

of the enemy's fleet, consisting of a ship, brig, schooner, and one sloop, moored in line, abreast of their encampment, with a division of five gun-boats on each flank; at forty minutes past seven, after the officers commanding vessels and the flotilla had received their final instructions as to the plan of attack, we made sail in order of battle. Captain Downie had determined on laying his ship athwart-haue of the enemy's, directing Lieutenant M'Ghee, of the Chubb, to support me in the Linnet, in engaging the brig to the right, and Lieutenant Hicks, of the Finch, with the flotilla of gun-boats, to attack the schooner and sloop on the left of the enemy's line.

At eight the enemy's gun-boats and smaller vessels commenced a heavy and galling fire on our line; at ten minutes after eight, the *Confiance* having two anchors shot away from her larboard bow, and the wind baffling, was obliged to anchor (though not in the situation proposed) within two cables length of her adversary; the *Linnet* and *Chubb* soon afterwards took their allotted stations, something short of that distance, when the crews on both sides cheered, and commenced a spirited and close action; a short time, however, deprived me of the valuable services of Lieutenant M'Ghee, who, from having his cables, bowsprit, and main boom shot away, drifted within the enemy's line and was obliged to surrender.

From the light airs and smoothness of the water, the fire on each side proved very destructive from the commencement of the engagement, and with the exception of the brig, that of the enemy appeared united against the *Confiance*. After two hours severe conflict with our opponent, she cut her cable, ran down, and took shelter between the ship and schooner, which enabled us to direct our fire against the division of the enemy's gun-boats, and ship, which had so long annoyed us during our close engagement with the brig, without any return on our part; at this time the fire of the enemy's ship slackened considerably, having several of her guns dismantled, when she cut her cable and wiped her larboard broadside to bear on the *Confiance*, who, in vain, endeavoured to effect the same operation; at thirty-three minutes after ten, I was much distressed to observe the *Confiance* had struck her colours. The whole attention of the enemy's force then became directed towards the *Linnet*; the shattered and disabled state of the masts, sails, rigging, and yards, precluded the most distant hope of being able to effect an escape by cutting the cable, the result of doing so, must in a few minutes have been, her drifting alongside the enemy's vessels, close under our lee; but in the hope that the flotilla of gun-boats who had abandoned the object assigned them, would perceive our wants and come to our assistance, which would afford a reasonable prospect of being towed clear, I determined to resist the then destructive cannonading of the whole of the enemy's fleet, and at the same time dispatched Lieutenant H. Drew to ascertain the state of the *Confiance*. At forty-five minutes after ten, I was apprized of the irreparable loss she had sustained by the death of her brave commander, (whose merits it would be presumption in me to extol) as well as the great

slaughter which had taken place on board, and observing from the manœuvres of the flotilla, that I could enjoy no further expectation of relief, the situation of my gallant comrades who had so nobly fought, and even now fast falling by my side, demanded the surrender of His Majesty's brig entrusted to my command, to prevent a useless waste of valuable lives, and, at the request of the surviving officers and men, I gave the painful orders for the colours to be struck.

Lieutenant Hicks of the *Finch* had the mortification to strike on a reef of rocks, to the eastward of Crab Island, about the middle of the engagement, which prevented his rendering that assistance to the squadron, that night, from an officer of such ability, have been expected.

The misfortune which this day befel us by capture, will, Sir, I trust, apologize for the lengthy detail, which in justice to the sufferers, I have deemed necessary to give of the particulars which led to it; and when it is taken into consideration that the *Confiance* was sixteen days before on the stocks, with an unorganized crew, composed of several drafts of men who had recently arrived from different ships at Quebec, many of whom only joined the day before, and were totally unknown either to the officers or to each other, with the want of gun-locks, as well as other necessary appointments not to be procured in this country, I trust you will feel satisfied of the decided advantage the enemy possessed, exclusive of their great superiority in point of force, a comparative statement * of which I have the honour to annex. It now becomes the most pleasing part of my present duty to notice to you the determined skill and bravery of the officers and men in this unequal contest; but it grieves me to state, that the loss sustained in maintaining it has been so great; that of the enemy, I understand, amounts to something more than the same number.

The fine style in which Captain Downie conducted the squadron into action, amidst a tremendous fire, without returning a shot, until secured, reflects the greatest credit to his memory, for his judgment and coolness, as also on Lieutenants M'Ghee and Hicks for so strictly attending to his example and instructions; their own accounts of the capture of their respective vessels, as well as that of Lieutenant Robertson, who succeeded to the command of the *Confiance*, will, I feel assured, do ample justice to the merits of the officers and men serving under their immediate command; but I cannot omit noticing the individual conduct of Lieutenants Robertson, Creswick, and Hornby, and Mr. Bryden, master, for their particular exertion in endeavouring to bring the *Confiance's* starboard side to bear on the enemy, after most of their guns were dismantled on the other.

It is impossible for me to express to you my admiration of the officers and crew serving under my personal orders; their coolness and steadiness, the effect of which was proved by their irresistible fire directed towards the brig opposed to us, claims my warmest acknowledgments, but more particularly for preserving the same, so long after the whole strength of the enemy had been directed against the *Linnet* alone. My First Lieutenant,

* The account of the British force has not been transmitted.