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FRASER, ALEXANDER MACKENZIE (1756–1809), major-general, was the third and posthumous son of Colin Mackenzie of Kilcoy, Ross-shire, by Martha, daughter of Charles Fraser of Inverallochy and of Castle Fraser in Aberdeenshire. He was educated at the university of Aberdeen, and at an early age he entered the banking-house of Sir William Forbes & Co. of Edinburgh, which he left in 1778 on being offered a commission by Lord Macleod in the 73rd, afterwards the 71st, highlanders. Mackenzie was speedily promoted lieutenant and made adjutant, and he served throughout General Elliott's famous defence of Gibraltar, during which he acted as aide-de-camp to Major-general Sir Charles Ross in his sortie, and was wounded by a splinter of rock. He was promoted captain on 13 Jan. 1781, and on the conclusion of the war he returned to England with Lord Macleod. The 71st regiment was next ordered to India, and when it departed Mackenzie was left behind on recruiting service. In 1784 he married Miss Helen Mackenzie, sister of the two highland generals, Thomas and Francis Humberstone Mackenzie, and great granddaughter of Kenneth, third earl of Seaforth, who was attainted for his complicity in the rebellion of 1713. Mackenzie threw up his commission in the army, and purchased the estate of Tore in Ross-shire, where he spent eight years in retirement until the outbreak of the great war with France in 1793. In that year his brother-in-law, Francis Humberstone Mackenzie, who was in 1797 created Lord Seaforth, raised the 78th highlanders, or Ross-shire buffs,

and in May 1793 he appointed Mackenzie major in it. The new regiment was disciplined with unexampled rapidity, and in four months it was declared fit for service, and ordered to Guernsey. On 10 Feb. 1794 Mackenzie was promoted lieutenant-colonel, and in the following September he joined the army under the Duke of York at Flanders. During the terrible winter retreat before Pichegru he covered the division of Sir Ralph Abercromby, and had frequently to face round in order to check the rapid pursuit of the French army. His most distinguished services were in the sortie from Nimeguen on 4 Nov. 1794, when he succeeded in the chief command General de Burgh, disabled by wounds, and at Geldermalsen on 5 Jan. 1795, on which occasion Sir David Dundas rode up to him and said publicly, 'Colonel Alexander Mackenzie, you and your regiment have this day saved the British army.' In March 1795 he returned to England on the termination of the campaign, and received a commission to raise a second battalion of the 78th regiment, and in 1796 he was gazetted colonel-commandant. In that year he proceeded to the Cape of Good Hope with his second battalion, which he there amalgamated with the first battalion, forming a superb regiment of over thirteen hundred men. He acted for a short time as second in command to Major-general Sir J. H. Craig at the Cape, and then continued his way to India, where his battalion was quartered at Benares. It was his regiment which escorted Sir John Shore to Lucknow in 1797, when he went there to depose the nawab of Oude, and as one of the conditions of the treaty then made, Mackenzie took

possession of Allahabad. In 1798 he joined Sir James Craig at Cawnpore, and commanded a wing of his army in the march against the Maráthás, and on 1 Jan. 1800 he left India for England. In 1802 he was promoted major-general, and in the same year was elected M.P. for Cromarty. In 1803 he inherited Inverallochy from his mother and Castle Fraser from his aunt, and he then took the additional name of Fraser. From 1803 to 1805 he commanded a brigade in England, and in 1805 in Hanover. In 1806 he was appointed to the staff of General Henry Edward Fox [q. v.] in Sicily, and in the same year he was elected M.P. for the county of Ross. While in Sicily he was selected for the command of an expedition to Egypt, for the British government had been induced by the urgent recommendations of the British consul-general, Major Missett, to direct General Fox to send a corps of five thousand men to Egypt. Mehemet Ali Pasha was then in power, and it was believed that owing to the disputes between the Mamelukes, the Porte, and the pasha it would be easy for a very small British army to obtain supremacy in Egypt. Fox was ordered to select one of his generals, fitted for both military and political affairs. 'It was probably on account of his conciliatory temper,' Bunbury writes, 'and his frank and engaging manners, that General Mackenzie Fraser was selected for the command of the expedition to Alexandria. He was a fine specimen of an open, generous, honourable highland chieftain. A man of very good plain sense, but one who had never studied the higher branches either of politics or of military science. Every one in the army loved Mackenzie Fraser, but no one

deemed him qualified for a separate and difficult command' (SIR HENRY BUNBURY, *Narrative*, p. 287). The force placed at his disposal consisted of seventy light dragoons, 180 artillerymen, and five thousand infantry, namely the 31st regiment, both battalions of the 35th, the second battalion of the 78th, the Regiment de Roll, the Chasseurs Britanniques, and the Sicilian volunteers. His transports were scattered on the way to Egypt, but on 18 March 1807 Captain Hallowell, better known as Admiral Sir Benjamin Hallowell Carew [q. v.], managed to get a thousand men ashore without any opposition. His other transports soon arrived with Sir John Duckworth's fleet from the Dardanelles, and on 21 March Fraser took possession of Alexandria. Then his greatest difficulties began; Major Missett, the consul-general, declared that it was impossible for him to get provisions for his army in Alexandria, a declaration proved to be false; he stated that the Albanian soldiers of Mehemet Ali were mere rabble, and recommended the general to send detachments to take possession of Rosetta and Rahmanieh. Fraser accordingly despatched a small force under Major-general Wauchope, his second in command, against Rosetta, and that general stupidly got involved in the narrow streets of the Egyptian city, where he was fired on by the Albanians from the windows and killed. His little force extricated itself with difficulty, with a loss of nearly half its numbers. Missett, however, insisted on the importance of taking Rosetta, and Fraser accordingly sent a brigade of 2,500 men to besiege that city. This expedition, though better conducted, was equally disastrous; Mehemet Ali sent all his

best troops down the Nile; the British army was forced to retire with heavy loss, and one of the detachments at El Hamid, of thirty-six officers and 780 men, was entirely cut off by the Albanians. Fortunately, Major-general Sherbrooke at this time joined Fraser's army with a reinforcement of two thousand men and the foolish and disastrous expedition came to an end after the treaty made by Sir Arthur Paget with the Grande Porte, and the restoration of the prisoners taken in the affair of Rosetta. On 23 April 1807 Fraser returned to Sicily, and when Sir John Moore left that country with his division for Sweden, Fraser commanded one of his brigades. Moore did not land in Sweden owing to the mad conduct of the king, and Moore's division went on to Portugal. Fraser there took command of an infantry division consisting of Fane's and Mackinnon's brigades, and he advanced with Sir John Moore into Spain. During the terrible retreat under that general through Galicia Fraser showed the highest military qualities, and his division, which was posted on the extreme left, greatly distinguished itself at the battle of Corunna. For his services at this battle he received a gold medal, and on 25 June 1808 he was promoted lieutenant-general. In the Walcheren expedition of 1809 he commanded the 3rd infantry division, with which he took the towns of Campveer on 30 July and Ramakens on 2 Aug. The pestilential climate of Walcheren greatly affected his health, and he returned to England only to die on 13 Sept. 1809 at the house of his brother-in-law, Sir Vicary Gibbs, the attorney-general, on Hayes Common. Fraser was one of the most popular, if not most able

generals of his time; and an old comrade, writing to the 'Gentleman's Magazine' for October 1809, speaks of him as being 'mild as a lamb, and as a lion strong.'

[The authority for Mackenzie Fraser's life and career is a long article in the Military Panorama for May and June 1814; see also Gent. Mag. for September 1809, Sir Henry Bunbury's Narrative of some Passages in the Great War with France for the expedition to Egypt, and Napier's Peninsular War for Fraser's share in the campaign and battle of Corunna.]

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