

Name: _____

Date: _____

WORKSHEET

Chapter 9: War in Western Virginia Section 1: The French and Indian War

George Washington's Letter

Twenty-three-year-old George Washington wrote the following letter to his mother, Mary Washington, describing the battle just east of Pittsburgh in which General Edward Braddock was mortally wounded.

Honored Madam:

As I doubt not but you have heard of our defeat, and perhaps, had it represented in a worse light, if possible, then it deserves I have taken this earliest opportunity to give you some account of the engagement as it happened, within ten miles of the French fort, on Wednesday, the 9th instant.

We marched to that place, without any considerable loss, having only now and then a straggler picked up by the French and scouting Indians. When we came there, we were attacked by a party of French and Indians, whose number, I am persuaded, did not exceed three hundred men; while ours consisted of about one thousand three hundred well-armed troops, chiefly regular soldiers, who were struck with such a panic that they behaved with more cowardice than it is possible to conceive. The officers behaved gallantly, in order to encourage their men, for which they suffered greatly, there being near sixty killed and wounded; a large proportion of the number we had.

The Virginia troops showed a good deal of bravery, and were nearly all killed; for I believe, out of three companies that were there, scarcely thirty men are left alive. Captain Peyrouny, and all his officers down to a corporal, were killed. Captain Polson had nearly as hard a fate, for only one of his was left. In short, the dastardly behavior of those they call regulars exposed all others, that were inclined to do their duty, to almost certain death; and, at least, in despite of all the efforts of the officers to the contrary, they ran, as sheep pursued by dogs, and it was impossible to rally them.

The General was wounded, of which he died three days after. Sir Peter Halkert was killed in the field, where died many other brave officers. I luckily escaped without a wound, though I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me. Captains Orme and Morris, two of the aids-de-camp, were wounded early in the engagement, which rendered the duty harder upon me, as I was the only person then left to distribute the General's orders, which I was scarcely able to do as I was not half still in a weak and feeble condition, which induces me to halt here two or three days in the hope of recovering a little strength, to enable me to proceed homewards; from whence, I fear, I shall not be able to stir till toward September; so that I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you till then, unless it be in Fairfax...I am, honored Madam, your most dutiful son.

Directions: After you have read the letter, answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. In the battle between the French and British, how many troops did each side have?
2. What was the result of the confrontation?
3. What happened to Washington during the fighting?
4. Where did Washington say he might meet his mother prior to September?