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THE MILITIA OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT

The Counties of Glengarry, Stormont and Dundas

BY BRIG. GENL. E. A. CRUIKSHANK

Communicated to the Institute, 10th November, 1915

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During the thirty years that had elapsed since the recognition of the independence of the United States, the loyalist settlers of the Eastern District of Upper Canada, who were mainly the families of Scottish Highlanders belonging to the Royal Regiment of New York, organized in the valley of the Mohawk river by Sir John Johnson, had received considerable accessions to their numbers through the arrival of clansmen from their native country. In 1786 nearly five hundred persons had emigrated from Glengarry in Scotland under the supervision of their priest, Alexander Macdonell of the Scothouse family, most of whom came to Canada. They had fled from famine as much as from increased rents. In 1804, they were followed by a still larger number who were mostly men who had recently served in the regiment known as the Glengarry Fencibles, which had been disbanded shortly after the conclusion of the peace of Amiens. They had been actively employed in the suppression of the insurrection of 1798 in Ireland. "These Highlanders," says an unfriendly writer, "whom the Irish called 'the Devil's Bloodhounds', both on account of their dress and habit of climbing and traversing the hills, had greatly the advantage in many encounters, so that they reduced in a few months the brave Holt's 'Independent Irishmen' from a thousand strong to a few scores. Dwyer, another Irish chieftain, after almost his whole party had been killed or taken, was at length surprised in a house with a few of his remaining followers by a party of the Glengarries. Here he defended himself and killed some of his pursuers till the house being set on fire, he was shot when endeavoring to escape naked through the flames."*

With such men and their sons to draw upon, the organization of an efficient and reliable militia force in the Eastern District was no difficult task. When war with the United States seemed more than probable in 1808, they eagerly proffered their services and requested that they might be armed with broadswords, their national weapons.

*A brief review of the Settlement of Upper Canada by United Empire Loyalists and Scottish Highlanders in 1783, &c., &c.," by D. McLeod, Major-General, Patriot Army, Upper Canada, Cleveland, 1841.

Two years later, a sensible plan for training was submitted for the consideration of the government by an unknown correspondent, but put aside and not carried into effect, probably from lack of money.

"The intimation that 20,000 of the colonial militia may possibly be called into permanent service and reflecting on the total want of discipline that would be found in that portion which is to be furnished by Upper Canada," said the writer of this letter, "has suggested the idea of forming camps in some convenient situation in each district."

"That a detachment of militia of each district should be halted or encamped for 28 days successively, drilled and disciplined to the use of arms and be practised in the use of entrenching tools, fortifying the camp, and in the use of great guns by engineers or artillerymen; to receive pay and provisions while in camp as the troops of the line. To enter the camp on the 1st day of April and continue in it until the first day of November, excepting two months for seed time and harvest, during which periods the camp should be kept by a small detachment of old men above 50. At the end of the 28 days the detachment should march out leaving the arms for the use of the succeeding detachment. Calculating the quota of Upper Canada at 2,200 men, the expenses to be incurred for the four months, including the pay of officers, expenses for entrenching, &c., it is supposed would amount to about 15,000 pounds currency.

"The benefits to be derived from the execution of such a project are various and not the least is that of breaking in upon the monotonous existence of the colonists, a life of hardship and labor is among them uninterrupted by religious or national holidays. They have no fairs, no habits of public amusement, few of public worship or any call from the daily routine of domestic life, except the neighborly aid of clearing a field or raising a building, which generally terminates in excess. I should imagine that this annual assemblage might soon be looked upon as a period of relaxation or amusement and that idea would affect the character of the colonists, a spirit of emulation between the individuals of each camp would naturally extend from camp to camp and the several divisions would look with expectation to the publication of the annual reports in which their appearance, discipline, and good conduct might be noted and contrasted.

"I am not insensible to the difficulty of any attempt to change the habits and manners of a whole population but I have some faith that the plan devised would, with proper attention to the appointment of officers, produce a very favorable change in the course of a few years in the principles, habits and manners of the colony, which might be aided by the occasional union of two or more camps and exchange of detachments from one district to another."*

In pursuance of the act of 1807 the militia of the Eastern District was enrolled and formed into regiments for whom a full complement of officers was appointed. Two regiments were accordingly formed in the

*Dominion Archives, Q. 317; p. 225.

County of Glengarry. Lieut.-Colonel Alexander McMillan, who had been a lieutenant in De Lancey's corps of loyalists in the war of the American Revolution was selected to command the 1st Regiment. Alexander Macdonell of Greenfield became the commanding officer of the other. The Stormont Regiment was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel, the Honorable Neil McLean, who had served in his youth as a lieutenant in the 84th Regiment and afterwards as a captain in the Second Battalion of the Royal Canadian Volunteers. Lieut.-Colonel, the Honorable Thomas Fraser, who had served as a captain in the Loyal Rangers, commanded the Dundas Regiment. Lieut.-Colonel Joseph Fortune was appointed to the command of the militia in the County of Russell, but it does not appear that this corps was fully organized, owing no doubt to the scattered nature of the settlements.

On the 8th of April, 1812, shortly after the prorogation of the Provincial Legislature, Major General Brock addressed an important circular letter to the commanding officers of all these regiments in which he said:

"The power which is vested in the person administering the government by the amended act of the militia passed the last session of the Provincial Parliament of forming two flank companies to be taken indiscriminately from the battalion, being limited to the end of the ensuing session, would almost deter me from incurring public expense upon a system which will cease to operate before its utility and efficacy can well be ascertained.

"But being anxious at this important crisis to organize an armed force with a view of meeting future exigencies and likewise to demonstrate by practical experience the degree of facility it may be trained for service, I have to request you to adopt immediate measures for forming and completing from among such men as voluntarily offer to serve, two companies not to exceed one captain, two subalterns, two sergeants, one drummer and thirty rank and file each in the regiment under your command.*

"You will have the goodness to recommend two captains whom you conceive the best qualified to undertake this important duty. The nomination of subalterns is left to your discretion.

"Such other regiments as are conveniently situated to receive military instruction shall have an opportunity offered them of showing their ardor in the public service which cannot fail creating a laudable emulation in the different corps.

"Assisted by your zeal, prudence and intelligence, I entertain the pleasing hope of meeting with very considerable success and of being able to establish the sound policy of rendering permanent at the end of the present war, a mode of military instruction little burdensome to individuals and every way calculated to secure a powerful internal defence against hostile aggression.

"Printed rules and regulations for your future guidance shall be forwarded as soon as possible; the most simple and at the same time the

*In the case of the Dundas regiment the number of rank and file was increased to forty in each company.

most useful movements have been selected for the practice of the militia.

"Experience has shown the absolute necessity of adopting every possible precaution to preserve in a proper state the arms issued to the militia, and of guarding against the heavy defalcations which have heretofore occurred.

"For which purpose you are authorized to prepare one or more depots in situations the most safe and convenient for assembling and drilling the men by squads and where the arms are to be lodged after each day of exercise.

"You are allowed to charge in your contingent account at the rate of five pounds yearly for every twenty muskets issued for the use of the men, which sum it is supposed will prove ample to defray every expense of keeping the arms and accoutrements in a complete state of repair.

"You will make application to the officer commanding at Kingston for the number of arms and accoutrements wanting to complete the men actually engaged to serve in the flank companies, and that officer has been instructed to comply with your requisition upon your transmitting duplicate receipts, one of which is to be forwarded to headquarters, that you may become responsible for the articles delivered to your order; at the same time the most liberal construction will be given to any representation accounting for such contingencies as are incident to the service.

"I cannot dismiss this subject without expressing my expectation that your knowledge of the localities of the country will enable you to make such arrangements as will give the utmost facility to the important object in view without subjecting the men to any material inconvenience. Coming generously forward with an offer of their services they are the more entitled to every consideration.

"Not only the place but likewise the time for assembling the companies or squads will be strictly attended to by you. It is my earnest wish that the little the men have to learn may be acquired by way of a pastime and not looked upon in the light of an irksome restraint. The generality of the inhabitants being already acquainted with the use of the musket have the less to learn. You may therefore under the existing circumstances limit the parade of the companies to three times in each month.

"A little attention on the part of the men will very soon enable you to reduce even that short term of attendance. The chief object of the flank companies is to have constantly in readiness a force composed of loyal brave and respectable young men, so far instructed so as to enable the Government on any emergency to engraft such portion of the militia as may be necessary on a stock capable of giving aid in forming them for military service. To your presence and exertions, I confidently look for the attainment of a system so evidently conducive to the safety and tranquillity of the province."*

A very considerable number of young men in the Eastern District had already enlisted in the regiment of Glengarry Light Infantry then being

*Dominion Archives, Militia Papers, U.C.M.D. 31.

organized. The loyalty of the greater part of the inhabitants was unquestioned. In a general review of the military state of the province addressed by General Brock to Sir George Prevost, dated the 2nd of December, 1811, he had remarked:

"The militia from the Bay of Quinte down to Glengarry is the most respectable of any in the province. Among the officers, several are on half-pay, who still retain a sound military spirit. Those from the Bay of Quinte would be properly stationed at Kingston, but all downwards would naturally desire to be employed to resist any predatory excursions to which their property would be much exposed from the opposite shore. I have besides been always of the opinion that a strong detachment would follow the route of Lord Amherst and attempt to enter the Province of Oswegatchie. The militia on the whole of that communication cannot therefore be more usefully employed than in watching such a movement, and should the enemy direct the whole of his force by St. Johns, the greater part can, with the utmost facility, join the army acting upon that frontier."*

On February 12th, 1812, he wrote:

"I have not a musket more than will suffice to arm the active part of the militia from Kingston westward. I have therefore to request that the number of arms may be sent according to the enclosed requisition to the places therein specified on the communication between Glengarry and Kingston. Every man capable of bearing a musket along the whole of that line ought to be prepared to act. The members of the Assembly from that part of the country are particularly anxious that some works may be thrown up as a rallying point and place of security for stores, &c., in the vicinity of Johnstown. I shall request Colonel Macdonell to examine on his return the ground which these gentlemen recommend as the best suited for that purpose. Being immediately opposite Oswegatchie, precaution of the sort is indispensable, were it only to preserve a free communication between the two provinces. I have been made to expect the able assistance of Captain Marlow. Should he be still at Quebec have the goodness to direct his attention on his way up to that quarter. He had better consult Colonel Fraser and Captain Gilkinson, men of sound judgment and well acquainted with the country. The militia will have of course to be employed on the works.

"I must still press the necessity of an active, enterprising, intelligent commander being stationed on that important line of communication. I wish Colonel Ellice were here to undertake the arduous task, as it is wholly impossible that I can do so."**

The only practicable line of communication between Kingston and Montreal during the greater part of the year owing to the wretched condition of the road was by the river St. Lawrence. The southern bank of that river was in the possession of the United States from Lake Ontario

*Dominion Archives, C. 673, p. 171.

**Brock to Baynes, February 12, 1812. Tupper's Life of Brock, pp. 147-150.

to St. Regis and as it was narrow and rapid in many places it seemed evident that a few batteries judiciously situated would render its navigation impracticable without strong escorts of troops and gunboats, thus scattering and wasting force required for the defence of the country.

By the end of April the flank companies of every regiment were completed to the required establishment but no arms could be supplied for several weeks.

On July 7, Colonel Richard Cartwright wrote from Kingston to Sir George Prevost informing him that the militia of the Midland District had assembled there with great alacrity upon receiving information of the declaration of war.

"The militia of the several counties situate between this place and the Lower Province appear to be extremely well disposed and have made applications for larger quantities of arms and ammunition than we have to spare. They have been in part supplied and have been referred to Your Excellency for such further quantities as it may be thought expedient to furnish them. In the first fervor of their zeal, it has not perhaps occurred (to them) that it is not possible to keep on service for any considerable length of time the whole male population of a country and arms put into the hands of people not actually arrayed for service are soon allowed to become unserviceable. Yet it might be expedient to have depots in the different counties to be resorted to in case of emergency. Every man along the frontier supposes that his property will be the object of immediate attack but it is to be presumed that mere predatory warfare will be wholly discountenanced on both sides.

"The Glengarry, Stormont and Dundas militia may be relied on as escorts for any stores, &c., that it may be necessary to forward. Or if it should be thought inexpedient to hazard boats in the narrow channels near Cornwall and Matilda, stores might be conveyed by land to Elizabethtown and though the actual state of the roads from thence, is bad, by ordering militia to work on them the roads would soon be made tolerably good along the whole line from Lake St. Francis to this place. Small redoubts or stockade forts in proper situations along this route might probably secure even the communication by water."*

"Five days later Colonel Robert Lethbridge was appointed to command at Kingston with the following instructions:

"You are directed to call upon the colonels and commanding officers of the corps of militia on the line from Kingston to Cornwall and to ascertain from the report of these officers and by an inspection of the militia as far as the time and circumstances will admit, the real effective state of the militia of the Province, their numbers, apparent loyalty and their disposition towards forming themselves into select corps, embodied for permanent service.

"You will obtain the best information of the quantity and description of arms in the possession of individuals. Government has just sent a supply

*Dominion Archives, C. 676, 122-5.

of 200 stands of arms and accoutrements complete and the equipment for 25 horsemen to Prescott, 100 stands to Cornwall, and 60 stand to Dundas with 50 rounds of ball cartridges for each musket and 100 for each pistol. It has been represented that there are twelve cases containing 114 stand of old arms at the Court House at Cornwall which are to be returned to Montreal for the purpose of being repaired.

"After having completed your inspection you are directed to arrange a plan of defence for this frontier for the purpose of securing the communication between Kingston and the Lower Province. With this view you will examine and report how far boats armed with light guns or swivels would tend to promote this object and whether the militia would engage to man and defend them.

"You will fix upon the stations best calculated for establishing depots of arms, ammunition, or military stores and you will state the proportion of arms desirable to be distributed to the several corps (for which) a sufficiency cannot be procured at present. You will assume the command of the garrison at Kingston and give such orders and directions as you may deem necessary for the security and defence of this post. But as you will be required to exert a vigilant general superintendence of the whole district to Montreal, you are not to consider yourself confined to this fort which you may leave at your discretion in the command of Major McPherson of the 10th Veteran Batta. You will report fully on all occasions to Major General Brock, and you will cause returns of the militia to be sent regularly for his information and to the Adjt. General of the Upper Province. You are also to transmit reports and returns of all occurrences for the information of the Commander of the Forces and His Excellency recommends that in performing this part of your duty you will observe a confidential explicit mode of communication so as to convey a full and complete statement of the actual state of affairs.

"From the extent of the several posts placed under your command, the difficulty of communicating promptly either with the headquarters of the Upper Province or with the Commander of the Forces, you must consider all circumstances not expressly provided for, guide yourself to the best of your judgment, observing as a general line of conduct that the post of Kingston is the object of primary importance committed to your charge. The general defence and security of the line of frontier should form the next object of your attention.

"Under the existing state of affairs it is not desirable that you should engage in active hostilities or provoke them on the part of the enemy on the contrary, use every precaution to preserve the tranquility of that part of the Province which does not in itself afford an eligible position for offensive operations.

"In the event of this portion of the Province becoming an object of serious attack and that your utmost exertions and endeavors prove insufficient to maintain your post, you will take especial care that no arms, ammunition, or military stores of any description are suffered to fall into

the hands of the enemy. You must remove or destroy everything that can be useful to him and you will use every exertion to collect all loyal, well disposed subjects to join the troops and retreat upon the Upper or Lower Province or keep the field against the enemy as circumstances and the necessity of the case may require.**

To prevent any interruption of the line of communication measures were taken to establish a system of convoy between Montreal and Kingston. As a considerable body of the militia from adjacent parts of the State of New York had been assembled at Ogdensburg and were reported to be contemplating an attack upon Prescott, Colonel William Fraser, who commanded there, deemed it necessary to order the two flank companies from the County of Dundas to reinforce the garrison composed of detachments of militia from the Johnstown District. A month elapsed without any offensive movement and early in August Colonel Lathbridge made a tour of inspection from Kingston to Williamstown in Glengarry.

"Of the militia of the Counties of Grenville, Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry," he reported, "I feel every satisfaction in noticing their uniform zeal to exert their best endeavors for the defence of their country, though as yet almost in the infancy of discipline with the exception of the manual and platoon exercise owing to the general want of instructors. But their wants and privations are many but notwithstanding that at Prescott they were not only without blankets but even straw was not to be procured, the alacrity of both officers and men to assist in erecting a stockaded fort with three embrasures at each of the two angles was highly meritorious and as no allowance for their trouble in any state and under the privations it was represented to me they were enduring, I ventured to order an issue of rum of a pint per man. I trust it will meet the approbation, under the singular case, of His Excellency the Commander of the Forces and yourself. The Dundas and Stormont militia are very desirous of having a troop established and being persuaded of its utility both as a patrol and for carrying despatches along the line of communication I am desirous of seconding their proposition. It seems a Mr. Forrester has been at York and made application on the subject and was referred by you to Major General Shaw who did not happen to extend his journey so far down. But though I should recommend Mr. Forrester for being one of the officers of the troop, I do not feel encouraged by the accounts I have of him (though no imputation on his loyalty), to suggest his having the command of the troop.

"The Dundas militia are unhappily in a state of schism at least between the two field officers, Col. McDonald and Major McKay. The former (is) certainly much advanced in years, the latter very shrewd and, I believe, extremely able and zealous, though inflexibly stern. I propose by way of healing the breach the substitution of Colonel Thomas Fraser to the command of the Dundas militia, an arrangement I have been

*Dominion Archives, C. 680 A, pp. 103-6

assured would be agreeable to Col. McLean, and I dare say, would not be ill taken by Major McKay. The Cornwall militia are very well attended to by Col. (McLean?). He has been obliged to hire a store for the accommodation of his men at the moderate rate of 20s. per annum, which by properly dividing by bertas is adequate to contain the whole of the present numbers embodied. More arms will be supplied to him when our means are more abundant. No blankets but a supply of straw. He has been obliged to purchase some camp kettles. The flank companies of the Glengarry militia partly assembled at McLaughlin's. Colonel McMillan has been under the indispensable necessity from the situation being destitute of other resources of contracting for a shed to cover his men and to build ovens, &c., &c., and I authorized his having a supply of kettles, a surgeon to attend the sick, and I have sanctioned his having the assistance of Mr. Wilkinson from Cornwall until your pleasure is ascertained. I do intend removing a part of the flank companies of the Glengarry to Cornwall as a point more material to be guarded than the mouth of the River La Raisin. I have been obliged to order them some kettles. There are four points more vulnerable than others from musquetry--from five to eight hundred yards distant from the American shore--between Rapid Plat and Cornwall; the best defence for which would appear to be two or three pieces of flying artillery which the inhabitants would undertake to furnish the horses for. But of this and the number of militia and the number of arms received, a more detailed report shall be forewarded to you at Niagara to which place I apprehend you are now removed and will probably reach you before this. I confess I have had a fatiguing week and request you will refer any inaccuracies in this to that cause.

.....
..... Colonel McLean is erecting a blockhouse on a point about 12 miles above Cornwall for accommodation for his men as a central rendezvous for part of them and an accommodation withall, the cost of which need be but trifling, it being done by the militiamen as far as labor is concerned.**

Shortly afterwards Colonel Vincent was appointed to command at Kingston and Lethbridge transferred his headquarters to Prescott. On August 29 he wrote from that place to General Brock informing him that "Having looked at the site and foundation of the blockhouse erecting by Col. McLean on a point twelve miles above Cornwall and having given it in some measure my approbation, I should be very sorry indeed if that work (an estimate of the expense whereof I enclose), should have your disapprobation, it is particularly necessary as a central spot for the reception of a part of the Stormont militia. What clothing the militia had of their own is now getting very bad and many of them unable to provide themselves with any more. I should hope some substitute or an allowance might be conceded them."**

*Lethbridge to Brock, Dominion Archives, C 688 A, pp. 169-172.

**Lethbridge to Brock, Dominion Archives, C 688 B, pp. 15-6.

The statement of expenditure in building a blockhouse in the township of Osnabruck enclosed amounted to \$49.26 and was signed by Captain William Morgan.

Within two weeks after war had been declared about two thousand militia from the State of New York had assembled at various stations of the south side of the river St. Lawrence, about half that number being quartered at Ogdensburg and the remainder distributed between Cape Vincent, Hamilton, Madrid and French Mills. They were well provided with small arms but had received very little training.

The conclusion of an armistice with General Dearborn encouraged hopes that peace would soon be restored although both sides took advantage of its provisions to continue their preparations and forward troops and stores to the frontier. When it was terminated by the instructions of the American government, General Brock made it known to the troops under his command by an inspiring General Order, dated at Fort George on September 8.

"Major General Brock was disposed to view the armistice as the forerunner of a restoration of peace and amity with the United States," he said, "The pretexes on which their declaration of war was chiefly founded having been removed by the British Government and an opening offered by it to an adjustment of all difficulties of minor importance between the two countries. But in vain has Great Britain thus held out the hand of conciliation. It has been rejected. The President of the United States having thought fit to direct their troops to resort again to active warfare and what motive can exist for his authorizing a renewal of hostilities at the same time too (as is confidently asserted), that he has sent an ambassador to England to treat for peace?

"Is it to facilitate its attainment that he by his own voluntary act places the two countries in a situation to inflict mutually the horrors of war, thereby to have their minds the more embittered towards each other; perhaps, indeed, he may imagine that by conquest on the side of Canada, he can indemnify the United States for the loss to which they are exposed on the Atlantic side from the superiority of the naval power of Great Britain, and that with a portion of her provinces in their possession more favorable terms would be obtained in a negotiation for peace? But the militia of this province have too just and manly a sense of what they owe to their own personal dignity and independence to be disposed of at the will of the chief magistrate of any foreign country. They will not stoop to the degradation of unresistingly becoming a make weight to be thrown by his hand into the scale—such baseness belongs not to them. They have already offered to the world an instance of what can be effected by the aid of their loyalty and valor and Major General Brock relies with confidence on the continued exertion of those ennobling qualities for defeating any design on this province, and for contributing no less honorably for themselves than usefully to their families, to their King and their country,

towards bringing the contest in which the implacable enmity of the American Government has engaged us to a favorable issue."

On the morning of September 21, a small body of American troops, embarking at Cape Vincent, made a successful attack upon the village of Gananoqui, where they destroyed some stores and captured a few prisoners. This event naturally excited considerable apprehension of raids upon other exposed points along the line of communication between Montreal and Kingston. An attack upon a convoy of boats under Major Heathcote of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at the narrows of the river near Toussaint's Island was repulsed with considerable loss after a prolonged engagement in which a number of men belonging to the companies of Captains Ault and Munro of the Dundas militia took an active part.

The menacing attitude of a considerable force of militia and volunteers assembled under Brigadier General Jacob Brown at Ogdensburg, induced Colonel Lethbridge to collect all the available militia from the adjacent counties in the Eastern and Johnstown Districts at Prescott to repel an attack and if practicable to dislodge and disperse the enemy. The American batteries were briskly bombarded without provoking any reply owing it appears from General Brown's correspondence, to a deficiency of ammunition. Lethbridge was consequently encouraged to attempt the passage of the river on the morning of the 4th of October with about seven hundred men. This movement was sharply repelled and abandoned without suffering much loss.

This unsuccessful attack was soon followed by the removal of Colonel Lethbridge from his command. "Having had repeatedly cause to mistrust the judgment in command of Colonel Lethbridge," Sir George Prevost wrote to General Brock on the 19th of October, "he has been relieved by Lieut. Colonel Pearson whose zeal and talents as a soldier I have frequently witnessed."

A redoubt, which subsequently received the name of Fort Wellington had been constructed at Prescott, and was garrisoned with two companies of regular infantry, a detachment of Royal Artillery, and a body of local militia. A division of gunboats manned by detachments of The Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the newly organized Corps of Voyageurs, was assigned for the protection of navigation between Montreal and Kingston.

On the 23rd of October the American force stationed at the French Mills near the mouth of Salmon River made a successful attack upon the British post which had been established just one week before at the Indian village of St. Regis, taking the greater part of a company of the Corps of Voyageurs. This act of aggression and the consequent menace to the navigation of the river induced the Governor General to direct a counter-stroke against the hostile position. Captain Andrew Gray, acting as Quartermaster General, who was under orders to proceed to Kingston in charge of a brigade of boats, was instructed to carry this out with the escort under his command, composed of one company of the Glengarry

Light Infantry and a small detachment of the 49th. On the afternoon of November 22nd, Gray arrived at Glengarry House with his convoy and despatched messages to Lieut. Colonels McMillan and McLean, commanding the 1st Glengarry and 1st Stormont regiments of militia to join him at that place with all the men they could assemble. As the flank companies of these regiments were in garrison at Prescott, McLean was obliged to call upon those militiamen living in the immediate vicinity, yet they responded with such alacrity that in two hours more than 250 men were collected under arms. The energetic efforts and powerful influence of their patriotic parish priest, the Reverend Alexander Macdonell, were of the greatest assistance on this occasion. At 11 p.m. the same evening, the whole force was embarked and a landing quietly effected two hours later some distance below St. Regis, whence a road led to the enemy's post. Colonel McLean was detached with one hundred men to occupy the Indian village and prevent any of its inhabitants from giving an alarm. The remainder accompanied by about thirty Indians, advanced through the woods against the enemy's post, preceded by an advanced guard at a distance of sixty paces. Two bridges had to be crossed when they approached the village. After the first of these was passed, a sentry challenged and then fired upon the advanced party when he was shot down. On reaching the second bridge another sentry fired upon them and was likewise shot. Several shots were then fired from windows of the nearest houses but it was soon ascertained that the entire garrison consisting of one company of New York volunteers, had shut themselves up in the unfinished blockhouse where they were surrounded and taken prisoners.

The official accounts of this affair written by Gray and McLean have disappeared but a letter from the former officer to Colonel Baynes, dated at Cornwall on November 23rd, 1812, has been preserved.

"I herewith transmit an official statement of the capture of the post at the Salmon River," he said, "I have entered fully into the particulars of this affair as it is highly creditable to the parties concerned and the greater part of them look for no other reward, it is therefore just and polite to give them their due in this respect. I have not in any respect stepped beyond the strict limits of truth in anything I have stated. I had, however, difficulties to encounter which I have not stated there and which are chiefly from too much zeal and from the habits that men not accustomed to discipline are in of volunteering their services upon all subjects. Half the Glengarry people *with your major at the head of them* were for making the attack by the river and so earnest were they upon the subject that not above half an hour before we embarked, they pressed the subject so closely that I was under the necessity of telling them that the expedition was taken upon my responsibility and that I would not alter the plan laid down. I saw already what would happen by following their advice. The only difference between us was that I saw it before, and they after, the capture of the place. They were all fully convinced of their error. Had we gone by the river we should have been shamefully beaten as they expected us

in that direction and had a picquet of 20 men on the river banks that might have killed the whole party. When I got them in motion and all properly arranged they went on very well and did their duty with the greatest cheerfulness. One of our greatest difficulties was to make them cease firing and keep to their ranks and be silent. I must in justice except the copy of your Regt. from this censure as they really conducted themselves remarkably well. I laid the strictest injunctions upon all the party to abstain from plunder and not to injure an individual except where resistance was made. This injunction was strictly complied with, and I believe no individual who remained quiet was injured excepting in one instance where a house was plundered by the Indians. This proved to be the house of the man who served me as guide and carried in the summons to the blockhouse. I assured him and several others of the village that we were not come to injure the persons or properties of individuals, we had come to retaliate upon them the injuries their Government had unjustly attempted to inflict upon us. I have promised to indemnify the man who was plundered provided I was satisfied of the justice of the statement he might make out. From his account of his losses, it cannot be much. I, however, thought it right to make the promise I did to discourage individual plunder. I have found it expedient to keep this matter over in silence as we may have some further use for our red brethren. Their conduct, *since they joined*, has been very good in general, which was not till about an hour before we embarked. It seems they drank every drop of their rum before they started. We found it necessary to make the utmost haste back, as we had information from a person friendly to us in the village that succours were expected every instant and this was so strongly corroborated from other sources that there was no reason to doubt it. I, therefore, urged our departure without a moment's delay. I found this the more necessary as our Glengarry volunteers had never had any training, having come to relieve the others the day before we arrived and there was no possibility of keeping them in the ranks. Many of them were so loaded with the enemy's arms and accoutrements that they could scarcely move. I, therefore, desired all the arms to be broken and the ammunition to be thrown into the river. The batteaux were sunk in the river and there we left them. The blockhouse was a mere shell, not having the roof on or the machecouli gallery formed. It would, however, have cost time and several lives to have taken it as it was musket proof and loopholed. Our Yankee friends, however, gave us possession on easier terms. One rascal was shot by one of the militia in the act of taking aim at some of us out at a window with one of the guns taken at St. Regis. The coincidence of the attack upon St. Regis and our retaliation being upon the same day of the month and at the same hour of the morning is curious, as it was of course not premeditated. The prisoners themselves acknowledge the justice of our attack and curse a major of theirs as the author of the attack upon St. Regis.

"We proceed upon our journey tomorrow, having given the prisoners

in charge of a guard from the Glengary militia who escort them to Coteau du Lake.”*

A few days later, Captain Gray made a report upon the subject of the improvement of the communication by land.

“I beg leave to submit for the information of His Excellency, the Commander of the Forces, the heads of such information as I have been able to procure relative to the completion of the road of communication between the two Provinces. The best line of direction for this road would appear to be that leading from the Long Sault (called Dundas Street or Pinoyer's road), to the River de l'Isle in Lower Canada, and by descending this river to Coteau du Lac and from thence (for the present) along the St. Lawrence to the Cedars as usual. This road would pass about six miles to the westward of Cornwall and nearly seven miles in rear of the post at the River Raisin. It is already a practicable road from the Long Sault to the River Baudet, but from the River Raisin to the River de l'Isle (a distance of nearly seven miles), the road will have to be cut through the woods. This line of direction shortens the distance between the Long Sault and Coteau du Lac five miles and is in every respect to be preferred to the margin of the Lake St. Francis, even if it were practicable to carry a road in that direction but that does not appear to be the case without incurring a very great expense on account of the swampy nature of the ground. The road now proposed possesses another advantage which should not be lost sight of which is the facility it will afford of carrying this line of direction to St. Anne's ferry which will shorten the distance between the Long Sault and Montreal fifteen or twenty miles. This object will soon be accomplished as a line of road nearly in the direction required is already made by the back concessions and will require but very little labor to complete it, so that in the first instance a secure line of road (as to the enemy) is obtained and the distance shortened five miles and an opportunity afforded of improving it at a future period. The means by which this object may be accomplished are also submitted for His Excellency's consideration. It appears that the person who was interested himself most about this object and who seems to possess the best information upon the subject is the priest. This gentleman I would appoint overseer and make him answerable for the execution of the work according to the plan laid down. The following gentlemen may constitute a Committee and be bound to complete the work for a given sum. It appears that the sum of four hundred pounds will be required to complete the work in question and that if that sum is granted for the purpose and authority to proceed with the work the following gentlemen will engage to have the road opened and rendered a practicable carriage way, summer and winter, viz.: Lieutenant Colonel McLean of Stormont and Lieutenant Colonel McMillan and Maedonell and Captains Allan Maedonell, Corbett and MacKenzie of Glengary. It appears that some opposition has been made

*Dominion Archives, C 729, pp. 22-5.

to this line of road by the proprietor of the seigniory through which it passed, but this difficulty, it is understood, will easily be got away if this object is taken up as a military measure.”*

Several troops of dragoons had been organized and were employed in the transmission of orders and intelligence on the line of communication. The following return of dragoon stations established from McPherson's, the first post in Upper Canada to Franklin's, the last station in the Johnstown District, has been preserved.

	At McPherson's.....	3 men	to McLughlen's.....	8 miles
	McLughlen's.....	3	“ to Cohoon's.....	8 “
	Cohoon's.....	2	“ to Barnhart's.....	8 “
	Barnhart's.....	4	“ to Gerald's.....	9 “
	Gerald's.....	2	“ to Moseley's.....	8 “
	Moseley's.....	2	“ to Castleman's.....	8 “
	Castleman's.....	2	“ to Kintner's.....	8 “
	Kintner's.....	2	“ to John Shaver's.....	8 “
	Shaver's.....	2	“ to Johnstown.....	8 “
	Johnstown.....	2	“ to Prescott.....	3 “
Hd. Qrs.	Prescott.....	12	“ to Thomas's.....	5 “
	Thomas's.....	4	“ to Brockville.....	7 “
	Brockville.....	4	“ to Elliott's.....	6 “
	Elliott's.....	4	“ to Malory's.....	7 1-2
	Malory's.....	2	“ to Trickie's.....	8 “
	Trickie's.....	2	“ to McNeal's.....	8 “
	McNeal's.....	2	“ to Gananoqui.....	7 1-2
	Gananoqui.....	4	“ to Franklin's.....	14 “
		58 men		129 miles

Early in 1813, Lieut. Colonel Bruyeres of the Royal Engineers was instructed to inspect the military posts in Upper Canada and report upon their condition. On the 14th of January he wrote from Prescott:

“The River Raisin is a position at present occupied by 100 men of the Glengarry militia accommodated in a very slight and miserable barracks. It is a very good post that should be strengthened by building a blockhouse on a projecting point near the church to contain 200 men: this would not only accommodate the troops but form a sufficient defence for this point which is much exposed to predatory excursions from the opposite shore owing to the ice being perfectly good across.

“Glengarry House, ten miles above the River Raisin, is a very strong position, and at present occupied by an officer and 32 men, whom I found busily employed barricading the windows and doors, it being only two miles with a sleigh road formed by the Indians from St. Regis. I recommend to strengthen and improve the present building, also to fortify and entrench this point in a temporary manner and to arm it with four iron

*Gray to Baynes, Nov. 29, 1812, Dominion Archives, C 688, B, pp. 161-3.

6 prs. and a traversing platform. This position is immediately opposite to Salmon River which renders it of importance to be occupied. There is at present one gunboat in the River Raisin for the service of Lake St. Francis, which is not sufficient. There should be two stationed at this point and two at Cornwall. Good boats for the purpose may be purchased on the spot. The navigation of the river is much exposed to interruption from Cornwall to Lake St. Francis. I am informed that St. Regis is a very good position and has very favorable ground that can be occupied. I did not consider it prudent to go over and examine it personally as it might have occasioned alarm and induced the enemy to take possession of this post before we are prepared to occupy it which must be done whenever it be deemed expedient so to do. The Indians in this village should be attended to. Part of them have already entered the American service but I am informed several of them would be very faithful to us if a proper officer of the Indian Department was stationed with them. By the best accounts I have been able to obtain from persons that have been in communication with the opposite shore, the enemy are not in any force at Salmon River but they are employed in cutting and forming a road from thence to St. Regis, it is supposed with a view to taking possession of that post. It is also said they are building some gunboats above the mills ready to be launched over the mill dam with the floods in the spring of the year.

“The town of Cornwall is occupied by 150 men of Colonel McLean’s Batta. of militia. They are quartered in the Court House and very miserably accommodated, which causes discontent and some have deserted in consequence. I have directed berths to be fitted up and to make the place as comfortable as the season required. This is not a good position for troops in point of defence as it does not possess any strong or commanding ground. At Ogdensburg, twelve miles above Cornwall, there is a strong position on which a blockhouse has lately been built by the militia and is occupied by a company. It is built in a very rough manner but I have directed them to improve it and to secure it with a small abattis.

“Iroquois Point, 18 miles above Osnaburg, is very strong ground situated on a very narrow channel of the river, not 200 yards from the opposite shore. This point should undoubtedly be occupied or the navigation may be totally interrupted there by the enemy.

“Prescott is twelve miles above Iroquois Point. It is at present in a very rough state but capable of being made into a very strong position. Having arrived only last night I have not yet formed the arrangements for what may be necessary to be done. I shall leave Lt. de Gaugreber here to survey this and the contiguous posts of Johnstown and the island of Point Levy. but this is the essential point to be first strengthened. The ice is now perfectly good to the opposite shore at Ogdensburg, only 11-4 miles distant. We can see every part of the place and the communication is quite practicable. Several deserters have lately come over and many more are expected as these assure us that the whole of the rifle company

commanded by a Captain Forsyth will also desert. They represent him as a very oppressive and tyrannical character, which has given great disgust. The force opposite is stated at about 230 men, generally disaffected, consisting of this rifle company and artillery. The militia are all dismissed, so that in point of numerical strength our force is superior to what is stationed there. It is said that troops are expected, but this is very uncertain. It would be very easy to accomplish immediately the destruction of this post, but I do not think it would be prudent to attempt it at present, for although we might destroy the post and bring off all the cannon (of which they have 13 pieces of different calibres) still it would rouse all the country to retaliate and attack this post with a very superior force who would all be induced to join in an expedition of this nature during the time the road is so perfectly open and passable. I should strongly recommend to remain quiet until the season is more advanced that they will lose this advantage and have less time to cross the river and when we may have a still more favorable opportunity to bring away two good armed schooners which are now fast in the ice and must in the event of a present attack be burnt. Lt. Colonel Pearson, whom I have confidentially consulted on this point, is strongly of this opinion. I intend further to have a conversation with Colonel Vincent and shall inform Your Excellency what his opinion may be on this subject. I shall leave this tomorrow and hope to reach Kingston on Saturday, from whence I shall write to you again. I omitted to mention that Indians are much required in vicinity of River Raisin, Glengarry House and at this post. They should be immediately sent, if possible. There are a few encamped in the vicinity of Cornwall from St. Regis and not much to be depended on. It would be a very great benefit and would very much tend to forward the public service if Lt. Colonel Pearson was to receive his orders from and be placed under the command of Gen. de Rottanburg as great delay is sometimes occasioned by going through Kingston and the upper part of the Province.”*

Lieut. de Gaugreben was directed to make a survey and construct immediately a strong blockhouse on a commanding spot in rear of the existing battery. These defensive works were strengthened from time to time until they were considered too formidable to be attacked by any force that the enemy could bring against them.

About the same time Lieut. Colonel Pearson had been requested by the Adjutant General to state his views for making the militia of the Eastern and Johnstown Districts “a more disposable and consequently a more efficient force.” He reported that, “From the experience which I have had of the state of this portion of the militia and the disposition of the major part of the inhabitants of those Districts, I have no hesitation in asserting that this force in its present state will never be brought to meet the expectations of the country. In the first place from the constant and numerous desertions of the militia, it is next to an impossibility ever

*Bruyeres to Provost, January 14, 1813, Dominion Archives, C 367, pp. 5-6.

to calculate on the force you can bring to action. This, I principally attribute to the incapacity of the generality of the officers who have been for the most part selected from family connection without reference to *capacity or respectability*. The advantage accruing from having young men of local *interest* placed at the head of companies has never been made a subject of *consideration*, on the contrary, men are placed in the responsible and important situations, who instead of *improving Government by their zeal and alacrity*, have in many instances irreparably injured the service by their imbecility and precept. Having conversed with most, and I believe I might add, all the respectable gentlemen of my District on the inefficient state of the militia, I find they universally concur in the idea of forming two battalions of 500 R. and F., each from the flankers of the District, and such others as might choose to extend their services from the Sedentary Militia. These corps I propose being commanded by militia Lt. Colonels with a captain of the line appointed as major, with two lieutenants from the regulars as captains to each of the Banns, the remaining officers to be militia and to be selected by the Lt. Colonels subject to the approval of the Inspecting Field Officer. Their pay and allowances as at present, but the men to be clothed at the expense of the Government, and to be embodied for the continuance of the American war. Should this plan meet with His Excellency's approval I shall feel happy in being the instrument of putting it into execution and of taking the superintendance of their formation under my immediate charge. As a more effectual mode of gaining the population of the District to the service of the State, I humbly submit the idea of granting a portion of land to each militia soldier whose services shall entitle him to the protection of Government, and I am decidedly of opinion that these measures are the only ones by which the force of this country can ever be brought to be of real utility to the Province."*

This proposal was acted upon at the next session of the provincial legislature and the formation of a battalion of Incorporated Militia was authorized.

On the morning of February 7, a body of American troops from Ogdensburg, commanded by Captain Forsyth, made a successful attack upon a small detachment of Leeds militia stationed at Brockville. To ensure the future safety of the line of communication it was then deemed necessary to expel the garrison of Ogdensburg and destroy their means of further offensive action. This enterprise was effectually accomplished on the 22nd February by Lieut. Colonel George Macdonell, who had succeeded Pearson in command at Prescott. According to the official prize list the total British force engaged on that occasion numbered 54 officers, 67 non-commissioned officers, and 540 rank and file, of whom 37 officers, 38 non-commissioned officers and 311 rank and file were militia from the Eastern and Johnstown Districts. Of these three officers five non-commissioned

*Pearson to Major-General Shaw, Prescott, January 19, 1813, Dominion Archives, Militia, U.C. 1813.

officers and forty-eight men belonged to the 1st Glengarry regiment; two officers, three non-commissioned officers and twenty-three men to the 2nd Glengarry; three officers, six non-commissioned officers and thirty-five men to the 1st Dundas; three officers, three non-commissioned officers and thirty men to the 2nd Dundas; and four officers, two non-commissioned officers and forty-one men to the 1st Stormont. The flank company of the 1st Glengarry under the command of Captain Duncan Macdonell of Greenfield, advancing in conjunction with a detachment of the King's Regiment, commanded by Captain Eustace, behaved particularly well and Lieutenant Donald McDermid and privates Daniel Cain, Farquhar McBain, Donald Macdonell, John Macdonell and Thomas Ross were wounded. Lieutenants Philip P. Empey and Alexander McLean and Private Thomas Servos of the 1st Stormont flank company were also wounded, the former officer so severely as to cause the amputation of a leg. In a letter addressed to Major General Sir Herbert Taylor, dated at Edinburgh on April 18, 1818, Lieut. Colonel Macdonell stated that:

"At that time the enemy completely commanded that then vital channel of supply by a strong force in the fort of Ogdensburg and its adjacent posts and it is now ascertained was on the first of March to have increased its strength in that quarter to five thousand men, which would at least have been indubitably fatal to the several fleets on the lower lakes.

"In an hour after I had assumed the command of my district at the imminent peril of being punished for disobedience of orders, I attacked and drove the enemy from the frontier of the St. Lawrence, destroying his forts, flotilla, depots, &c., and transferring eleven pieces of cannon and all his stores to His Majesty's magazines and by a political arrangement with the great loan contractor of the United States, who had immense property at my mercy, I effected a total abandonment by the enemy of the banks of the St. Lawrence for the two last campaigns, thus removing the seat of war to 500 miles from Montreal."*

In forwarding Forsyth's rather lame account of his discomfiture, Major General Dearborn, who at that time commanded the Ninth Military District of the United States, made the following significant comment: "His known zeal for a small partisan warfare has induced me to give him repeated cautions against such measures as would probably produce such retaliatory strokes as he would be unable to resist; but I fear my advice has not been fully attended to as could have been wished." No attempt was made to re-occupy Ogdensburg as a permanent military post during the remainder of the war and the most serious menace to the free navigation of the St. Lawrence by the British convoys of supplies was thus definitely removed.

The organization of the proposed force of Incorporated Militia did not proceed with as much ease as had been anticipated, mainly it would appear, owing to the difficulty of selecting proper officers.

*Macdonell to Taylor, April 18, 1818, Dominion Archives. Q 342, pp. 35-6.

"Due attention will be paid to the memorials of Lt. Colonel's McMillan and T. Fraser," General Steele wrote to the Military Secretary on May 6. "I have received from the brother of the latter a memorial similar to his and evidently written in an angry mood. Unfortunately I have not a battalion or a place of profit for every one who may be desirous of one or the other. Before the close of the last session of the provincial parliament, Lt. Colonel Sherwood, a leading member of the lower House offered to raise a corps, and after the adoption of the plan of the Incorporated Militia, it was not to be expected that I would advertise for a substitute for him, for it appears to me that it would have been both impolitic and unjust. It was thus that it happened that he was one of the first nominated to form a corps. In writing about the same time to the Commanding Officer at Prescott, I suggested that perhaps Lt. Col. McLean would be a proper person to raise a corps and might undertake it. At this time I understood that he was senior Lt. Colonel in his district from the circumstance of his having written an official report of the affair on Salmon River, which was forwarded to me through Br. Gen. Vincent. The commanding officer (I believe Lt. Colonel McDonnell) made the proposal to Lt. Colonel McLean and he accepted it. Some time afterwards, Lt. Colonel Fraser offered through Colonel Pearson (then at Kingston) to form a corps of Incorporated Militia. I assented to it if it appeared to the Officer Commanding that the population of the Eastern District was sufficiently numerous to furnish three battalions, on which not having heard anything since, I take it for granted that his opinion was unfavorable to a third battalion. Some of these gentlemen imagine that their claims and complaints are properly addressed to Sir George Prevost because they reside within the limits of a General Officer in Lower Canada."*

A monthly return of the troops stationed in the Eastern District, dated May 25, 1813, shows that at that time six officers, six sergeants and seventeen rank and file of militia dragoons were quartered at Prescott and eighty-three rank and file were on command at other posts. Of the Embodied Militia, sixteen officers, thirteen sergeants and two hundred and twenty-one rank and file fit for duty were also stationed there besides twenty sick. At Johnstown was stationed a weak battalion of Incorporated Militia composed of twenty-two officers, thirteen sergeants and two hundred and twenty-one rank and file fit for duty, ten sick, twenty men on command and three absent without leave. At Cornwall there were eight officers, nine sergeants and one hundred and two rank and file fit for duty; six men sick present, six sick absent, seventeen men absent with leave and two absent without leave. At Glengarry House was stationed a detachment of the same regiment composed of two officers, two sergeants and twenty seven rank and file. At the River Raisin there was a third detachment of this corps composed of nine officers, six sergeants and one hundred and twenty rank and file. This distribution appears to have remained practically unchanged for several months until it was considered necessary

*Dominion Archives, C 688, pp. 212-5.

to strengthen the garrison of Kingston by withdrawing troops from the less important posts below. During this term of service, Sergeant David Cameron and Privates John Clark, James Falkner, Roderick McKenzie and Alexander McPherson of the 1st Glengarry and Private Peter Eamer of the Stormont regiment were injured so severely by accidents while on duty as to qualify them for admission to the pension list.

About the 20th of October reliable information reached the British commanders in Upper Canada that a large force was being quietly assembled at Sackett's Harbor where many boats were being prepared for its transportation in execution of some offensive operation. Deserters reported that the intention was to effect a landing simultaneously about twelve miles above Kingston and at Gananoqui. The force to be thus employed was estimated by them thirteen thousand bayonets but this was liberally discounted as an obvious exaggeration. At the same time Prescott and other posts of minor importance upon the line of communication might become possible objects of attack. As a preliminary measure of precaution the officer in command at Kingston was directed to form a small corps of observation composed of the flank companies of the 49th regiment and four battalion companies of the Canadian Voltigeurs to replace a similar force under the command of Colonel Hercules Scott, which had lately been withdrawn from Cornwall to Coteau. Lieut. Colonel Pearson had resumed command of the Eastern District some time before with his headquarters at Prescott. When it became all but certain that the enemy intended to move down the St. Lawrence, Major J. B. Dennis of the 49th Regiment was specially detailed with some other officers to organize a *levee en masse* of the militia. Ogdensburg and Hamilton had been temporarily reoccupied by American regular troops moving in the direction of Montreal. About the 1st of November a brigade of seven boats loaded with goods belonging to merchants in Upper Canada were captured while ascending the river and carried into Hamilton. About midnight of November 8-9 another brigade of thirty-six bateaux, laden in this instance with valuable public stores from Montreal, and escorted by a company of the 1st Glengarry and a company of the Stormont militia commanded by Captain Alexander McMillan of the first named corps was attacked at the same place by a force from Hamilton which was probably overestimated at five hundred regulars. This attack was successfully repelled with some loss to the assailants.*

The correspondence of Major Dennis and the officers associated with him in the organization of the militia throw some light on their operations during the formidable invasion of the Eastern District by General Wilkinson's army.

At 10 o'clock on the morning of November 8, Dennis wrote from Cornwall to Scott at Coteau du Lac:

"I had the honor to receive your letter, dated 6 o'clock, 8th November

*Memorial of Alexander McMillan to Sir Richard Downes Jackson, dated June 8, 1842, Dominion Archives, C 711, p. 274.

and in consequence of your offering a supply of flour and ammunition, I have sent down the gunboat for such quantity as you can spare, as both are very scarce here, and perhaps you may be able to spare some flints.

"I have just received intelligence from Mr. Colquhoun that 4,000 of the enemy last night arrived at Salmon River. This, he informed, he received from an intelligent Indian of the Americans named De Lorne, who is in our employment. Tonight he is to ascertain it to a fact, for he told Colquhoun it was hearsay information from one of his own tribe. Should this be the case, Montreal is still their ulterior object unless they have an intention of crossing here and moving up the communication to join Wilkinson's army. We cannot judge their intentions except as circumstances arise out of the movement, nor can I be answerable to give any certain information. You shall receive it as I do and judge accordingly. You will give it just application. I have received no despatch from Colonel Pearson since the interruption of the communication, although I have made repeated efforts to communicate with him.*

"When arms, &c., arrive at your post I presume it would be advisable to send them up, as many of the militia, particularly the Glengarry, are most anxious to have them."

At 1 p.m. on November 10, he wrote again to Scott, dating his letter "11 miles from Cornwall":

"My advance at Uphold's bridge (which I have destroyed) is at this moment engaged with the advance of the enemy, cavalry and infantry. They have brought up two field pieces, which obliges my retiring by the wood parallel to the Glengarry Road. In consequence of their six pounders I have ordered off everything by wagons and shall endeavor to cover their retreat, taking an opportunity to annoy them while I can with my people who are raw and completely undisciplined, although they are reluctant of retiring and when acting with regulars will be an efficient and daring force.

"The enemy appear to have a cloud of riflemen and were in the act of gaining my right flank when I ordered the men to fall back. I write this in the field on a fence and the bearer is Dr. McCloud, who will describe what I have not time at present to do. We had a few wounded as had also the enemy."***

This skirmish is generally described as having occurred at Hooppole or Hoople's Creek. Privates Finlay Munro and Lachlan McDonald of the 1st Glengarry regiment were wounded and on the part of the Americans Major Benjamin Forsyth and one riflemen.

Colonel Macomb of the United States army described these operations in his evidence before a court martial in the following manner.

"I was detached on the morning of the 7th November to dislodge the enemy from Fort Matilda and other points with about 1200 men consisting of the 3rd regiment of artillery, Col. Randolph's corps (29th),

*C 681, pp. 24-5.

**Dominion Archives, C 681, pp. 22-3.

the riflemen and New York volunteers. I proceeded at 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the 7th. I had to halt about eight miles from the mill for the rear to come up and saw some men hovering in the skirts of the woods on the Canada side. As we moved towards our shore the militia, Indians and other troops came to the opposite bank and began firing and whooping. The other boats having arrived, I directed Col. Scott to lead the right column and Col. Randolph the left, and the riflemen and volunteers to land further up the river to prevent the escape of the enemy. About dark the several columns reached the shore under the fire of the enemy and immediately went forward. The enemy precipitately retired into the woods, one officer of the regular troops was taken before he could mount his horse. This officer informed me that their force consisted of about 200 militia and Indians and 100 regulars. Owing to my boats getting into a rapid I fell down the river to Point Matilda where the river is about 500 yards wide. Here we expected the enemy would make a stand but they ran off leaving eight or ten muskets in their barracks. The battery was not quite completed but the position was surrounded by narrow trenches for the militia to stand in and fire at our boats as they descended."

Major Lee of the 36th United States Infantry stated:

"At Hooppole Creek the bridge had been destroyed and a party of militia fired on our advance wounding Major Forsyth and one of his men. A party was detached under Col. Scott to pass up the creek to some fordable point and turn the right of the enemy. As soon as they saw this detachment crossing, they dispersed. We understood them to number eighty men. General Brown's march was obstructed for about three hours. This took place about twelve miles down the river from Crysler's about noon on the 10th. . . There was a blockhouse on the river which they evacuated."

Captain John Biddle of the 46th United States Infantry said:

"When the advance of Col. Macomb's detachment arrived within a mile of Matilda, they were fired on by fifty or sixty militia who fired five or six rounds and dispersed. We landed and burnt the works. . . We took Capt. Green of the Commissariat. It was dark when we entered the place and two of our platoons fired at each other. The works consisted of a semi-circular battery of large squared logs filled with earth."

Captain McPherson of the United States artillery gave this evidence.

"At Hooppole Creek 400 or 500 Scotch militia and Indians were concealed in the woods on the northeast of the creek where they had destroyed the bridge. I was ordered up with two pieces of artillery, having left two under Capt. Irvine at Williamsburg. When I arrived the riflemen were in confusion but rallied. The guns opened fire and the enemy retreated in less than an hour followed by the elite under Col. Macomb who had crossed above."

At 2 o'clock p.m. on November 11, Captain Cochrane of the Royal

Marines wrote from McMartin's Inn to Colonel Hercules Scott at Coteau du Lac:

"A person has this instant arrived from Cornwall, which place he left at 7 o'clock this morning, at which time part of the enemy's cavalry were entering the town, but in what force he was unable to ascertain. I arrived at this house yesterday evening at 4 o'clock and having learnt that it was Major Dennis's intention to retreat on this road I thought it better to remain here until his arrival which was about 12 o'clock last night. This house is situated on the right bank of the River Raisin, near the road to Coteau du Lac, 14 miles from the mouth of the river, 17 miles from Martin's Inn, and 16 miles from Cornwall, the road from which place enters the main road to Coteau du Lac, 7 miles from here. I have employed three persons of *respectability* to give me information; one placed on the road near Martin's, the second near Cornwall, and the third between the River Raisin and Jones's, so that the enemy cannot move without being observed by one of them. I have not had a report from any of them but may expect to hear very soon. Major Dennis with about 400 of the militia are here and will remain until the movements of the enemy are ascertained to a certainty. Should their cavalry, as is reported, attempt to pass this road, he will be able to annoy them very much. Forty-three boats with provisions, etc., from Cornwall left this today for Coteau du Lac. I have not yet been able to communicate with Colonel Morrison. Mr. Johnston brings the latest accounts from his division. A very heavy and constant firing has been heard the whole of this morning a short distance above Martin's. I shall proceed in that direction, but this at present is the most central place and best calculated to receive information. The militia suffered but little in the skirmish; but I am sorry to say their officers are very bad, particularly the two Colonels. The men are well disposed, and I am convinced had they officers, would behave well. Colonel Raubette left this early in the morning to endeavor to cross the lake."*

At 3 p.m. on the same day, Major Dennis wrote to Scott from the same place:

"Yesterday evening, about six o'clock, the division of militia under my command arrived here and took post. The enemy crossed Uphold's Creek shortly after they had cannonaded my advance with 6 pounders. Determining on falling back, from the conviction that there was no prospect of having it in my power to push them or effect the destruction of any of their boats which might be descending the rapids, I directed the return of the stores and provisions which I could collect at Cornwall and Martin's. (which I had previously held in a constant state of readiness) to proceed to Coteau du Lac. I fear much that some of the stores will diminish from the impossibility of my affording them any disciplined protection.

"I trust that it will appear to you that there was an expediency for my retreating in the circumstance of my force being so disorganized and undisciplined that it became preposterous for me to calculate on any

*Dominion Archives, C 681, pp. 31-4.

movement against the enemy, and that no advantage could be derived that might from the fire of a crowd without arrangement, and which from the general high spirits of the people themselves would bring on them an unavoidably severe destruction.

"Retaining what provisions I deemed necessary for our supply for some days, I directed more to be stored at the Rev. McDonald's, and the remaining portion of what I have been able to collect to be forwarded as expeditiously as possible to the Coteau. Our biscuit, I fear will fall short, as, owing to the wet weather, some part of our supply having been deposited on the Concession Road from Cornwall, and which from our having retired will be open too much to plunder, I say, I fear from these circumstances I must look to your promised supply, which you signified is sent around by the back road, and which, of course, I must fall in with.

"I have ordered the boats down that were in the River Raisin lest the enemy's gunboats should be detached in quest of them.

"We are waiting information which from my having detached three militia officers of some intelligence to different distances, and to endeavor to obtain it on different points, will soon be here, and I shall not fail to lay it before you when received, should it be of any importance.

"Since our arrival here, I am sorry to report that we have many desertions of the militia to their homes. The dreadful state of the roads and the severe rainy weather has tended to excite a disposition to this criminal conduct, and the inefficiency of many old but ignorant and indolent officers to keep them under control."*

At a quarter past three o'clock p.m. Donald McKay wrote to Captain Cochrane from "back of Cornwall":

"Mr. Knoughnetts and myself have arrived at Cornwall early this morning and have been down as far as Rolchoon and some distance above Cornwall and by all our endeavors cannot ascertain the strength of the enemy. They at this moment have made their appearance at Cornwall with their advance guard of horse but what number I cannot at this moment say. Their boats have not yet passed Cornwall but most probably will be on tonight. There is a continual heavy cannonading all this afternoon above, probably on their move but it seems further off than Long Sault. I hope I will be able to give you a more correct account of the enemy's situation early tomorrow. However, be assured that none of their boats have yet passed Cornwall."**

After this letter Captain wrote to Scott from McMartin's Inn at 6 p.m.

"I have this moment heard from the person employed by me on the road to Cornwall and enclose his letter. His information may be relied on. Since I wrote this morning I have heard various reports respecting the enemy's force near Cornwall, some say two thousand infantry and cavalry, others two hundred cavalry and 600 infantry. They, how-

*Dominion Archives, C 681, pp. 41-3.

**C 681 C, p. 82.

ever, all agree a great many of their boats are two miles from Cornwall, near the widow Bernard's house, and that General Brown with Col. Scott are there. It appears the enemy did not enter Cornwall until towards this morning, only a few of their cavalry patrolling within a quarter of a mile of it which made the person mentioned in my former letter suppose they intended taking possession. I have also heard from the person employed near Martin's but nothing of importance. I have most distinctly heard the cannonading which continued many hours incessantly. I hope by tomorrow to be able to give you more information. Capts. McKay and Colclough have arrived.

"I have directed all letters containing any information to be addressed to Major Dennis in case of my absence, therefore every necessary information will be forwarded."*

Before receiving this letter Colonel Scott had written that day to the Governor General from Coteau du Lac:

"I have the honor to inform you that some officers I sent off this morning to join the Glengarry Militia have this moment returned, not having been able to get up with them. They report that Shurtleff's Mills were seen in a blaze last night, and that the enemy are supposed to have been in Cornwall in the evening. Report says that the whole of the Glengarry militia are retiring by the upper road and may be expected by 2 o'clock tomorrow. I have received no information from Captain Cochrane and none later from Major Dennis than that dated one o'clock yesterday which I forwarded to Colonel Baynes this morning.

"After consulting the officers of the artillery and giving it every consideration in my power regarding the two twenty-four pounders on travelling carriages at the Cedars, I have determined to move them to this position for the following reasons: If the enemy are able to pass our position at the Coteau it is not to be supposed that two twenty-four pounders remaining at the Cedars will stop them passing. They will certainly land below Coteau du Lac and take those guns. The same reasons apply to the Beauharuois Channel after they have passed its danger. Two guns firing at a distance of 750 yards will not prevent their proceeding although it may do some damage to their boats. . . . Only two of the Glengarry militia were yesterday wounded. The enemy re-established the bridge last night eight miles above Cornwall (the name I forget) under the protection of several gunboats who kept up an incessant fire. The whole of the boats I ordered to the River Raisin have been ordered back, and returned this evening loaded with Government stores."**

On the following day, the whole of the American troops were re-embarked and landed on their own side of the river. A few days later they went into winter quarters at the French Mills on Salmon River. This course of action was undoubtedly in a great measure imposed upon them by the resolute conduct of Lieut.-Colonel Morrison in pursuing and harass-

*C 681 C, pp. 83-5.

**Dominion Archives, C 681, pp. 35-6.

ing them without relaxation, as it would appear, entirely on his own initiative. The following letter from the Governor General, which establishes this fact beyond question has never been published before.

“H. Q. Lachine, 11th Nov. 1813.

“Sir,

“I entirely approve of your having decided in persevering in following the enemy's army moving toward Lower Canada with the regulars and militia under your command accompanied by a division of gunboats commanded by Capt. Mulcaster, notwithstanding the order you received from Major General de Rottenburg to retire to Kingston. I place great reliance on your intelligence, activity and enterprise and that of the field officers under your immediate command and trust that my expectations will not be disappointed but that by an unwearied and daring system of attack upon the rear and flank of the American army, ably supported by the gunboats, you will be enabled so to cripple their expedition as to be the principal cause of its object being frustrated. Every possible precaution has been taken to arrest the enemy's progress at the Coteau du Lac and the Cedars should be able to approach either of these points. If you continue to press boldly the first of these positions cannot fail to prove to your little armada a field of glory. Conscious you duly appreciate the noble opportunity I have afforded you for the display of your talents in the honorable support of the fame of the British Army and the best interests of your country.

I am, &c.”

This letter was not delivered to Morrison until after he had fought the very creditable action at Chrysler's Farm and thus fully accomplished the services anticipated from his efforts.

On the way down the river a small party of troops was landed at the village of Hamilton and took possession of a considerable quantity of public stores together with the greater part of the merchandise which had been captured from Canadian merchants some time before. As Morrison possessed no means of bringing this property away he entered into an agreement with two of the principal inhabitants by which they agreed to deliver it on the opposite side of the river at the house of Jacob Wager, and, in the event of failure to do so, admitted that their village should be subject to be destroyed.”

No definite information exists as to the number of militia from the Eastern District actually engaged at the action of Chrysler's Farm. The official return of casualties shows that one private of militia artillery and one private of militia dragoons were wounded.

From this time forward many of the inhabitants on both sides of the river seem to have tacitly entered into a truce with each other and resumed commercial intercourse. This understanding was quietly encouraged by the British commissariat to enable them to secure supplies from the United States. On the 9th of December, Captain William Gilkison wrote from Prescott to Commissary General Robinson on this subject:

"I am sorry it has as yet been out of my power to assist in procuring provisions from the other side of the water and it is not likely any will be had from Ogdensburg unless orders are sent to Col. McBean, commanding at the post, to allow me to go over when occasion requires under a flag of truce that I may make my arrangements and also that I may be furnished with boats and men for the purpose of transporting across such articles of provisions as may be purchased there and to give the sellers part payment in such goods as are not prohibited by proclamation from being sent to the enemy.

"I was not aware that there would have been any necessity for the above application until this morning when I informed the commanding officer that I should tonight probably require a boat and men to go over the river for a small quantity of flour which I expected to be ready this evening and was astonished when told that this verbal order from General Drummond prevented him from allowing any communication with the enemy except by flag of truce and that but seldom.

"Should the intercourse with Ogdensburg be allowed, I presume a quantity of flour and pork may be had from there in course of the winter; at present the roads are in such a state that produce cannot be brought from the interior of the country."*

The success of the measures taken in consequence for obtaining provisions from the enemy's territory is described in a letter from T. G. Biddout, dated at Prescott on the 12th of January, 1814.

"Tomorrow I return to Cornwall to take charge of my new post. There are 1000 troops to be fed and my duty will be hard for the country is so excessively poor that our supplies are all drawn from the American side of the river. They drive droves of cattle from the interior under pretence of supplying the army at Salmon River and are so allowed to pass the guards and at night cross them over to our side. I shall also be under the necessity of getting most of my flour from their side."

On January 31st he wrote that Major Forsyth had been destroying all the boats up the river to prevent supplies from being passed over.

The inhabitants of Hamilton had failed to fulfill their agreement to deliver the stores taken at Hamilton and it was learned that they had been removed some distance inland and a sale had been ordered on government account. On the night of February 6 Captain Reuben Sherwood, an assistant-quartermaster-general, late of the Leeds militia, crossed the river at Point Iroquois at the head of a party composed of a subaltern and twenty men of the Royal Marines and ten men of the Incorporated Militia commanded by Captain John Kerr. He then proceeded to Madrid on the Grass River, fourteen miles from Hamilton, where these goods had been temporarily deposited for safe keeping and succeeded in discovering the greater part of them. Horses and sleighs were then impressed from the inhabitants and the party returned with them to Cornwall at two o'clock on the following afternoon without having met with any opposition.

*Dominion Archives, C 1222, pp. 10-11.

Sherwood was particularly well qualified for the conduct of such an enterprise from his intimate local knowledge of country as he was a surveyor by profession and often appeared on the American side of the river without any attempt at disguise or concealment. The American local historian, Hough, when describing this event remarked that "this bold incursion convinced the people that their lives and property were at the mercy of the British."

Writing on the 9th of February from Cornwall T. G. Ridout said:

"I have paid very large sums in specie for secret service, this being the fountain head of all correspondence with the enemy. Reuben Sherwood is very active in that way. He has been twice taken but made his escape. Two nights ago with thirty of the marines he crossed over to Hamilton, marched ten miles into the country and captured a great quantity of goods."

For this service Sherwood was thanked in a general order, dated the 13th of February.

About the middle of February reliable information was received that the American army was about to abandon its positions on the Salmon River, in consequence of the extreme difficulty experienced and the enormous expense incurred in supplying the troops allotted for their defence with provisions and the daily decrease of their army from sickness and desertion arising from the harassing and fatiguing duties to which their troops were exposed from the constant apprehension of an attack." Colonel Scott of the 103rd regiment, who was still in command at Coteau du Lac immediately crossed the river with his whole disposable force consisting of eighty-nine officers and 1219 men and marched towards the Salmon River where he arrived in time to harass their rear guard and capture about one hundred sleigh loads of provisions and stores. The harracks, block-houses, store buildings and boats were burnt or otherwise demolished. A considerable number of sick or wounded men were made prisoners. Writing from Cornwall on February 19 T. G. Ridout said: "We are in pursuit of the Yankees and will go to Plattsburg. I have a great deal of gold and silver wherewith the make purchases in Vermont. I have sixty sleighs loaded with provisions." Detachments of Scott's troops marched without opposition to Madrid, Malone, Hopkinton, Chateauguay Four Corners, and even within four miles of Plattsburg. He remained in the enemy's country for a week, marching at will in any direction and then returned to his post at Coteau, "having obtained from the inhabitants the assistance of the land transport he required together with provisions and accomodation for his men." A detachment of sixteen officers, nine non-commissioned officers and thirty-five men from the 1st Glengarry militia was employed in this expedition. The 2nd Glengarry furnished three officers, five non-commissioned officers and fifteen privates and the Stormont regiment sent a detachment of ten officers, seven non-commissioned officers and twenty-eight privates. Captains Joshua Y. Cozens

and John Macdonell of the latter regiment were seriously wounded by accident while returning on the 22nd February.

Detachments of these regiments were subsequently employed in garrison and escort duties upon the line of communication but were not engaged with the enemy as no further attempt was made to interrupt it. A letter addressed by the American Secretary of War to Major General at Plattsburg on the 10th of June, 1814, shows that this project was still being contemplated at that date.

"A number of armed galleys such as those employed on Lake Champlain will be immediately constructed at Sackett's Harbor," he wrote, "and while we have the ascendancy on Lake Ontario, these will be pushed into the St. Lawrence with orders to occupy the rapids of that river and thus interrupt the water communication between Montreal and Kingston. The better to effect this object, a post will be established on the south side of the St. Lawrence, strongly fortified and garrisoned by a complete force say 1500 men, sustained by the 1st Division of the right. The moment for beginning this establishment will be that which opens to us the command of Lake Ontario. An engineer will be employed by the War Department to select the site."

As the American naval force failed to secure the command of Lake Ontario for any considerable period, this project was never carried into effect.

From time to time considerable supplies of provisions were obtained from the American side of the river. T. G. Ridout related in a letter, dated at Cornwall June 19, 1814, a singular instance of the manner in which this service was conducted.

"I have contracted with a Yankee magistrate to furnish this post with fresh beef. A major came with him to make the agreement but as he was foreman to the Grand Jury at the Court in which the Government prosecutes the magistrates for high treason and smuggling, he turned his back and would not see the paper signed."

During 1814, Sergeant John Driver of the 2nd Glengarry, Private Robert MacNaughton of the 1st Glengarry and Private John McKachie 1st Dundas, were injured by accident so seriously as to be placed on the pension list. Captain Donald McKay of the 2nd Glengarry, Ensign Donald Macdonell of the Stormont regiment, Private William Campbell of the 1st Glengarry, and Privates Donald MacDougall, Hugh Macdonald, Angus McPhee and Angus McDonell, 2nd Glengarry, died of disease while on duty during the war.