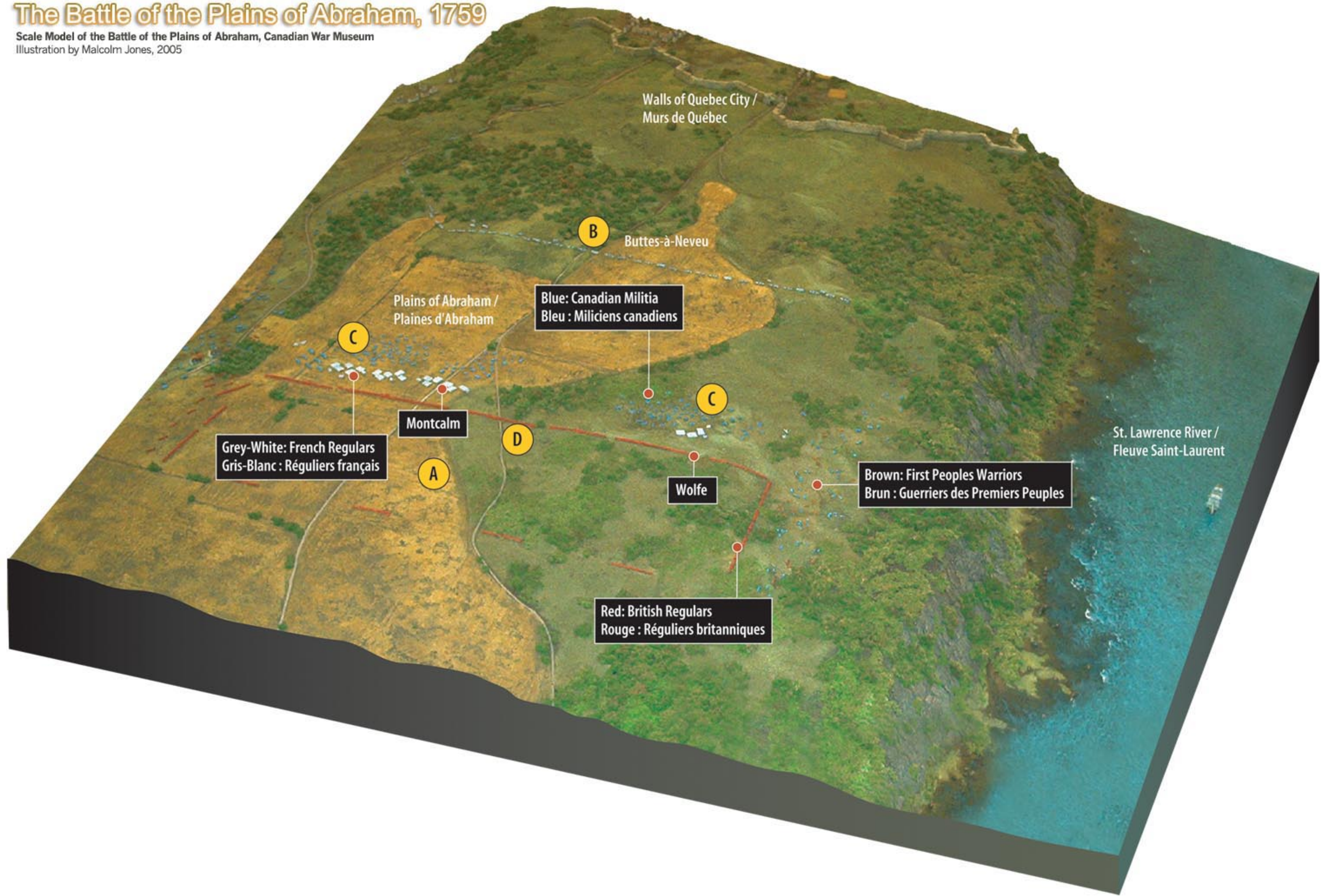


The Battle of the Plains of Abraham, 1759

Scale Model of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, Canadian War Museum

Illustration by Malcolm Jones, 2005



A. Wolfe's Mistake: Taking the Low Ground

British commander James Wolfe formed his battle line across the Plains of Abraham. Here, his soldiers could fight a European-style battle between lines of troops across open ground. But they could not threaten Quebec City, which lay beyond a 15-metre hill known as the Buttes-à-Neveu.

B. Montcalm's Mistake: Abandoning the High Ground

An army on the Buttes-à-Neveu could bombard the walls of Quebec City or dominate the Plains of Abraham. When word of Wolfe's landing arrived, Louis-Joseph de Montcalm and his army occupied this hill. At about 10:00 a.m., however, Montcalm abandoned a strong position to charge the British line.

C. The French Charge

As the French charged down the hillside, Montcalm's troops veered to the left and right, likely because of the rugged terrain. Two clusters of soldiers headed for the north end of the British line; a third advanced on the south end.

D. The British Volleys

The British held their ground. Their entire line fired a series of devastating volleys. Shaken, the French retreated. Montcalm's army had suffered about 650 casualties. Wolfe's forces lost 58 killed and 600 wounded. Both generals were killed.