
A Particular

A C C O U N T

OF THE

Battle of CULLODEN, &c.

A PARTICULAR

ACCOUNT

OF THE
Battle of CULLODEN,
April 16, 1746.

In a LETTER from an Officer of the
Highland Army, to his friend at
London.

In great Attempts, 'tis glorious ev'n to fall.



LONDON:

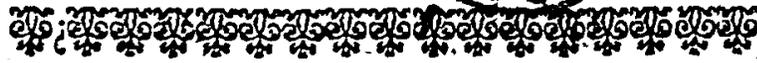
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ADVERTISEMENT

THE following Letter was wrote from the *Highlands of Scotland*, in Summer 1746, at the Request of a Friend, and never intended for the Publick; but no particular Account of the Battle of *Culloden* having as yet appeared, it is hoped this may not be unacceptable, as it tends to remove some Mistakes that have hitherto prevail'd, with respect to that Affair; and contains a Number of Facts which only cou'd have fallen within the Knowledge of one so nearly concern'd as the Author. The Hardships he at that Time underwent, and the Dangers he must have been exposed to, no doubt occasion'd its being written in a Hurry but the Publisher chuses rather it shou'd appear as it is, than take upon him to make any Alterations.





A Particular

ACCOUNT

OF THE

Battle of CULLODEN, &c.

SIR,



In answer to what you wrote about the *Highland Army* having not behav'd with their usual Bravery, or that some of their principal Officers had not done their Duty, which might be the Occasion of their late Misfortune; I must inform you, That by all I can learn, the Men shewed the utmost Eagerness to come to Action; nor did I hear of one Officer but behav'd well, so far as the Situation and Circumstances wou'd allow. The Truth seems to be, that they were overpower'd by a superior Force, and their Field of Battle was ill chose, which gave the Duke of *Cumberland* great Advantage, especially in his Cannon and Horse. Another Misfortune they lay under, was a total Want of Provisions, so that they were reduced to the Necessity, either of fighting an Army a Third stronger, starve or disperse.

I shall let you know what happen'd the Day of the Battle, and the preceding Day, so far as consists with my Knowledge.

On the 15th, all those of the *Highland Army*, who were assembled, were drawn up in Line of Battle upon a Moor, South from *Culloden*, facing Eastward; this was done very early in, the Morning, as it was known, that the Duke, of *Cumberland* had come to *Nairn* the Night before; but as he did not move in the Morning, it was judg'd, that he wou'd not march that Day, it being his Birth Day, and as his Troops had made no halt from the Time they left *Aberdeen*, it was reasonable to think he wou'd give them a Day's Rest.

About Ten o'Clock, Lord *George Murray* desired Brigadier *Stapleton* and Colonel *Ker*, to cross the Water of *Airn*, near where the Army was, drawn up (not far from the Place where the Battle was fought

next Day) to take a View of the hilly Ground on the South Side of the Water, which, to him, seem'd to be steep and uneven, consequently much more proper for *Highlanders*; for the Ground they were drawn up on, was a large plain Moor; and tho' in some Parts it was interspers'd with Moss, and deep Ground, yet, for the most Part, it was a fair Field, and good for Horse: After two or three Hours they return'd, and reported, that the Ground was rough and rugged, mossy and soft, so that no Horse could be of Use there; that the Ascent from the Water Side was steep, and there were but two or three Places in about three or four Miles where the Horse cou'd cross, the Banks being inaccessible; they cou'd not tell what kind of Ground was at a greater Distance; but the Country People inform'd them, that for a great Way it was much the same. Upon this Information, Lord *George Murray* propos'd, that the other Side of the Water shou'd be the Place for the Army to be drawn up in Line of Battle next Day; but this was not agreed to; it was said, that it look'd like shunning the Enemy, being a Mile farther than the Moor they were then upon, and at a greater Distance from *Inverness*, which it was resolv'd not to abandon, a great deal of Ammunition and Baggage being left there.

It was then propos'd to make a Night Attack upon the Duke of *Cumberland's* Army in their Camp, which, if it cou'd be done before One or Two o'Clock in the Morning, might (tho' a desperate Attempt) have a Chance of succeeding: Several of the Officers listen'd to this, as they knew the Duke of *Cumberland* was much superior in Number to the *Highlanders*. The Objections to it were, That a great many of the Army had not yet joined, particularly *Keppoch*, Master of *Lovat*, *Clunie*, *Glengyle*, the *McKenzies*, and many of *Glengarie's* Men, and other Regiments, which were all expected in two or three Days, or sooner; and if they shou'd fail in the Attempt, and be repulsed, it wou'd not be easy rallying the *Highlanders* in the Dark: That if the Duke of *Cumberland* was alarm'd by any of the Patrols (suppose no Spy shou'd give him Intelligence) he might have Time to put his Army in Order in their Camp, place his Cannon, charg'd with Cartouch Shot, as he had a Mind, and his Horse might be all in Readiness, so as to pursue, if the *Highlanders* were beat off; And, lastly, the Difficulty of making the Retreat, with perhaps many wounded Men, whom the *Highlanders* will never leave behind, if it's possible to bring them off. It's to be observ'd, that there was no

Intelligence of the Situation of the Enemy's Camp; add to this, how fatiguing it wou'd be to march backward and forward twenty Miles, and probably be obliged to fight next Day, even cou'd they make a safe Retreat, and not be attack'd before they join'd the rest of their Army.

On the other hand, the P— was very much bent for the Night Attack, and said he had Men enough to beat the Enemy, whom he believ'd were utterly dispirited, and wou'd never Hand a brisk and bold Attack. The Duke of *Perth*, and Lord *John Drummond* seem'd to relish it, and Lord *George Murray*, *Lochiel*, with others, were induc'd to make a fair Trial of what cou'd be done, though they were sensible of the Danger, shou'd it miscarry: They observ'd With much Concern, the Want of Provisions; the Men had only got that Day a Biscuit each, and some not that; and it was fear'd they wou'd be worse next Day, except they cou'd take Provisions from the Enemy; and they had Reason to believe, that if the Men were allow'd to disperse, to shift for some Meat, which many of them wou'd do, if the Army continu'd there all Night; that it wou'd be very difficult to assemble them in the Event of a sudden Alarm; which, considering the Nearness of the Enemy, might reasonably be suppos'd; and as they must have lain that Night upon, the Moors near *Culloden*, as they had done the Night before, they knew many of the Men wou'd disperse without Liberty to several Miles Distance for Provisions arid Quarters, and that it wou'd be far in the Day before they cou'd be assembled again; and as *Keppoch* came up and join'd the Army that Afternoon, they flatter'd themselves the Men they had might do, if they cou'd make the Attack by One or Two in the Morning; especially if they were, undiscovered, as they had great Hopes they might; for having examin'd the different Roads, of which they had perfect Intelligence from the *McIntoshes*, who liv'd in those very Parts: They found they cou'd keep upon a Moor the whole Way, so as to shun Houses, and be a considerable Way from the high Road that leads from *Inverness* to *Nairn*. They also consider'd, That in the Event of making the Attack, shou'd they be beat off, without the desir'd Success, they might before Day-break get back as far as *Culraick*, which was very strong Ground, and from thence by a Hill they cou'd retire the whole Way on the South Side of the Water of *Aim*, till they were join'd by their Friends, whom they expected, and by the Straglers; nor did they believe

the Enemy wou'd follow (suppose the *Highlanders* were beat back) till it was good Day-light, so as they cou'd see about them, and send out reconoitering Parties, to prevent their falling into Snares and Ambuscades: And before all this cou'd be done, the *Highland Army* might have reach'd *Culraick*, and the hilly Ground on the South Side of the said Water, where regular Troops cou'd not easily overtake them, and where their Cannon and Horse, in which was their greatest Superiority, wou'd have been of little Use.

That they found the P— was resolv'd to fight the Enemy, without waiting for the Succours that were soon expected, and without retiring to any stronger Ground, or endeavouring to draw the Duke of *Cumberland's Army* any farther from the Sea, from whence he got all his Provisions that were brought in Ships that sail'd along, as the Army march'd near the Shore.

For these Reasons, the above Gentlemen, and most, if not all others who were spoke to upon the Subject, seem'd to think the Night Attack might be attempted; but most of them thought they were in very bad Circumstances at any Rate; and no Attempt cou'd well be more desperate than their present Situation.

About Seven at Night, an Incident happen'd, that had like to have stopp'd the design'd Attempt, and thereupon many were design'd to have given it up as impracticable. The Thing was this, Numbers of the Men went off to all Sides, especially towards *Inverness*, and when the Officers who were sent on Horseback to bring them back, came up with them: They cou'd by no Persuasion be induc'd to return, giving for Reason, that they were starving, and said to the Officers, they might shoot them if they, pleas'd; but they would not go back till they got some Provisions.

But the P—— continued keen for the Attack, and positive to attempt, it, and said, that there was not a Moment to be lost: for as soon as the Men shou'd see the March begun, not one of them would flinch. It was near Eight at Night when they mov'd, which could not be sooner, else they might have been perceived at a considerable Distance, and the Enemy have seen them on their March. Lord *George Murray* was in the Van, Lord *John Drummond* in the Center, and the Duke of *Perth* towards the Rear, where was also the P——, having *Fitz-James's* Horse and others with him. Proper directions were given for small Parties to,

possess all the Roads, that Intelligence might not be carried to the Enemy. There were two Officers and about thirty Men of the *McIntoshes* in the Front, as Guides, and some of these Men were in the Center and Rear, and in other Parts, to prevent any of the Men from losing their Way in the Dark.

Before the Van had march'd a Mile, which they did as slow as cou'd well be, to give Time, to the Line to follow, there was Express after Express sent to stop them, the Rear being far behind: Upon this the Van marched still slower, but in a short Time after, there came Aid de Camps and other Officers, to stop them, or at least to make them go slower; and of these Messages I am sure there came near one hundred before the Front got so far as *Culraick*, which retarded them to such a Degree, that the Night was far spent; for from the Place the Army began the March to *Culraick*, was, but six Miles, and they had still four long Miles to Nairn.

It was now about One o'Clock in the Morning when Lord *John Drummond* came up to the Van, and said, That several were far behind, and if they did not stop, or go slower, he was afraid the Rear cou'd not get up. In a little Time after, the Duke of *Perth* came also to the Front, and assured them, that if there was not-a Halt, the Rear could not join. There was a Stop accordingly; *Lochiel* had been mostly in the Van all Night, and his Men were next to the *Athol* Men, who were in the Front. There were also several other Officers that came up, there bring a Defile a little Way behind, occasioned by a Wall at the Wood of *Culraick*, which also retarded the March of those who were behind.

The Officers talking of the different Places of making the Attacks, it was said by some, That it was better to make the Attempt with Four Thousand Men before, Day-break, as with double that Number after it was Light. Mr. *Sullivan* was also come up to the Front, and. it being now evident, by the Time the Army had taken to march little more than six Miles, it wou'd be impossible to make the other Part of the Road, which was about four Miles before it was clear Day-light, besides the Time that must be spent in making the Disposition for the Attack, as it could not be done by the Army in the Line, on their long March. Mr. *Sullivan* said, he had just then come from the P—, who was very desirous the Attack should be made: But, as Lord *George Murray* led the Van, and cou'd judge of the Time, he left it to, him, whether to do it or

not. There were several, Gentlemen having; join'd the *Athol* Men as Volunteers had walked all Night in the Front, and as the Duke of *Perth*, Lord *John Drummond*, and the other Officers, seem'd much diffculted what to resolve upon, Lord *George Murray* desired them to give their Opinion, for they were all deeply concerned in the Consequence. The young Gentlemen were all for marching on and eager to come to an Engagement, which Opinion shewed abundance of Courage; for they must have been in the first Ranks, had there been an Attack: but most of the Officers were of a different Opinion, as several of them express'd. *Lochiel* and his Brother said, That they had been as much for the Night Attack as any Body could be, and it was not their Fault that it was not done, but blamed those in the Rear who had marched so slow, and retarded the rest of the Army. Lord *George Murray* was of the same Way of thinking, and said, If they cou'd have made the Attack, it, was the best Chance they had, especially if they cou'd have surprized the Enemy; but to attack a Camp that were near double their Number in Day-light, when they cou'd be: prepared, to receive them, must be reckoned Madness by every Body.

At this very Time Mr. *John Hay*, came up, and said, that the Line was joined; being informed the Resolution was taken to return, he began to argue upon the, Point, but it was too late. This was the Gentleman the Army blamed for want of Provisions (he having the Super-intendency of those Things) but with what Justice I shall not take upon me to say. It was about Two o'Clock in the Morning (the Halt not being above a Quarter of an Hour) when they went back in two Columns, the Rear facing about, and the Van taking, -another Way at a little Distance. They had a View of the Fires in the Duke of *Cumberland's* Camp, and as they did not shun passing near Houses, as they had done in advancing, they marched very quick; Day-light began to Appear in about an Hour: They got to *Culloden* pretty early, so that the Men had three or four Hours Rest: They kill'd what Cattle and Sheep they could find; but few of them had Time to make any Thing ready, before the Alarm came of the Enemy being on their March, and approaching. The Horse of the P—'s Army had been all on so hard Duty for several Days and Nights before, that none of them were fit for patrolling at that Time. *Fitz-James's* Horse, and several others, had gone to *Inverness* to refresh; so that at first it was not known whether it

was an advanc'd Party, or the Duke of *Cumberland's* whole Army: However, the *Highlanders* got ready as quick as possible, and marched through the Parks of *Culloden* in Battalions, just as they happened to be lying, to the Moor on the South Side, facing Eastward, and about Half a Mile farther, back than where they had been drawn up the Day before.

Lord *George Murray* once more proposed to pass the Water of *Airn*, as being the strongest Ground, and much the fittest for *Highlanders*, and *Clunie*, who was expected every Moment, was to come on that Side; but this was not agreed to, for the same Reason that was given the Day before; namely, that it was like shunning the Enemy, and abandoning *Inverness*. Speaking to Mr. *Sullivan* he told him he was afraid the Enemy would have great Advantages in that plain Moor, both in their Horse and Cannon: But he answered, That, he was sure Horse cou'd be of no Use there, because there were several Bogs and Morasses; but, I am sorry to say it, the Event prov'd otherwise. Mr. *Sullivan* drew, up the Army in Line of Battle, being both Adjutant and Quarter-master-General, the Right near to some Enclosures near, the Water of *Airn*, and the Left towards the Parks of *Culloden*. I can't justly tell what Order they were drawn up in, there had been some Disputes a Day or two before about the Rank, but no Body who had any Regard for the Common Cause insisted upon such Things on that Occasion.

Those who had gone off the Night before, and early that Morning to *Inverness* and other Parts, had now joined, and the Master of *Lovat* was come up with a considerable Recruit of his Men; it was observed, that upon the Right, there were Park-Walls under which so many of the Enemy could draw up and Flank the *Highlanders*. Lord *George Murray*, who commanded that Wing, was very desirous to have advanced and thrown them down; but as this would have broke the Line, and the Enemy forming their Line of Battle very near that Place, it was judged by those about him, too dangerous to attempt.

Both Armies being formed, the Cannonading began on both Sides, after which there were some Alterations made in the Dispositions of the two Armies, by bringing Troops from the Second Line to the First, as both endeavoured to out-flank one another. The *Highlanders* were much galled by the Enemy's Cannon, and were growing so impatient, that they called out for the Attack; upon which it was

judged proper to attack, and Orders were given accordingly, The Right Wing advanced first, as the whole Line did much at the same Time, and gave the Onset with their usual Intrepidity. The Left Wing did not go in Sword in Hand, imagining they should be Flanked by a Regiment of Foot, and some Horse which the Enemy brought up about that Time from their Second Line or Corps de Reserve. When the Right Wing were within Pistol-shot of the Enemy, they received a most terrible Fire, not only in Front, but also in Flank, from a side Battery supported by the *Campbels*, &c. notwithstanding which, they went in Sword in Hand, after giving their Fire close to the Enemy, and tho' they were received by them with their Spontoons and Bayonets, the Two Regiments of Foot that were upon the Enemy's Left, would have, been entirely cut to Pieces, had they not been immediately supported by two other Regiments from their Second Line. As it was; these two Regiments (being *Barrell's* and *Monro's*) had above Two Hundred Men killed and wounded. Two Regiments of Dragoons coming up on the same Side, entirely broke that Wing of the *Highlanders*; and though three Battalions of the Right of the Second Line were brought up and gave their Fire very well, yet the Ground and every thing else, was so favourable to the Enemy, that nothing could be done but a total Rout ensued.

I am positively inform'd, that the whole *Highland* Army did not consist of above Five Thousand fighting Men, and the Duke of *Cumberland's* must have been at least above Eight Thousand. In the one Army there were not above One Hundred and Fifty Horse, of which one Half was of the Regiment of *Fitz-James's*; in the other Army they had Eleven or Twelve Hundred. When a Misfortune happens, People are apt to throw the Blame upon Persons and Causes, which frequently are the Effects of Malice or Ignorance, without knowing the real Springs or Motives.

Some are of Opinion, that the Night Attack could have been made; but I am convinced of the contrary, for the following Reasons:

The *Highland* Army, when they halted near *Culraick*, were not above Four Thousand Men; they had four Miles to march, Part of them were to have made a considerable Circumference, so that it wou'd have been Sun-rise before they cou'd have made the Attack. The Ground about *Nairn* where the Enemy were encamped, was a hard dry Soil, and plain Moors

for three Miles round, except where the Sea intervened, the nearest strong and uneven Ground being the Wood of *Culraick*. Let it be supposed that the *Highlanders* had made an Attack in broad Day-light upon the Enemy, double their Number in their Camp, who were well refreshed by a Day, and two Night's Rest, with Plenty of all kinds of Provisions, with their Cannon pointed as they thought proper, and their Horse drawn up to their Wish, in a fine Plain, What must the Consequence have been? What must be said of Officers, who led Men on in such Circumstance and in such Situation?

Would it not have been certain Death and Destruction to all who had made the Attack? Would it not have been said (and justly too) why go on in so desperate an Attempt, seeing it cou'd not be done by Surprise and undiscovered, as was projected? Why not try the Chance of a fair Battle, by retiring and being joined by the rest of the Army, as well those who had withdrawn the Night before, as a great many others who were hourly expected, where also they would have Cannon, and might have the Choice of the Field of Battle; by this Means there was a fair Chance, by the other there was none.

As to the above-mention'd Facts, you may rely upon them. I saw the Duke of *Perth*, the Duke of *Athol*, Lord *John Drummond*, Lord *George Murray*, Lord *Ogilvie*, Colonel *Stewart* of *Ardshiell*, Colonel *John Roy Stewart*, Lord *Nairn*, and several others at *Ruthven* in *Badenoch*, on the *Friday* after the Battle; they all agreed on the same Things.

There is one Thing I must take Notice of, That from the Beginning of the whole Affair, till that Time, there had never been the least Dispute or Misunderstanding among any of the Officers. Some found Fault, that the Night March was undertaken, feeling there was not a Certainty of reaching *Nairn* in Time to make the Attack before Day-light; as also that they had too few Men. In Answer to this, there was no Body doubted when the March was begun, but that there would be abundance of Time; their greatest Precaution was to take Care not to be discovered. The *Highlanders* had often made very quick Marches in the Night time. The *French* Piquets, I believe, were in the Rear, and were not so clever in Marching. The Moor they went thro' was more plashy than was expected, and they were obliged to make some Turns to shun Houses, and there were two or three Defiles that took up a good deal of Time to pass. The Guides, tho' they knew the

ground very well, yet were not Judges what Time it would take to march those ten Miles, as they were called, tho' by Reason of the indirect Road, must have been much more.

Notwithstanding all this, I am persuaded that the *Clans* (had they not been retarded by repeated Orders and Messages) would have reached *Nairn* by Two o'Clock in the Morning. As for their Numbers, tho' not half that of the Enemy, they might very probably have succeeded, for had they made the Attack undiscovered, so as to have got in Sword in Hand, they had undoubtedly cut their Enemies to pieces. Nothing indeed is more uncertain than the Events of War; Night Attacks are most of all subject to Disappointments. This March and Countermarch, was too sure, as Things turn'd out, a great Disadvantage; it fatigued the Men much, and the Time might have been much better employed; a Council of War might have been obtain'd, in which, doubtless, a Resolution wou'd have been taken to chuse a more advantagious Field of Battle, and perhaps have postponed fighting, till the Succours that were coming up with the utmost Expedition, should join. Councils of War were seldom held, and were out of Request from the Time the Army marched into *England*. I remember only two that were held there, one at *Brampton*, in regard of besieging *Carlisle*, or going to attack General *Wade*; the other was at *Carlisle*, where it was resolved to march forward. What happen'd at *Derby* was accidental: Most of the Officers being at the P——'s Quarters, and taking into their Consideration on their Situation, they were all unanimous, in advising the P—— to retreat, rather than, come to an Engagement, without almost a Certainty of Success, in a Country that stood waiting to declare for the Conquerors; in which Case a Defeat to his Army there must have proved fatal.

I think there was but one Council of War called after they returned to *Scotland*, and that was near *Creiff* the Day after the retreat from *Stirling*, where there was some Difference in Opinion; some at first being for the Army going all one Road, but it was at last agreed to march for *Inverness*, in two separate Bodies, the one by the *Highland Road*, and the other by the Coast. The Day of the Battle of *Falkirk*, the Officers were call'd together in the Field, where the Army was drawn up betwixt *Bannockburn* and *Torwood*, and they all agreed to march strait to the Enemy. As to the Retreat from *Stirling*, it was advised

by many of the principal Officers, particularly the *Clans*. They drew up their Reasons, and signed them at *Falkirk*, three Days before the Retreat was made; the Chief of which was, a vast Number of their Men had gone home, after the Battle, and were not return'd, and that as the Siege of *Stirling Castle* was not advancing, they did not think it adviseable to fight in such Circumstances.

This Letter has been much longer than I intended: But before I conclude, I must acquaint you with a Proposal that was made six Weeks before the Battle of *Culloden*: Some Officers propos'd sending up Meal to several Places in the *Highlands*, and in particular towards *Badenoch*, that in the Event of the Duke of *Cumberland's* marching to *Inverness*, before the Army was gathered, they might retreat for a few Days, till they could assemble; or, if a Misfortune should happen by a Defeat, there might be some Provisions in those Parts; but this was reckoned a timorous Advice, and was rejected as such; tho' I have Reason to think it was the Opinion of almost all the *Highland* Officers, who were not for precipitateing any Thing. There is no doubt to be made, but that the *Highlanders* could have avoided fighting, till they had found their Advantage by so doing: They could have made a Summer's Campaign, without running the Risque of any Misfortune; they could have marched thro' the Hills to Places in *Bamfshire*, *Aberdeenshire*, the *Mearns*, *Perthshire*, *Lochaber*, and *Argylshire*, by Ways that Regular Troops could not have followed; and if they had ventur'd among the Mountains, it must have been attended with great Danger and Difficulty; their Convoys might have been cut off, and Opportunities would have offered to attack them with almost a Certainty of Success: And tho' the *Highlanders* had neither Money nor Magazines, they would not have starv'd in that Season of the Year, so long as there were Sheep and Cattle; they could also have seperated themselves in two or three different Bodies, got Meal for some Days Provision, met again at a Place appointed, and might have fallen upon the Enemy where they least expected: They cou'd have marched in three Days, what would have taken regular Troops five; nay, had those taken the high Roads (as often they would have been obliged, upon Account of their Carriages) it would have taken them ten or twelve Days; in short, they might have been so harrass'd and fatigu'd, that they must have been in the greatest Distress and Difficulties, and at length

probably been destroy'd, at least much might have been expected by gaining of Time, perhaps the *Highlanders* might have been enabled to have made an offensive, instead of a defensive War. This was the Opinion of many of the Officers who considered the Consequences of losing a Battle: They knew well, that few *Highlanders* would join heartily against them so long as they continu'd entire; but would upon a Defeat.

One great Objection to this, was, That the *Irish* Officers (who were as brave Men, and zealous in the Cause as any cou'd be) and some of the Low Country; Gentlemen, could not well endure the Fatigue of a *Highland* Campaign; and as to the Common Soldiers, that came from *France*, there were not above 400 of them remaining; they and their Officers (even tho' a Battle had been lost) had only to surrender, and were Prisoners of War. It was very different with the *Scots*, whose Safety depended upon their not venturing a Battle, without great Probability of Success: But any Proposition to postpone Fighting, was ill received, and was call'd *Discouraging the Army*. I have nothing more to add, but that I am,

SIR,

Lochaber,
16 May, 1746.

Your's, &c.

