



Extended History of Collection M-075: Pitt, William

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1.0 This document is an Officer's Commission in the Royal Regiment of Irish Artillery in the Kingdom of Ireland. It was awarded by King George II to Mr George Delany. The commission is for the rank of Lieutenant-Fire Worker in the Royal Irish Artillery Regiment.

Lieutenant-Fire Worker is the most junior officer's rank in the artillery service. Commissions in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers were awarded to those who graduated from a course at the Royal Military Academy. Future promotion was by seniority.

The Royal Irish Artillery was an Irish regiment of the British army. It was formed in 1755 as The Artillery Company of Ireland. The name was changed in 1760 (the year of our document) to The Royal Regiment of Irish Artillery. Personnel were recruited all over Ireland and were trained in Dublin Castle and then in the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, England. With the union of the Kingdom of Ireland with Great Britain in 1801 the regiment was absorbed into the British Royal Artillery.

2.0 William Pitt, later 1st Earl of Chatham (1708-1778), called William Pitt the Elder. In 1760 the world was still engaged in The Seven Years War (1756-1763). In America the war is called The French and Indian War. Pitt held the senior policy making office in the British Government under the King and Prime Minister - The Secretary of State for the Southern Department. This office was responsible for a) the internal governance of Southern England, Wales, Ireland, and the American colonies (until 1768), and b) foreign relations with the Roman Catholic and Muslim states of Europe. At this time of war the Southern Minister was also responsible for the conduct of the overall British war effort.

During this period in British political history the Prime Minister usually held the office of First Lord of the Treasury. In 1760 this office was held by Thomas Pelham-Holles, Duke of Newcastle. He and Pitt formed a symbiotic team. Pitt effectively ran the war effort and foreign policy while Newcastle ran the government's finances and retained control of the Parliamentary majority. Pitt was "*The Man of Measures*" while Newcastle was "*The Man of Means*". The other policy making position in the cabinet was Secretary of State for the Northern Department (Robert D'Arcy, 4th Earl of Holderness). Cabinet members who were charged with executing Military and Naval operations were the Commander in Chief of the Army, Field Marshal Earl John Ligonier, and the First Lord of the Admiralty, George Anson, 1st Baron Anson.

In February 1760 Pitt and Newcastle were firmly in their cabinet positions, but things would soon change. In October 1760 George II would die and be succeeded by his



grandson George III. George III and his favorite John Stuart, Earl of Bute had views on the war that differed from Pitt. Due to these differences Pitt resigned from the cabinet in October 1761. He was later to become Prime Minister in his own right but due to ill health found it difficult to serve.

3.0 George Delany - No record could be found relating to George Delany. His commission defines in very general terms his role and responsibilities and the subordinate ranks that would be under his command. These include more junior Lieutenant-Fire Workers, Bombardiers, Gunners, and Motrosses. (*A matross was a soldier of artillery, who ranked next below a gunner. Their duties were to assist the gunners in loading, firing and sponging the guns. They were provided with firelocks, and marched with the store-wagons, acting as guards.*)

4.0 George II (1683-1760), Reigned 1727-1750. As the monarch George II had the prerogative of appointing all Royal Army and Navy commissioned officers. He was known to take this responsibility very seriously. However, he probably only personally signed commissions for higher ranking or socially prominent officers.

5.0 Commission Signatures - Due to the abbreviations and indistinct handwriting it is impossible to decipher which departments and persons signed George Delany's commission. On the lower left the Ordnance Office is signed for by Joseph Keen. The Secretary's Office (?) was signed for by a Mr. Henry ???. On the lower right, the office is unknown although it is signed for by a Mr. Madigan. Since this commission is for a Kingdom of Ireland regiment the signatures may have been Irish officials rather than English. William Pitt, as the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, could have been signing an Irish military officer's commission in an Irish Regiment since his functional responsibilities included the Kingdom of Ireland and as such was signing for the King (*of Ireland*).

6.0 Thomas DesBrisay, Esq. Captain - (1733-1819) - DesBrisay was born in Dublin. He was the son of Theophilus DesBrisay and Magdalene de Vergese d'Aubussargues. In 1753 he married Ellen Landers (Landen). They had 16 children.

DesBrisay was appointed an ensign in the 35th Foot (Donegall's) at the age of ten. He attained the rank of Captain in the Royal Irish Artillery on February 7, 1760. This career was terminated when, on July 31, 1769 he was commissioned Lieutenant Governor, Secretary and Registrar of St. John's Island (*now Prince Edward Island*). Ten years lapsed before he took up the appointment. Having acquired land on the Island, he attempted to recruit settlers in Ireland for the colony. In 1773, however, the British government, unwilling to encourage emigration, expressly forbade him to continue his efforts. In the summer of 1779 he was ordered by the Secretary of State for the American Colonies (*a new Cabinet position created in 1768*) to take up his appointment in Canada.

For the rest of DesBrisay's life he was active in colonial Prince Edward Island politics and land dealings. Because of failing eyesight, DesBrisay had his grandson, Theophilus, assist him in the performance of the duties of Secretary and Registrar for the Colonial Council for some 15 years before his death. He died in Prince Edward Island on 1819 at the age of 86.



7.0 James Fitzgerald, 20th Earl of Kildare (1722-1773) The Colonel in command of the Royal Irish Artillery Regiment was an Irish nobleman. He was the son of Robert FitzGerald, 19th Earl of Kildare, and Lady Mary, daughter of William O'Brien, 3rd Earl of Inchiquin. In 1747 he married 15-year-old Lady Emily (1731-1814), daughter of Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond and one of the famous Lennox Sisters. She was descended from King Charles II and therefore a cousin of King George III. Kildare sat in the Irish House of Commons from 1741 until 1744, when he succeeded his father as Earl of Kildare. He was created Viscount Leinster in 1747 and Duke of Leinster in 1766. From 1749 to 1755 he was one of the leaders of the Popular Party in Ireland and served as the country's Master-General of the Ordnance between 1758 and 1766, becoming Colonel of the Royal Irish Artillery in 1760. He was promoted to Major-General in 1761 and to Lieutenant-General in 1770. He became Lord Deputy of Ireland in 1756.

References

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Internet Search

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