

Edward Carlisle of Williamsburg, Virginia

Early Life

Home and School

February 1725 to July 1739

Edward Carlisle was born in Williamsburg, Virginia, on the third of February 1725, the son of Joshua and Constance Carlisle and the younger brother to Charles Carlisle. He was raised at his family plantation in Jamestown. In September 1738, at the age of thirteen, he was sent to the William & Mary Grammar School in Williamsburg.

Midshipman and Master's Mate

July 1739 to March 1745

In July 1739, at the age of fourteen, Edward went to sea as a captain's servant in the brig-sloop *Wolf* at the start of the War of Jenkin's Ear. He advanced through midshipman to master's mate in the sloop. In 1739 and 1740 *Wolf* was employed in enforcing the navigation acts in Virginia and Georgia. In 1741 *Wolf* escorted troops to the Caribbean and served in Admiral Vernon's force at Cartagena and Guantanamo Bay. In January 1743 *Wolf* was wrecked on the Caicos Bank from where Carlisle made his way to Portsmouth via Jamaica and Antigua. In December 1743, Carlisle was appointed to *Neptune* as master's mate and in February 1744 he took part in the battle of Toulon, *Neptune* flying the flag of Vice Admiral Lestock.

Lieutenant

March 1745 to May 1753

In March 1745 at age twenty, Carlisle was promoted to lieutenant and appointed to the third-rate *Monmouth* as fourth lieutenant, rising to third lieutenant. In October 1747 he took part in the second battle of Cape Finisterre. In December 1748, at the end of the War of Austrian Succession, *Monmouth* was paid off. Carlisle, being unemployed, took passage for Virginia where he stayed for a year. In January 1750 Carlisle was appointed to *Monarch* as first lieutenant. The year was spent on guardship duties in Portsmouth, then in 1751 *Monarch* took troops to Minorca, returning to Portsmouth for further guardship duties. Carlisle was relieved in September 1752 and took passage for Virginia where he stayed until May 1753.

Commander

July 1753 to September 1755

In July 1753, at the age of twenty-eight, Carlisle was promoted to commander and given command of the fourteen-gun brig-sloop *Drake*. He was employed in the North Sea fishery Protection and made two voyages to Senegal and one to Minorca and the Eastern Mediterranean. Carlisle was relieved from command of *Drake* on promotion in September 1755.

The Colonial Post Captain

December 1755 to July 1756

In September 1755, at the age of thirty, Carlisle was promoted to post captain and took command of the sixth-rate frigate *Fury*, stationed at Minorca as part of the peacetime Mediterranean Squadron. In May 1756 he was with Byng's squadron at the Battle of Minorca and in June 1756 *Fury* captured the French frigate *Vulcain*. In August 1756 *Fury* sailed for Portsmouth.

The Leeward Islands Squadron

November 1756 to February 1757

In September 1756, Carlisle took command of the new sixth-rate frigate *Medina*. In October he sailed for the Leeward Islands Squadron and in December he took part in the attack on Port Louis in Grenada. In February 1757 *Medina* captured the French frigate *L'Arques*.

The Jamaica Station

June 1757 to November 1757

In April 1757, Carlisle married Chiara Angelini in Antigua and within a week sailed for Jamaica. In June 1757 *Medina* survived a hurricane off San Domingue and in July 1757 *Medina* conveyed the Spanish governor of Florida to St. Augustine. In August 1757 Carlisle was wounded in action with two Dutch pirates and was convalescent at Kingston, Jamaica until November 1757, missing *Medina's* involvement in the battle of Cape François and the destruction of the French frigate *Outarde*.

The Cursed Fortress

February 1758 to September 1758

In February 1758 *Medina* sailed for Halifax, stopping at Savannah, Hampton Road and Boston. From March to August 1758 *Medina* blockaded Louisbourg, arriving in advance of Rear Admiral Hardy's squadron. In June 1758 *Medina* covered the landings at Gabarus Bay. In July 1758 Carlisle commanded the cutting out expedition against the French third rates *Prudent* and *Bienfaisant*. In September 1758 *Medina* captured the French frigate *Yvette*. On 3rd September, Carlisle returned to Williamsburg a few hours after his son was born.

Rocks and Shoals

December 1758 to November 1759

In October 1758 *Medina* escorted a convoy to the West Indies and another back to Hampton Roads, during which he saved Holbrooke, a passenger in the post-office packet *Lord Halifax*, from being captured by a privateer. Carlisle spent Christmas in Williamsburg before sailing in January 1759 for Halifax and the expedition against Quebec. *Medina*, with James Cook embarked, surveyed the Saint Lawrence ahead of Saunders' fleet. Carlisle commanded the two Whitby cats that supported Wolfe's attempt against the Beauport Lines, then *Medina* was wrecked under Point Aux Peres. Carlisle was seconded to General Wolfe's staff and witnessed the battle of The Plains of Abraham. In September 1759 he was given command of the fifty-gun fourth-rate Dartmouth. He stopped at Hampton and visited Williamsburg then crossed the Atlantic for Portsmouth. However, he fell in with the Channel Fleet and was with Hawke at Quiberon Bay where he captured a French fifty-gun ship that was

armed *en flûte*. He arrived in Portsmouth in November 1759 in time to attend George Holbrooke's wedding to Ann Featherstone.

Ligurian Mission

May 1760 to September 1760

Carlisle was again in the Americas in early 1760 and found time to visit his home in Williamsburg where he finalised the purchase of a house on Governor's Green. He was in Portsmouth in April 1760 for a quick scrape of Dartmouth's bottom and a few fathoms of caulking and in May 1760 he sailed with Admiral Saunders' squadron to the Mediterranean. *Dartmouth* was detached from the squadron to carry the British Envoy to Sardinia to Villa-Franca and tangled with a French seventy-four-gun ship off Port Mahon. At Villa-Franca and Nice Carlisle found that all was not well with the Angelini family. Dartmouth again met the French seventy-four as well as some other third rates that were being built in Genoa for the French navy. During a cruise along the Italian coast, Carlisle captured a French brig and a privateer. In finally defeating the French seventy-four, *Dartmouth* was damaged and sent back to Gibraltar, and from there to the West Indies. To his delight he was sent north with a convoy to the Chesapeake Bay.

Carlisle's Duty

November 1760 to June 1761

When Carlisle returned to Antigua from the Chesapeake in November 1760, he was placed in command of a small squadron blockading the French islands in the Antilles. In February 1761 he was briefly captured by a French privateer off St. Lucia but was rescued by Dartmouth and captured the privateer. He became embroiled in a New England merchant's smuggling operation, which strayed into trading with the enemy. He took the suspect to Newport, Rhode Island where he narrowly escaped having to pay damages for illegally detaining a merchant ship. In April 1761, on the way back to Antigua, he had a couple of weeks at home in Williamsburg, where he was witness to his brother's death. In June 1761 he took on two French ships of the line that were trying to impede the British capture of Dominica and took them both as prizes. When he returned to English Harbour for repairs in mid-June he was surprised by Chiara and his son Joshua who arrived unexpectedly, to stay for the hurricane season.

Cousins At Arms

November 1761 to January 1762

A ship carrying cargo of furniture for the governor of Cuba is wrecked and, as a gesture of goodwill to Spain, Carlisle is ordered to take it to Havana via Jamaica. Lady Chiara successfully lobbies to be allowed to sail with her husband as an interpreter. Dartmouth chases a French convoy in the Old Bahama Straits and is almost wrecked. In Havana, Carlisle meets his old friend Don Alonso who asks that he be taken to his new post as governor-general of Guatemala in *Dartmouth*. On the way out of the Gulf of Honduras, Carlisle meets a magistrate from the logging settlement of St. George's Island on the Yucatan Peninsula. Evidence is building of Spain's impending entry into the war and Carlisle takes *Dartmouth* into the Gulf of Mexico to see what the French in Louisiana are doing. On the way back to Jamaica Dartmouth has a short battle with a French third rate and meets Holbrooke in the

Windward Passage. Holbrooke offers to take Chiara back to Antigua and on to Williamsburg in *Argonaut*.
