, would be soon completed, and hereafter become a nursery, from which the army might draw a number of hardy recruits.

I have, &c,
Isaac Brock

* This letter is also reprinted in Ferdinand Tupper's *The Life and Correspondence of Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.* (Simpkin, Marshall & Co, 1847), and in that text, the word here is "sargeant," not surgeon.