

The French made active preparation for defense. They called to this frontier the entire available force of the District of Montreal. By the end of August, when Johnson's army had reached Lake George, Dieskau, the French commander, had gathered here seven hundred regulars, sixteen hundred Canadians and six hundred savages. The impetuous Frenchman did not wait for an attack. Dashing forward to strike his inactive adversary, he mistook his route, and on the 7th of September found himself between Fort Edward and Lake George. He was just in time to form an ambush for a thousand colonists, who had been sent under Col. Ephraim Williams to relieve Fort Edward. Among the latter was the brave and venerable Hendrick, chief of the Six Nations, with two hundred of his braves. Led into the ambush, surrounded by invisible foes, defense was impossible, and Hendrick and Williams fell, with many of their men. Whiting, of Connecticut, extricated the remainder of the force, and with it retreated to Johnson's camp, fighting every step of the way.

The camp was not intrenched. Dieskau, whose motto was, "Boldness wins," dashed on, hoping to enter the camp with the fugitives. But he mistook the temper of the New England militia. Though abandoned by their commander, who left the field with the excuse of a slight wound at the commencement of the action, these marksmen of the woods not only checked the French assault, but for five hours poured into their ranks such a withering fire as they had never before encountered. The French regulars were annihilated. The Indians and Canadians, crouching in the bushes, kept out of the range of the fire. At length the Americans rushed over their slight works, and put the whole French army to flight. A French renegade wantonly shot down their intrepid and thrice-wounded commander. Among the privates of the American army in this action were Israel Putnam, of Connecticut, and John Stark, of New Hampshire.