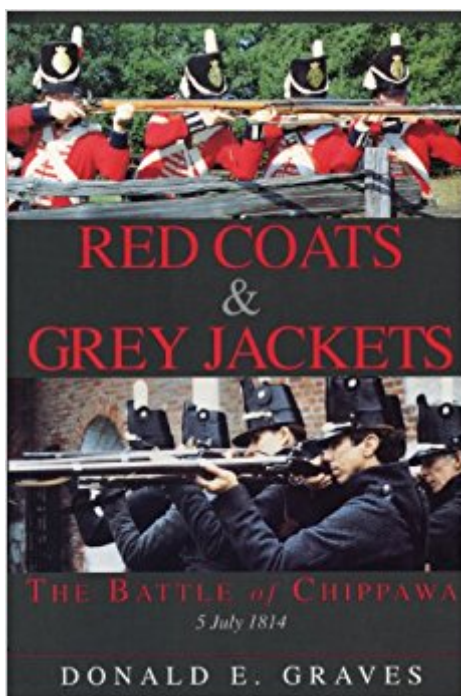


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# Red Coats & Grey Jackets: The Battle Of Chippawa, 5 July 1814



## Synopsis

"... the definitive analysis of the battle of Chippawa. Donald Graves establishes its historical background, describes the opposing armies, brings them into battle, and assesses the results, without wasting a word –â ¢ yet his account of the battle combines high colour and exact detail. You find yourself alternately in the generals' boots and the privates' brogans, in all the smoke, shock and uproar of a short-range, stand-up fire fight." - John Elting, author of *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armee*

## Book Information

Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Dundurn; 1st Edition edition (July 25, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1550022105

ISBN-13: 978-1550022100

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,604,207 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in [Books > History > Americas > Canada > War of 1812](#) #34 in [Books > History > Americas > Canada > 19th Century](#) #179 in [Books > History > Americas > Canada > Pre-Confederation](#)

## Customer Reviews

"Donald Graves appears determined to become a one-man-band on the War of 1812 ...

Meticulously documented, cogently argued, this book alone will likely secure his reputation among military historians." (James Elliott Hamilton Spectator)"Highly recommended for anyone interested in the British Army's hard fought 1812-15 battles in North America." (Ian Kemp)"With the aid of Bill Constable's excellent maps, and a number of the participant's own descriptions, Donald Graves furnishes a clear, easy-to-follow account, demonstrating a through understanding of the tactical factors and leadership qualities which affected the outcome." (Ed Dovey Military History Illustrated)"The quality of writing and information is superb." (Geoffrey Hayes CBRA)

A military historian with the Department of National Defence, Canada, Donald E. Graves has published many articles and monographs on warfare in the Napoleonic period, including *Sir William Congreve and the Rocket's Red Glare* (1989). *Red Coats and Grey Jackets* is Graves's sixth book.

he is the author of *The Battle of Lundy's Lane, 1814* (1993) and co-author of *Normandy 1944: The Canadian Summer* (1994). His current project is to compile a comprehensive anthology of eyewitness accounts of the War of 1812. Donald Graves resides near Almonte, Ontario. when he is not researching or writing, he likes to engage in his two favourite hobbies - emuwatching and viticulture.

This is a little known battle in a little known and understood war in the history of the US. This book fills a void by providing a very thorough and unbiased view of this battle. This battle, fought right near Niagara Falls on the Canadian side was between the British/Canadians/Indians and the US and their Indian allies. It made Winfield Scott famous as his brigade of 1300 men stood face to face with a British brigade of 1200 men at 100-150 feet distance and fired musket volleys for 25 minutes. The British tried to close with the bayonet, the means that they used to break the US line time and again during this War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War, but the US firepower was too good. For one regiment, 13 of 17 British officers were either killed or wounded during this short period. This caused the British line to break and retreat to the rear. Apparently, the only time in the history of this war or any other were the British stood face to face with the US on a level plain and lost. This book tells a lot more of the story than what is provided above, of course, with a brief synopsis of the War of 1812 prior to this event, and why the US won this battle, and the events following this battle. I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in US history.

Mr. Graves does an excellent job describing an obscure, yet compelling battle of the War of 1812. Winfield Scott professionally trained and led his famed brigade at Chippewa where he managed to get the better of the British in a brief, but hard fought firefight. The book correctly dispels many of the myths associated with this battle. Contrary to popular opinion, the British did not attack in column, as many histories of the war have asserted. The British were a linear army, they generally deployed and fought in a two rank line. This is how they fought and defeated Napoleon in Spain. It would have been illogical of them to have fought any other way at this battle. Although the British were known to employ the column on occasion, Chippewa was not one of them. Another myth dispelled is that Scott's brigade routed Gen. Riall's command. The British were bested in a fair firefight, and retired in good order. They did not rout or run off the field as claimed in many works. Also, there is no documented evidence that Gen. Riall exclaimed "By God those are regulars!" when he saw Scott's brigade advancing in a professional manner against him. Graves asserts that this famous quote, found in every history on the War of 1812 was first used by Scott

himself in his memoirs written many years later. Scott had a tendency to inflate his own importance and liked to refer to himself in the third person in order to do so! Still another myth associated with this battle is that the grey jackets worn by many of Scott's brigade were adopted by West Point to commemorate the battle. Evidence suggests that the US Military Academy had already adopted the grey jacket at least a year before the event. Scott had no particular preference whether his men wore grey or regulation blue uniforms. All he was concerned with was a professional appearance. The grey jackets were sent because that was all that was available. Normally militia wore such uniforms in the US army. Chippewa created quite a sensation in the States because it was one of the first battles the US regular army actually won against British regulars during the whole war. Up until this point the US regular army had not conducted itself much better than militia! The varied and un-even performance of the American army during the whole War of 1812 was no doubt quite vexing to the British. In a strange way it might have worked to the advantage of the Americans in some cases, although the often poor showing the army made in most engagements did not reflect well upon the young nation's honor. The real winners of this controversial battle was Winfield Scott and co. who would become the doyens of American military culture throughout the 19th century. In many respects the US army was founded on the Niagara Frontier in 1814, and not at Valley Forge in 1778. Chippewa and Lundy's Lane a few weeks later were important landmarks in this development. They deserve to be remembered. Thanks to Graves perhaps now they will be.

The depth of the description of the engagement was fair, I would have enjoyed a larger accounting of the battle

Never expected to see my great-great-grandfather's name in the book, but his company was mentioned a few times. Liked the detailed information on the battle. Now I know just what he did in the battle.

Two of my Grandfathers fought in this battle. Also, I grew up 6 miles from Fort Ripley Minnesota which was named after one of the Generals involved in his battle. It was a valuable source adding much insight to my Family History project

So stated the British commander on the field of Chippewa in July 1814 as the American Brigade commanded by Winfield Scott crossed the open field, closing ranks as men fell, and descended on the British battalions like 'gray doom.' This outstanding volume by War of 1812 authority Donald

Graves expertly tells the tale of the first stand up fight during the war where American regulars defeated and routed a British army. Expertly trained by Scott, the American Left Division of Jacob Brown was the best force the Americans fielded during the war. Using the excellent French 1791 Reglement, Scott untiringly trained his regulars in the Buffalo encampment and led them against the British until a wound at Lundy's Lane, after Chippawa, knocked him out of the war. This rousing tale 'of much fight' is one of the best battle narratives written, and paints in broad strokes the desperate fighting on the Niagara frontier in 1814, where American, Briton, and Canadian fought against each other in some of the most desperate battles of the period. This excellent volume is indispensable for a realistic view of the period, and the research that went into the book is intense, accurate, and tells a tale of valor, ingenuity, and the terror of the early 19th century battlefield. It is a must to understand the period and belongs on the bookshelf of every historian and enthusiast of the period.

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