Major General Sir Isaac Brock is remembered as the Hero of Upper Canada for his defence of what is now Ontario during the War of 1812, and also for his noble death at the Battle of Queenston Heights. In the more than two centuries since then, Brock’s likeness has been lost in a confusing array of portraits—most of which are misidentified or conceptual. The 1824 monument constructed to honour Brock’s sacrifice was destroyed in 1840 by Benjamin Lett, a disgruntled disciple of William Lyon Mackenzie and critic of the Upper Canadian elite. The replacement and subsequent commemorations emphasized a patriotic desire to visualize the hero’s appearance. But despite uncovering an authentic portrait painted only a few years before Brock’s death, a series of false faces were promoted to serve competing claims and agendas. St-Denis situates Brock’s portraits within an emerging English Canadian imperial nationalism that sought a heroic past which reflected their own aspirations and ambitions. A work of detailed scholarship and a fascinating detective story, The True Face of Sir Isaac Brock details the sometimes petty world of self-proclaimed guardians of the past, the complex process of identification and misidentification that often occurs even at esteemed Canadian institutions, and St-Denis’ own meticulous work as he separates fact from fiction to finally reveal Brock’s true face.
During Sir Isaac's tenure he faced desertions and near mutinies, was injured in battle and nearly died from fever. His heroics earned him membership in the Order of the Bath, and he had the privilege of serving alongside Lord Nelson and the Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh. His death in the Battle of Queenston Heights was a crushing blow to British leadership. Isaac Brock was born in Saint Peter Port on the Channel Island of Guernsey, the eighth son of a middle class family. He earned a reputation during his early education as a good swimmer and boxer. He kept a reputation as a physically commanding man throughout his life, and is said to have stood between 6 ft 2 in and 6 ft 4 in (1.88 and 1.93 m) in height. He was also noted as a serious student, who took education very seriously, even at a young age. Major General Sir Isaac Brock is remembered as the Hero of Upper Canada for his defence of what is now Ontario during the War of 1812, and also for his noble death at the Battle of Queenston Heights. In the more than two centuries since then, Brock’s likeness has been lost in a confusing array of portraits-most of which are misidentified or conceptual. A work of detailed scholarship and a fascinating detective story, The True Face of Sir Isaac Brock details the sometimes petty world of self-proclaimed guardians of the past, the complex process of identification and misidentification that often occurs even at esteemed Canadian institutions, and St-Denis’ own meticulous work as he separates fact from fiction to finally reveal Brock’s true face. Major General Sir Isaac Brock is remembered as the Hero of Upper Canada for his defence of what is now Ontario during the War of 1812, and also for his noble death at the Battle of Queenston Heights. In the more than two centuries since then, Brock’s likeness has been lost in a confusing array of portraits-most of which are misidentified or conceptual. The 1824 monument constructed to honour Brock’s sacrifice was destroyed in 1840 by Benjamin Lett, a disgruntled disciple of William Lyon Mackenzie and critic of the Upper Canadian elite. The replacement and subsequent commemorations emphasized a