

As Lieut.-Colonel Fischer's column was as strong as the other two combined, it is evident that General Drummond based his chief hope of success upon its ability to carry the Snake Hill battery and take the remainder of the intrenchments in reverse. But by thus dividing his force into two nearly equal bodies with an impassable forest between them it is apparent that he exposed either wing to the danger of being overwhelmed by a sudden and vigorous counter attack.

For the past three weeks working parties composed of one-third of the American force, who were relieved every eight hours, had been employed night and day in fortifying their position and had accomplished much. When captured on the third of July, Fort Erie was a small quadrangular work, enclosed in rear only by a wooden palisade, and a shallow dry ditch. It had been designed merely to command the entrance of the river, and was armed with three pieces of artillery, all mounted on its water front. During the advance of the American army towards Lake Ontario it had been made defensible on the land side by the construction of a curtain and parapet of earth of the same height as the adjacent bastions, leaving the palisades, eleven feet high, still standing outside. The ditch was deepened and protected by *abattis*. The northeastern bastion had a scarp of masonry, surmounted by a parapet of earth measuring from the bottom of the ditch to the crest of the merlons twenty-two feet. Inside this stood two substantial stone barracks, each ninety-three feet in length by twenty-six in width and two stories in height. The upper story of these buildings had been considerably damaged by the fire of the siege guns, for which they had formed a conspicuous target. Outside of the line of palisades a small fleche had been constructed and two new bastions thrown up, which were connected with each other by a line of high palisades, behind which was a log building loopholed for musketry. Curtains of earth connected them with the original fortification, and the whole was enclosed by a dry ditch nine feet deep and twenty-five feet wide and a double line of *abattis*. Six guns, varying in calibre from a six to a twenty-four pounder, were mounted, and the garrison at the time of the assault consisted of Captain Williams's company of United States artillery and two companies of the 19th United States Infantry, commanded by Major W. A. Trimble, amounting in the whole to two hundred and fifty effective men.

On the right a parapet of earth, seven feet high and eighteen feet thick, had been thrown up extending from the ditch outside of the re-entering angle of the northeastern bastion eastward to the river, where it terminated in a *lunette*, usually called the Douglass battery,