

*Donald Campbell of Airds, Highland officer with the Government
army*

Campbell of Airds was one of the many Scots and Highlanders who remained loyal to the Government. He was from the west coast, near Appin where he was employed by the Duke of Argyll. He was a captain with the Argyll Militia and watched the battle closely as he guarded the baggage train. He wrote this letter shortly after the battle.

Inverness, 22 April 1746

Dear Sir

I wrote you a short account of the glorious battle of Culloden the night after the action but as it was in a hurry I fancy it will not be disagreeable if do it now more particularly, and according to the best observations I could make.

The 15th HRH halted the army at Nairn, sent for the commanding officers, acquainting them that he expected to engage the rebels next day and to prepare the officers and men....

The 16th the army decamped early, officers and soldiers in the highest spirits. Col Campbell with his men and a party of the light horse were sent before to examine the roads and woods in the way. The army march'd in four columns when within two miles of Culloden, the advanced party halted till the army came up and drew up in battle order....

The orders given [myself] ... was to divide [the] men on the right and left wings of the army and so to march on till the engagement begun, when they were to retire to guard the baggage...

The rebels had three batteries at a cottage above the parks of Culloden from which they begun to play [i.e. fire] on our line about one in the afternoon. Their complement was soon returned by our cannon from the right center and left. Theirs did little or no execution but ours a great deal and disordered them so that as they could not stand it, they endeavoured to break in on our line, sword in hands and advanced very resolutely but were received with such a closs and hot fire from our small arms that they soon gave ground and fled out right which by the by was the pleasantest sight I ever beheld. In the pursuit the dragoons and light horses made terrible slaughter of them.

The cannonading continued about nine minutes and the whole was over in less than an hour.

General Bland and the cavalry .. on the left... was stopt by two high stone park dykes that lay in his way.... Ballimore and his command were ordered to break down them dykes and make way for the horse - which they executed, and taking advantage of the second dyke fired closs on a strong party of the rebels that then formed the right....and pulling them to disorder, General Bland advanced with the cavalry and cut numbers of them to pieces.

It was in passing a slap [gap] in the second dyke that Ballimore was shot dead, and that Achnaber received his wounds of which he dyed next day.

The right of our army got little to do, the greatest pressure lighted on Barrell's regiment who were once disordered but being supported by Munroe's and Sempill's soon formed, closed their ranks and did great

execution. The Scots Fusiliers who behaved gloriously made the first break amongst the enemy without the loss of one man. They had the Duke's particular thanks saying it was owing to them the victory was so cheap.

There never was a more compleat victory obtained. We got all the enemies cannon, ammunition and a good part of their baggage. His RH acted not only the part of a general but aid de camp, was all the time in the lines giving orders with the same coolness as a judge sitting on his bench.

The troops all behaved remarkably well and . . . not a single man turn'd his back or come off from his line, even the few wounded men came off in spirits. Our loss was surprisingly small. The only officer of distinction killed was Lord Robert Kerr and about 40 private men.

Of the enemy at least 1500 fell in the field and chase, some say upwards of 2000 and that of their best men, mostly clans and numbers of gentlemen. There are many prisoners but as more are still bringing in, the exact number cannot be ascertained.

The night of the 15th preceding the battle the rebels proposed to surprise and attack our camp at Nairn and came within less than three miles of us. One of their columns commanded by Lord George Murray missed their way so that the Pretender who commanded the other could have no account of him and made him cry out with extream anxiety that he was betrayed by Lord George. This incident so disconcerted their schemes that they found it must be an hour of day light or they could reach our camp, which made them turn tail and return to their former cantonment [?] about Culloden parks.

The fatigue of this night's march, joined to empty stomachs and light purses with the Duke's coming up sooner than probably they expected gave us considerable advantage.

Some of the pretenders domesticks are come in, no certain account what is become of himself. It is said, tho I cannot say it with certainty that the rebels are gathering [by] Fort Augustus and Laggan ... if it is so, I fancy we shall soon beat up their quarters tho the precise day is not yet named.