

him to move from his strong position. At this time a reinforcement of 300 men under Colonel Upham, came into the field, whose activity while engaged evinced the benefit that might have been derived from their more early assistance. After the troops were re-formed, I received orders to return to the ground near the boats, and to embark. A valuable part of the flotilla and the two principal artillery officers had descended the river and joined Gen. Brown at Cornwall, during the action, and many of the remaining boats were already in the stream. Had an early and sufficient reinforcement come into the field, as was expected, the result of this day would have been very different. It is evident, throughout, that the commander in chief acted with a misapprehension of the force and the designs of the enemy—when the action began, it is probable he considered his strength inferior to ours, else he would not have retained, in inactivity, so large a force in the boats.

The strength of the enemy, according to the calculation of the principal officer engaged, could not have been less than 2500 men, 7 pieces of artillery, and 9 gun boats (manned from the fleet;) the British prisoners state their strength 2100. Our force, exclusive of artillery and dragoons, amounted to not more than 1200 men. Though the result of this battle was not so decisive as I could have wished, and as the first part of it promised, yet when it is recollected, that the troops had been exposed for four days to incessant fatigue, and inclement storms, from which they had no shelter, that we carried into the field so small a force, that the action commenced unexpectedly, and without artillery, and was sustained with a cool determined valor never surpassed, for more than three hours, and that the enemy were superior in numbers and position, it is hoped that this affair may justly be considered as having added new glory to the American arms. The field was crimsoned with the blood of 339 killed and wounded, whose deaths or scars will immortalize this day. The names of the officers whose bravery and activity characterized this conflict, were reported to the commander in chief. The praise, however, which was so parsimoniously bestowed on this occasion, but ill accords with their deserts. In the account of the enemy, who reported our numbers 7000 men, a greater compliment is implied than could be found in the despatches of the commander in chief.

I would not here again give an useless exhibition of the valor and skill which was displayed by many individuals and corps on this important day. The time for reward has passed by—those who fell must sleep in oblivion, and those who survive, conceal their scars, which are seen only with indifference. But, I cannot forbear from making one more struggle to rescue the character of this army from unmerited aspersion. If it be not entitled to the praise of their country, let it not meet with undeserved neglect, but receive the common rewards of justice.

With much consideration and respect,

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN P. BOYD,
Brig. Gen. Commanding.