

To resist this formidable army, Brock had fifteen companies of regular infantry, which may have mustered sixty rank and file each; two officers and thirty men of the Royal artillery, with five field guns; a troop of militia drivers, and a troop of Provincial Cavalry, besides the flank companies of the five Lincoln and two York battalions of militia. The fourteen flank companies probably did not average more than thirty-five officers and men each, or less than five hundred in all. The muster rolls of the five Lincoln battalions show a total of nearly two thousand men, but these were scattered over the twenty townships then composing the country, comprising the entire peninsula from Burlington Bay to the mouth of Grand river. Perhaps five hundred of these could be readily assembled at a few hours notice. Most of the Indians had dispersed to their hunting-grounds. The exigencies of the transport-service on the lakes had obliged the British general to send away the armed vessels which had formerly served the flank of his position, and to watch a frontier which practically extended from the Sugar Loaf on Lake Erie to Four Mile Creek on Lake Ontario, and to occupy the numerous posts and batteries between and maintain communication over a line of sixty miles, he had actually less than a thousand regular troops and six hundred militia, with a reserve of possibly six hundred militia and Indians. Half of this force was scarcely adequate to garrison Fort George and the adjacent batteries, and a body of troops could hardly be marched from one end of his line to the other in less than two days. The concentration of large bodies of men near Fort Niagara and Buffalo, where great numbers of boats were collected, forced Brock to weaken his centre and strengthen his wings, anticipating that an attempt would be made to turn either flank and land troops a few miles in rear of the works protecting it. Four companies of the 49th, two of the Royal Newfoundland regiment, four of militia and a small detachment of Royal artillery, occupied Fort Erie, and a series of batteries extending as low as Frenchman's Creek; four companies of militia and one company of the 41st were posted along the river between that point and Chippawa; the flank companies of the 49th and two of the York militia held the batteries near Queenston; the earthworks at Brown's and Field's points were each guarded by a militia company, while the remaining companies of the 49th and Lincoln militia, and the field guns were quartered in and about Fort George. A

chain of outposts and patrols maintained constant communication between all these posts, and the Indians were held in reserve in small parties several miles in rear. As the number of regular artillerymen was quite insufficient to work even the field-guns in their possession, a corps of volunteer gunners had been formed partly from the regular infantry and partly from the militia under Captains Kerby and Swayze.

The quality of these troops was unquestionably superior to that of any likely to be brought against them. The 41st contained a large proportion of young recruits, but was a fine body of men, and although the men of the 49th had been ten years in the country, drinking rum without bounds, they were still respectable and ardent. The flank companies of militia were generally composed of picked men and had attained a very creditable degree of discipline.

The successful result of an attack upon two small armed vessels at Fort Erie served to raise the spirits of Van Rensselaer's army in a remarkable degree, and was actually a serious blow to their opponent's wing to the extreme scarcity of provisions apart from the loss of the vessels. This occurred early on the morning of the 9th October, and Brock arrived on the spot before sunset, but having apparently satisfied himself that no immediate attempt to cross the river was contemplated there, returned to Niagara next day. This hurried journey had the effect of fastening Van Rensselaer's movements, for a spy returned to his camp with information that Brock had left Niagara in great haste and was supposed to have gone to Detroit. Encouraged by this report, and feeling, as he expressed it, "That the national character is degraded and the disgrace will remain corroding the public feeling and spirit until another campaign, unless it be wiped away by a brilliant exploit in this," he determined to strike while the enthusiasm of his troops was at its heat over the recent exploit, and fixed the hour and place for crossing the river for three o'clock next morning at Queenston. The stream was there at its narrowest; a ferry had been established for years, and although the current was swift, the navigation was well ascertained and an indifferent oarsman could pull across in less than ten minutes. His artillery, superior in numbers and calibre, could cover the landing from the high ground above Lewiston, where batteries had already been thrown up.

Accordingly the regulars from Fort Niagara, and strong detachments from Buffalo, were ordered to join the main-body at Lewiston before midnight, and boats sufficient

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