

nels for themselves in the soft soil, so that the road crossed a deep gulley wherever a creek was encountered. These gullies De Watteville perceived could be converted into formidable lines of defence, so he ordered that the trees that topped the banks of these gullies be so felled as to form barricades and afford shelter for the firing-line. Between what is now known as Allan's Corners and the foot of Morrison's rapids, a distance of four miles, there are six of these gullies. The preparation of the first three of these ravines he entrusted to Major de Salaberry. The fourth, the most important, for it faced the ford at Morrison's, was assigned to Colonel Macdonell and his Glengarry Highlanders. The sixth line De Watteville kept in his own charge, and here he planted his artillery. Altogether he had 1600 men at his command, nearly all militia or regiments of volunteers.

Hampton saw that forcing these successive barricades of felled trees was going to entail sacrifice of life, which he thought could be avoided by a flank movement. Dense bush and swamps made attempts to turn the barricades on their north side impracticable but by sending a column along the southern bank of the river it could cross at Morrison's ford, and so take all the lines of defence in their rear, except the main one under De Watteville, whom Hampton counted on retreating on seeing his front defences had been turned. The drawback to the plan was that it involved a march through a dense bush, broken by swamps, hollows formed by creeks full of water from the recent rains, and, worst of all, to cover such ground in the dark, for to be effective in carrying the ford the movement must be a surprise. The difficult task was entrusted to Colonel Purdy, who was in command of the 1st brigade. At dark on the evening of the 25th he led a regiment of the line and the light corps down to the ford, where the Ormstown grist mill now stands, and waded to the south bank of the Chateauguay. His troubles began at once. To lead a body of soldiers in daylight through an untracked forest, cumbered with fallen trunks and thick with underbrush, is difficult, but to do so in the dark is to attempt the impossible. The men straggled, and ever and anon, there were cries for help from those floundering in marsh and pool. To aggravate the situation, it began to rain. Purdy blamed his guides, but without cause, for it was so dark they could not recognize landmarks. A halt had to be called before two miles were travelled, and the little army shivering from wet and cold, for they dared not betray their presence to the