

accuracy what was our number on the field, because it consisted of indefinite detachments taken from the boats to render safe the passage of the rapids. Gens. Covington and Swartwout voluntarily took part in the action, at the head of detachments from their respective brigades, and exhibited the same courage that was displayed by Brig. Gen. Boyd, who happened to be the senior officer on the ground. Our force engaged might have reached 1,600 or 1,700 men, but actually did not exceed 1,800; that of the enemy was estimated from 1,200 to 2,000, but did not probably amount to more than 1,500 or 1,600, consisting, as I am informed, of detachments from the 49th, 84th and 104th regiments of the line, with three companies of the Voltigeur and Glen-garry corps, and the militia of the country, who were not included in the estimate.

It would be presumptuous in me to attempt to give a detailed account of the affair, which certainly reflects high honor on the valor of the American soldier, as no examples can be produced of undisciplined men with inexperienced officers, braving a fire of two hours and a half, without quitting the field, or yielding to their antagonist. The information is derived from officers in my confidence, who took active parts in this conflict; for though I was enabled to order the attack, it was my hard fortune not to be able to lead the troops I commanded. The disease with which I was assailed on the 2nd of September, on my journey to Fort George, has, with a few short intervals of convalescence, preyed on me ever since, and at the moment of this action, I was confined to my bed, and emaciated almost as a skeleton, unable to sit on my horse, or move ten paces without assistance. I must, however, be pardoned for trespassing on your time a few remarks in relation to the affair.

The objects of the British and Americans were precisely opposed; the last being bound by the instructions of the government, and the most solemn obligations of duty, to precipitate their designs on the St. Lawrence by every practicable means; because this being effected, one of the greatest difficulties opposed to the American arms would be surmounted, while the first, by duties equally imperious, to retard and if possible, prevent such descent. He is to be counted victorious who effected his purpose! This British commander having failed to gain either of his objects, can lay no claim to the honors of the day. The battle fluctuated, and seemed at different times inclined to the contending corps. The front of the enemy were at first forced back more than a mile, and though they never regained the ground they lost, their stand was permanent and their courage resolute. Amidst these charges and near the close of the contest, we lost a field piece by the fall of an officer, who was serving it with the same coolness as if he had been at a parade or a review. This was Lieut. Smith, of the light artillery, who, in point of merit, stood at the head of his grade. The enemy having halted and our troops being again formed into battalion, front to front, we resumed our position on the bank of the river, and the infantry being much fatigued, the whole were re-embarked and proceeded down the river without any further annoyance from the enemy or their gun-boats, while the dragoons, with five pieces of light artillery, marched down the Canada shore without molestation.