

[Page 31 - Signing Your Life Away, Number Three: A Letter from Poupet de la Boularderie](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 56](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1991/1/1

Finally, rousing from his lethargy, the commandant told me to form up a detachment, half of soldiers and half of militia? men. No officer of the garrison offering to take command, Sieur Morpain, captain of the harbour, put himself along with me at the head of the detachment. From then on I had nothing to do with the disposition of the troops. We were given orders to repulse the enemy. We had gone scarcely a cannon-shot from the parade square before there were more than fifteen hundred of the enemy on shore, forming up as they came ashore. I told Sieur Morpain that it would be futile to attack a body so much superior in numbers, that we had missed our chance, that we could no longer prevent the English from laying siege to Louisbourg. I said that if I had been given a detach? ment four hours earlier I could have prevented it and given the enemy something to think about. "It doesn't matter," said Morpain, "let's go on." We were marching in line in the open, instead of in the woods. We had gone hardly half a league when the English ships, moored broadside on, caught sight of us and saluted us with their artillery. Sieur Morpain said to his men: "Spread out to intervals of fifteen feet to avoid getting hit." I told him that he should not attempt to march in line and that, if he would let me do it, I could get him out of the difficul? tion in which we found ourselves. The enemy was advanc? ing upon us and it was my intention to divide the detach? ment in four squads in such a way as to maintain a steady fire from twenty guns; each squad of twenty men, upon firing, would break off and move right and left to the end of the col- Suppliers of Commercial Recreational Fencing p. O. Box 98, King St., North Sydney, N. S. B2A 3M1 794-4773 CAMERAS LTD. ONE STOP PHOTO AND VIDEO CENTRE le are committed to provide the highest quality ?? in cameras & audio equipment. Our products I have the most features available for the best lvalue. The quality commitment also extends to r photofinishing. * Quality Cameras & Accessories * Quality Photo Finishing * Quality Video Equipment & Supply I * Quality Audio Visual Equipment Mon-Thurs 8:30-5:30 Friday: 8:30-9:00 Saturday: umn where they could relaod. I would thus have made sure of a safe retreat, even in the face of such an enemy. Only twelve French soldiers had followed us closely. For the last time I said to Morpain: "You know nothing of fighting on land, just as I know nothing of fighting at sea. Halt the detachment and pull it together. You are within range of the enemy. By making the manoeuvre I suggest we will make an honourable retreat and not fall into the jaws of a trap." He answered not a word and went on. I followed him until we found ourselves trapped in a space that the enemy had surrounded. The fire was heay, and Morpain lost his head. He told me to hold on as well as I could while he brought up the rest of the detachment to rescue me. Outraged at this, I said to him: "Morpain, you have done a foolish thing, but it is useless to flee in disorder; it is dishonourable. This place must be our tomb." He persisted in going back and had the barbarity to cry out: "Let everyone save himself." His negro servant half-carried, half-dragged him and by concealing him under the leaves saved him from capture. In recognition of this



service Morpain gave the servant his liberty and returned three days later to the parade square in Louisbourg by a stroke of good luck. I was left alone with my twelve brave soldiers. We retreated some distance from the enemy front and were firing point-blank from behind the trees when they got in behind us. They killed seven soldiers and wounded the five others, who did succeed in getting back into the citadel. Left all alone, without any hope of rescue, I threw myself sword in hand into the middle of the enemy. I was wounded by two gunshots and taken prisoner, as is confirmed by the certificate that I have the honour to send you. They (the English) kept me with the fleet for forty days. The day before the town was surrendered, they sent me to Boston, some two hundred leagues from Louisbourg. There I spent three months. The English government, having some confidence in me, put me in charge of the French. I went into different parts of the country to bring them together. Then I saw to their embarking on seven ships and we sailed for France, landing at different ports. I then embarked on a vessel outfitted by the king and loaded with powder and soldiers for Quebec. I was in command of the said soldiers with the rank of Captain. The vessel was part of the squadron commanded by M. Le Jonquiere who, before his defeat, ordered us to make sail for Quebec. We arrived at our destination. Up to this time, my belongings and property mentioned above, had remained untouched by the English. A party composed of French and Indians had orders from M. de la Gallissonniere which they failed to carry out. Instead of falling upon the English as they should have done, they went on the day of Pentecost and set fire to all my buildings. Peace was signed on the thirtieth day of April. MPTOWN 562-3600 Quality Cameras Building, corner George & Dorchester Streets. PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO. I returned to France, where the Minister promised the Cross of St. Louis. He also said that he would look after me when I got back to Isle Royale. I embarked on the Intrepid and took