

decision, Vincent moved forward his headquarters to St. Catharines and pushed on his outposts to the Four Mile Creek, with the intention of confining the enemy within their works as closely as possible.

Soon after his arrival at Kingston, the Governor General became convinced that Sir Roger Sheaffe had "absolutely lost the confidence of the inhabitants," and resolved to relieve him at once of the civil and military administration of the affairs of the Province. Major General Francis De Rottenburg, then commanding the Montreal District was selected to replace him. On the 29th of June, General De Rottenburg arrived at Vincent's headquarters and assumed command. He was a Swiss by birth and had received his early military training in the Dutch Army. In 1795, he entered the British service as Major in Hompesch's Hussars. He served in the suppression of the rebellion in Ireland in 1798, and in the expeditions against Surinam and Walcheren and at the Siege of Flushing. Sixty-four years of age, phlegmatic and unenterprising, his past career had not been distinguished and he was decidedly inferior to Vincent in vigour and capacity.

Almost his first official act was to direct the trial by court-marshal of two deserters taken in arms at Stoney Creek, who were found guilty and sentenced to death. Skirmishes at the outposts became a matter of daily and almost hourly occurrence. A letter from the American Camp, dated on the last day of June, gives this gloomy picture of their situation:

"Our Army, numbering about 2,000, is entrenched on the right of the Fort. Fort Niagara is garrisoned by about 400 men. Our pickets and foraging parties are constantly harassed by local militia and Indians. Every night there is a skirmish. They keep our troops under arms, which exhausts and wears them away very fast. Our forces has diminished very much. The enemy's fleet plagues our troops very much. It has been making demonstrations off Niagara for near two weeks. The weather is very wet. It rains at least one-half the time. On the first of July, the British outposts were extended to St. Davids, entirely cutting off all intercourse between the enemy's camp and the surrounding country and restricting their forages to the narrow space between the lines. The road along the western bank of the Four Mile Creek afforded a very good and easy means of communicating between these outposts, a decided advantage over the American piquets which were separated from each other by enclosures and woods. Of the latter there were six, usually numbered from the right, covering the front of their position from lake to river about a mile in advance of their entrenchments and nearly half a mile apart."

Yeo's squadron continued to blockade the mouth of the River for a week after its return, occasionally cruising eastward along the American shore of the Lake to intercept any small craft that might attempt to steal along the coast from the Genesee. During this time, four small vessels and several Durham boats loaded with provisions for the American Army were taken on their way to Fort Niagara. A captured sailor, one William Howells, was induced to act as Pilot and the boats of the Squadron under his guidance searched every bay and creek where a boat could lie hidden as far as the mouth of the Genesee, and much alarm was excited in the American commissariat lest they should ascend the river and destroy a magazine and the bridge on the main highway for supplies from the east, known as the Ridge Road, by which all communication with their base of