

parade at the nearest permanent British military outpost. These Militia musters were a chance to ensure that every Militiaman was registered on the Regimental rolls, held a musket in good working order, and could adequately perform basic military drill.

Thus by definition, every Mason of military age would have also been a member of the Militia. So the men who settled the colony, and built the pioneer Masonic Lodges, were also the same men who were called up as Militiamen to defend their new homes during the War.

Although the provincial capital moved to York or Toronto in 1796, Newark in 1812 retained many of its vestiges of the original capital. It continued to serve as the local military headquarters, with nearby Fort George being the principal garrison for the British Army, the local Militia, and the Provincial Marine.

One of the British Regular soldiers who was charged with protecting the Niagara frontier was James Fitz Gibbon. Born in Ireland, he spoke both Irish Gaelic and English. He enlisted in the 49th Regiment of Foot in 1797 at the age of 17, and served in the Napoleonic Wars in Europe as a Sergeant.

In 1802, the Regiment was posted to duty in Quebec, which gave Fitz Gibbon the opportunity to become a Mason in Merchant's Lodge # 40. Under the able military direction of his superior officer, Colonel Isaac Brock, Fitz Gibbon was promoted to Sergeant Major and eventually Lieutenant. The Regiment, along with Fitz Gibbon, was later posted to Upper Canada. By then Colonel Brock had become General Brock. (We have not yet been able to associate Brock with a specific Masonic Lodge. However, as an officer in the Regular Army, he would have been familiar with the concept of military Lodges.)

Another important military group stationed at Newark was the British Indian Department, whose headquarters was located adjacent to Fort George. This organization was charged with maintaining the alliance between the British Crown and the First Nations of North America, and formed a major part of the strategy for the defense of Upper Canada against the United States.

A strong alliance with the First Nations was a strategic priority for the British. The location of First Nations settlements in Upper Canada and in American Territories served as a sort of buffer state between British and American interests. In addition, the psychological value of Native warriors cannot be overestimated. After the American Revolution, the Americans demonized the role of Native warriors who had supported the British, and regularly accused them of all manner of atrocities in popular literature. By 1812, a whole generation of Americans had been raised on exaggerated myths of Native warriors as a vicious and dangerous foe, lurking in the wilderness, ready to pounce on any American invader who dared to venture into Upper Canada.

In their diplomatic work, the officers of the British Indian Department proved to be well skilled. Their success can be attributed to two reasons. First, they showed great respect to the warriors of the First Nations by learning their languages and customs. One of these traditions was the silver chain of friendship. Aboriginal tradition recalls that when European explorers first sailed to North America, the local Iroquois welcomed them as friends and allies. The warriors tied the explorers' ship to a tree so they would not lose their new friends. However, the rope began to rot,