

Fort Frederick - Maryland's Frontier Defense

1756-1759



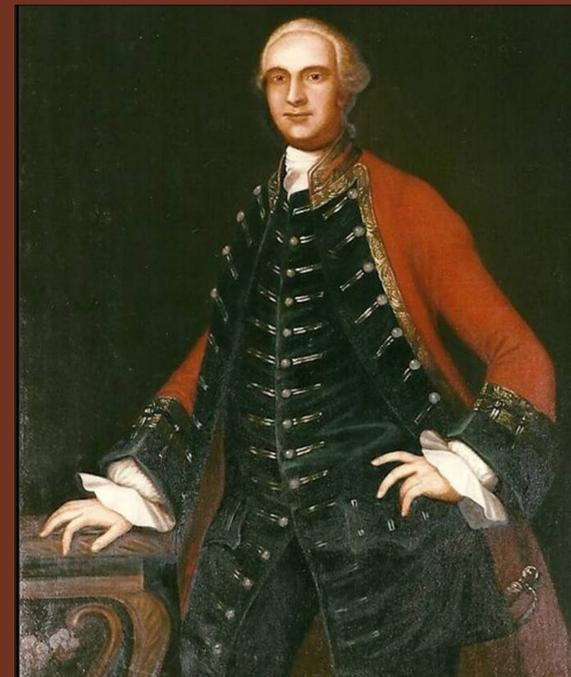
"The Fort which I have been building & which I have left our Troops to finish is almost close on Potowmack & upon the North Mountain We face the Bastions & Curtains with Stone & shall mount on each of the Bastions a Six pounder. The Barracks will receive & lodge very commodiously 200 Men beside Officers & on Occasion near twice that number." - Horatio Sharpe, July 1756

In May 1756, after months of political wrangling, Governor Horatio Sharpe got the funds from the Maryland Assembly to build his fort at North Mountain. The fort would be Maryland's main defensive contribution during the French and Indian War.

The French and Indian War would be the culmination of years of skirmishing between the French and British in North America over who would control the continent. After several British and American colonial battlefield losses war was declared in 1756. This struggle would finally decide who would control what would become Canada and the United States. It would also create the factors that would lead to the American Revolution.

Fort Frederick was unique among American colonial frontier forts as it was built of stone versus the usual wooden fort. It was named for Frederick Calvert, Lord Baltimore, the proprietor (owner) of the colony of Maryland.

Also, unusual were the barracks which you see on either side of the parade field. These barracks are two stories high, with porches, glass windows, and clapboard siding. Most colonial forts would have small simple huts or cabins. Each barrack would accommodate 100 or one company of Maryland Soldiers. The barracks are made up of six large open bays in which two squads or 16 men lived. There was a third building in front of the far wall in front of you called the Governors House. It was described as *"built with some taste having arched doors and windows"*, and served as the officers quarters, fort headquarters and storehouse for supplies.



Governor Horatio Sharpe, Colonial Governor of Maryland 1754-1771, the builder of Fort Frederick.



Another unique feature was the fort's flag that Governor Sharpe ordered for the fort to be, "a Black & Yellow Flag 24 feet long and 16 feet broad with the Union in One Corner". This flag is not known to have been flown anywhere else.

During the French and Indian War the fort would never be directly attacked but served as a safe place for the Maryland soldiers to reside between patrols, as well as a major supply base during the Forbes Campaign to 1758.

A notable moment took place in 1757 when the Colony of Maryland formed an alliance with the Cherokee at Fort Frederick. This alliance would be beneficial for both parties. The Cherokee received English trade goods for fighting with their enemy the Shawnee. Maryland benefited as Gov. Sharpe asked Cherokee, *"Let our men go out to war with you, Look on them as your brethren, Teach them to fight after your manner, and neither the French nor their allies will be able to stand before you."* These valuable skills would lead to the Maryland Troops serving as rangers in the Forbes campaign in 1758.