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# Dunbar 1650

Cromwell's most famous victory



Stuart Reid • Illustrated by Graham Turner

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Cromwell's most famous victory



First published in Great Britain in 2004 by Osprey Publishing, Elms Court,  
Chapel Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 9LP, United Kingdom.  
Email: [info@ospreypublishing.com](mailto:info@ospreypublishing.com)

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 1 84176 774 3

Editor: Lee Johnson  
Design: The Black Spot  
Index by David Worthington  
Maps by The Map Studio  
3D bird's-eye views by John Plumer  
Battlescene artwork by Graham Turner  
Originated by Grasmere Digital Imaging, Leeds, UK  
Printed in China through World Print Ltd.

04 05 06 07 08 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For a catalogue of all books published by Osprey Military  
and Aviation please contact:

Osprey Direct UK, P.O. Box 140, Wellingborough,  
Northants, NN8 2FA, UK  
E-mail: [info@ospreydirect.co.uk](mailto:info@ospreydirect.co.uk)

Osprey Direct USA, c/o MBI Publishing, P.O. Box 1,  
729 Prospect Ave, Osceola, WI 54020, USA  
E-mail: [info@ospreydirectusa.com](mailto:info@ospreydirectusa.com)

[www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com)
















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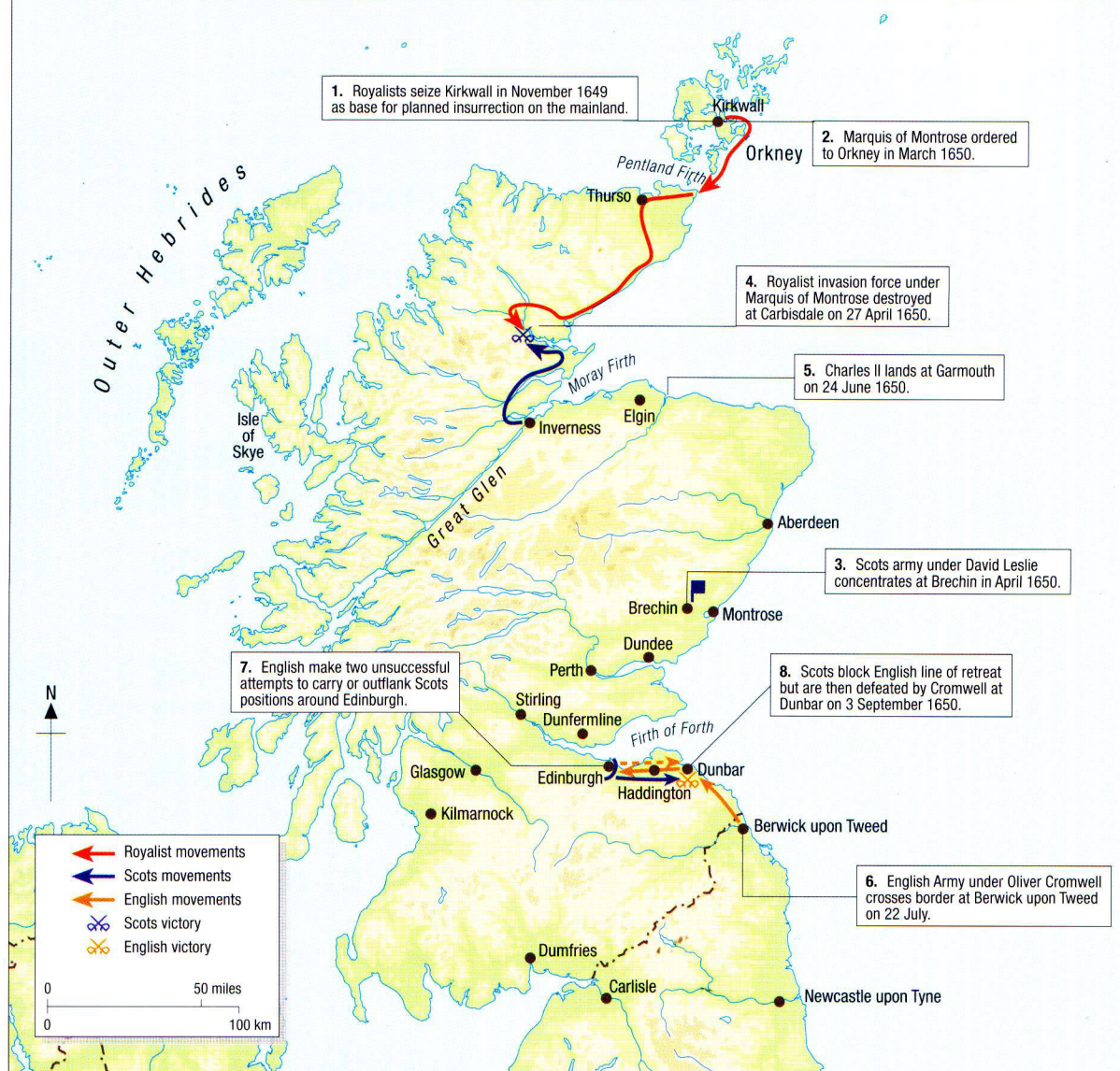
## KEY TO MILITARY SYMBOLS

 ARMY GROUP	 ARMY	 CORPS	 DIVISION	 BRIGADE
 REGIMENT	 BATTALION	 COMPANY	 INFANTRY	 CAVALRY
 ARTILLERY	 ARMOUR	 MOTORIZED	 AIRBORNE	 SPECIAL FORCES

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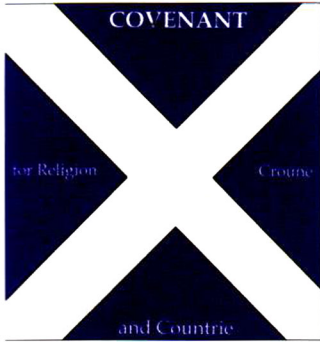
# SCOTLAND, 1650



**RIGHT** Charles II, depicted here after his eventual English restoration, initially hoped that Montrose's invasion would place him on the Scottish throne, but after Carbisdale he was willing to agree to a succession of humiliating conditions.



# INTRODUCTION



No fewer than 135 Scots infantry colours and cavalry cornets taken at Dunbar were recorded by a gentleman named Payne (or Fitzpayne) Fisher in a volume now held in the British Museum. The archaic inscription on this unidentified blue and white one (BM Harl.1460/5) may indicate that it belonged to Campbell of Lawer's Regiment, but it could just as easily have been an old colour issued out to a newly raised company.



The last Anglo-Scots conflict, which began in the summer of 1650, was a classic case of a war that should never have happened, and is a clear illustration of how a combination of misunderstanding, bad timing and the sheer momentum of events can lead to a disastrous falling out between former allies.

The particular misunderstanding that led to the battle of Dunbar lay in the curious inability of Oliver Cromwell and the English government to appreciate that the Scots' view of kingship was fundamentally different from their own. In all conscience this difference should have been obvious enough to anyone since the Great Civil War had actually begun in 1638 with the Scots' repudiation of King Charles I's authority. To the Scots their King was merely first amongst equals; an hereditary representative of his people who might legitimately be restrained or even deposed by them if he was considered to have misused the powers entrusted to him. The Scots' crown, even from medieval times, was a constitutional monarchy presiding over a parliament made up of three 'Estates'; representing the nobility, the Royal Burghs, and the Kirk or church. There were clear limitations on the Royal power and no room at all for the absolutist doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings' so disastrously espoused by the late King.

Consequently, when Charles I embarked on a radical programme of secular and religious reforms in both his kingdoms in the 1630s it was the Scots who first obstructed it, initially by banding themselves together in a National Covenant and then taking up arms against him, to all intents and purposes constituting themselves as a republic in all but name. In two short wars in 1639 and 1640 not only were the King's attempts to reassert his authority in Scotland decisively defeated but as a result his authority in his other kingdoms was also fatally weakened. Rebellion in Ireland was followed by civil war in England in 1642 and having thus precipitated the wider crisis the Scots then intervened in the war two years later to bring about an eventual Parliamentary victory.

However, although most Scots had rallied behind the Covenant at the outset, a serious political split developed after the war between, on the one hand, those fanatical adherents of the Presbyterian church who wanted in effect to establish a theocracy, and on the other the nobility and a good many of the burgesses who held out for the former balance between the 'Thrie Estates'. Initially the traditionalists prevailed but then made the fatal mistake of entering into an 'Engagement' with the King, and agreeing to intervene on his behalf in support of a Royalist uprising, in return for the establishment of Presbyterianism in England. This intervention, in what became known as the Second Civil War, ended disastrously at the battle of Preston in 1648. In the aftermath of the debacle Scotland was itself briefly plunged into civil war. The hard-line adherents of the so-called 'Kirk' party seized Edinburgh and Stirling in a coup celebrated as the 'Whiggamore

Raid' – so-called from the characteristic cry of the southwestern drovers who made up the bulk of the insurgents. Nothing daunted the 'Engagers' fought back, dramatically recapturing Stirling within the week, only to agree a ceasefire when faced with the threat of intervention by a newly-triumphant Oliver Cromwell. Then in the political manoeuvring that followed, English backing ensured that it was the 'Kirk' party that remained in control of the country.

In the circumstances, while it was only to be expected that the Scots' proclamation of Charles II in succession to his executed father should be coolly received in Westminster, there was no real reason why Scotland and England should find themselves at war less than two years later. That proclamation had largely been a matter of form and a subsequent Royalist uprising that aimed to give it some substance was very swiftly suppressed by the authorities.

Indeed had the matter ended with David Leslie's defeat of Mackenzie of Pluscardine's insurgents at Balvenie on 8 May 1649, all might still have been well and the misunderstanding eventually smoothed over. The catalyst for the events that followed was of course the would-be King Charles II and his general, James Graham, Marquis of Montrose.

# CHRONOLOGY

## 1638

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**28 February** Scots begin signing the National Covenant and so precipitate the chain of events that leads to the Great Civil War.

## 1643

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**25 September** Scots sign the Solemn League and Covenant, allying themselves to the English Parliamentarians. In the following year their intervention will be decisive.

## 1644

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**2 July** The Scots and their English allies defeat the Royalists at Marston Moor, the biggest battle of the Civil War.

**29 August** Scots Royalist uprising led by Marquis of Montrose begins in Scotland, but despite winning a number of military victories the rebels fail to gain control of the country.

## 1645

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**13 September** Scots Royalists decisively defeated by David Leslie at Philiphaugh.

## 1646

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**5 May** King Charles I surrenders to the Scots Army outside Newark-on-Trent.

## 1647

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**26 December** The Scots government effectively changes sides, signing an 'Engagement' with Charles I committing it to support him in a new war in return for the establishment of Presbyterianism in England.

## 1648

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**23 March** The Second Civil War begins in England.

**4 May** Belated mobilisation of Scots Army begins.

**8 July** Scots Army led by Duke of Hamilton invades England.

**17 August** Hamilton decisively defeated by Oliver Cromwell at Preston.

**25 August** Hamilton surrenders at Uttoxeter.

**5 September** Civil War breaks out in Scotland as 'Kirk' Party seizes Edinburgh and Stirling.

**12 September** Pro-Royalist 'Engagers' recapture Stirling.

**27 September** In the face of threatened English intervention both sides agree to disband by 10 October, leaving 'Kirk' party in power.

## 1649

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**30 January** King Charles I is executed in London and his son subsequently proclaimed as King Charles II in Edinburgh.

**22 February** Royalist rebels led by Thomas Mackenzie of Pluscardine briefly seize Inverness.



- 8 May** David Leslie defeats Pluscardine at Balvenie in Speyside, and the rising collapses.
- 5 September** Advance elements of a Royalist expeditionary force sail from Rotterdam for the Orkney Islands.

## 1650

- 23 March** Marquis of Montrose lands at Kirkwall with the main body of the Royalist army.
- 12 April** The Royalist invasion force led by the Marquis of Montrose lands near John O'Groats.
- 25 April** David Leslie assembles the government army at Brechin.
- 27 April** Montrose is decisively defeated by Archibald Strachan at Carbisdale, Sutherland.
- 21 May** James Graham, Marquis of Montrose is executed in Edinburgh.
- 12 June** Mobilisation of the English Army begins.
- 21 June** Committee for purging the Scots Army is established.
- 23 June** King Charles II signs the Covenant and is finally allowed to land in Scotland the next day.
- 25 June** Mobilisation of the Scots Army begins.
- 26 June** Oliver Cromwell is appointed Lord General of the English Army.
- 28 June** Work is ordered to begin on constructing fortifications at Edinburgh and Leith.
- 19 July** English Army concentrates at Berwick.
- 22 July** English Army led by Oliver Cromwell crosses the border into Scotland.
- 26 July** Cromwell occupies Dunbar.
- 29 July** The English are halted by the fortified line linking Edinburgh and Leith.
- 30 July** Cromwell falls back to Musselburgh and is attacked there by Scots cavalry, before falling back further to Dunbar on 5 August.
- 13 August** The English advance to the Braid Hills south of Edinburgh.
- 15 August** Cromwell falls back to Musselburgh.
- 18 August** The English capture a Scots outpost at Colinton.
- 24 August** The English capture a Scots outpost at Redhall.
- 27 August** Cromwell still halted by the Scots Army deployed in a defensive position at Corstorphine.
- 28 August** A flanking move by Cromwell is halted at Gogar. The English Army once again retreats to Musselburgh.
- 31 August** The English evacuate Musselburgh and retreat to Haddington. They are attacked there by Scots.
- 1 September** The English retreat to Dunbar. A Scots brigade occupies the defile at Cockburnspath, blocking the road to England. The remainder of the Scots Army moves on to Doon Hill south of Dunbar.
- 2 September** David Leslie replaces the Earl of Leven as commander in chief of the Scots Army and orders it to move down off Doon Hill to confront the English.
- 3 September** Battle of Dunbar.



Unidentified white on blue colour (BM Harl.1460/34). Both the red crescent and the number 2 are in agreement in designating the second captain's company. Oddly enough five other white on blue colours bearing the same curious arrangement of lettering were captured, but none had either cadence marks or numerals.

# THE CARBISDALE CAMPAIGN, APRIL 1650





# FROM ALLIES TO ENEMIES

**T**he Scots, or at least some of them, wanted a King for the sake of the legitimacy that any head of state confers upon a nation and therefore entered into negotiations with Charles Stuart to discuss his possible return from exile in Holland. These negotiations were by no means a formality. Far from inviting him back upon any terms the Scots very prudently took the opportunity to demand certain assurances from him; rendering explicit those constitutional limitations on the crown's authority that might hitherto have only been implied. Equally naturally Charles was just as anxious to avoid those limitations and sought to improve his bargaining position through military pressure.

In September 1649, a pathetically small force of Scots and English Royalists, backed up with a rather more impressive collection of Danish and German mercenaries, sailed for Orkney and after a long and uncomfortable voyage seized the town of Kirkwall. This was a dramatic enough move in itself, even allowing for the total lack of any opposition to the invaders when they landed. Unfortunately, while Kirkwall was sufficiently inaccessible to afford a certain security for the Royalists, it soon proved to be far too remote from Edinburgh to influence decision-making there, far less in Holland. As negotiations stalled Charles was therefore forced to raise the stakes. The renowned James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, himself an exile since 1646, was ordered to Orkney in March 1650 and then in April shipped his motley army across to the Scottish mainland.

## CARBISDALE

Over the winter, some far from enthusiastic Orcadian levies augmented the original cadre of exiles and mercenaries at Kirkwall, and Montrose now hoped to be joined by the local clans on the mainland as well. However, if he was expecting to repeat his previous successes in 1644 and 1645 by raising the country for the King he had very badly miscalculated, for his reputation preceded him.

Those earlier campaigns in Scotland, while punctuated by a number of impressive tactical victories (and the odd ignominious debacle), had ultimately proved fruitless. They had also been accompanied by terrible atrocities, which dramatically eroded support for the Royalist cause. Even those who had actually followed him reckoned that service with Montrose meant little more than hard marches and considerable suffering. As revealed in a rhyme recorded by Thomas Pennant, contemporary opinion held that enlisting under Montrose offered a soldier little but sickness and woe. By contrast service with his rival, Lord Lewis Gordon, at least offered plenty of opportunities for plundering:



The Marquis of Argyle did not play a particularly prominent role in the campaign, but his son, Lord Lorne, was colonel of the King's Lifeguard. The trophies of the battle did however include a horse cornet bearing his arms and an infantry colour.



*If ye with Montrose gae, ye'll get sick and wae enough  
If ye with Lord Lewis gae, ye'll get rob an reave enough*

Moreover, when Montrose crossed the Pentland Firth he was actually landing in an area of Scotland where support for the King was not merely problematic but conspicuously lacking. He hoped, and perhaps had even been encouraged to believe, that on landing he would be joined by the Munros, Mackays and other northern clans. Unfortunately, to the very end he remained blithely oblivious to the fact that these were some of the self same levies that he and his Irish mercenaries had defeated and mercilessly harried at Auldearn five years before. Now he was back with more foreign mercenaries, and quite paradoxically his second in command was the same Sir John Hurry who had led the northern clans to their doom at Auldearn; little wonder that recruits were hard to find.

Hurry, now in the King's service once more, landed near Duncansby Head with the Royalist advance guard on 9 April and, marching swiftly southwards, by-passed Dunbeath Castle to seize the strategically important Ord of Caithness – a narrow pass between the mountains and the sea. It was a neat beginning to the campaign, but it was also the last time the Royalists would move fast and decisively. Montrose himself got the rest of his army across the Pentland Firth by 12 April and established a temporary headquarters at Thurso. A number of the local gentry dutifully rallied to the King's standard but they brought few of their people with them and so, leaving 200 of his men as a garrison, Montrose marched south to join Hurry a few days later. On the way, however, he paused for three days to capture Dunbeath Castle – and then detached another 100 men to hold it. Conversely, he failed to take Dunrobin and so swung inland to Lairg, crossed the hills and came down to the Kyle of Sutherland at Carbisdale on the evening of 25 April. And there he halted, digging in for what to all appearances would be a lengthy stay.

Why he did so is not at first sight entirely clear, for thus far he had met with little active resistance. The local commander, the Earl of Sutherland, had contented himself with establishing a scattering of garrisons, such as Dunrobin, and prudently retired southwards without offering any real impediment to the Royalist advance. Yet, by comparison with his earlier campaigns, Montrose's progress was positively glacial. Moreover, in another break with the past, he was leaving garrisons along a line of communications all the way back to his original base in Kirkwall.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion, therefore, that Montrose halted at Carbisdale not merely because he hoped to gather reinforcements before pushing further south but primarily because he was trying to achieve the political legitimacy that his earlier rootless campaigns had lacked. Instead of rampaging around the countryside, he hoped the very fact of his holding territory in the name of the crown would give King Charles the leverage he required without once again alienating potential supporters by visiting them with fire and sword.

In short, having achieved his initial objective of establishing himself on the mainland, Montrose was now playing it safe. The site of his camp was well chosen; a long flat stretch of ground between the deep Kyle of Sutherland and the heights of Creag a' Choineachan. At the southern end of the camp, the ground narrowed into a defile before opening out again into the broad strath of Carbisdale. The pass was easily held,



Scots musketeer after Koler, wearing very full-cut tartan trews and characteristic broad blue bonnet, and armed with a matchlock musket and a dirk in place of the more customary sword. Men such as these certainly fought at Carbisdale and may also have fought with Innes' Brigade at Dunbar.



8. The Danish and German mercenaries make a fighting retreat into the birch wood, beating off an attack by Strachan's Troop, before surrendering when menaced by the Highlanders.

7. Crossing the River Carron, the Highland levies come over the hills and attack the Royalists' open right flank.

3. Strachan orders the Highland levies under Balnagowan and Lemaire to make a wide flanking move to the left.

 Highland levies  
**BALNAGOWAN & LEMLAIR**

2. In the broom immediately in front of the burn are the 36 musketeers detached from Campbell of Lawers' Regiment to screen the main force.

1. LtCol Strachan deploys the main body of his force, including four troops of cavalry and the picked Highlanders, concealed amongst the broom along the Culrain Burn.

  
**STRACHAN**

#### ROYALIST FORCES

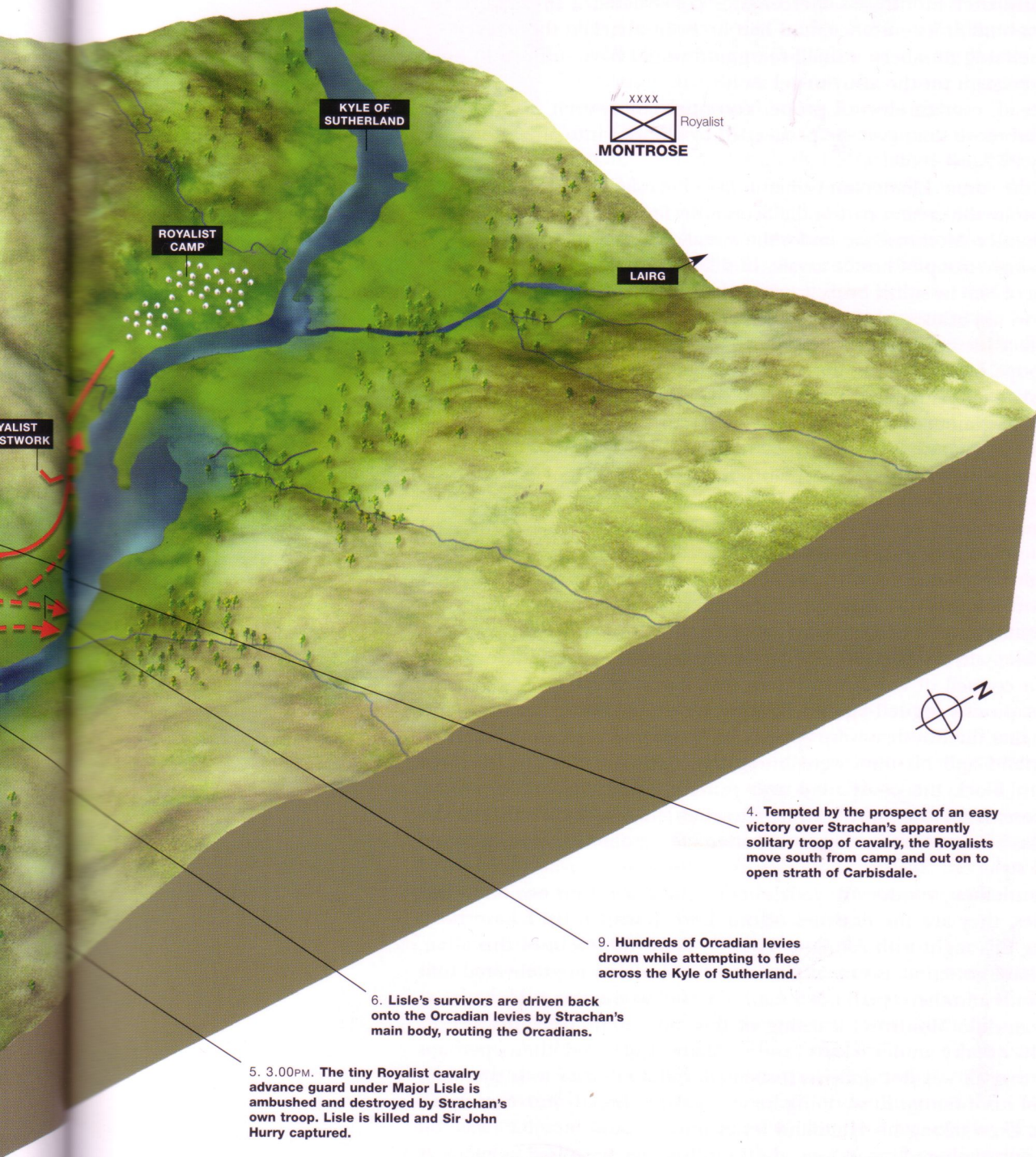
- A Major Lisle's Horse - 40 men
- B Danish Mercenaries - 200 men
- C Orcadian Levies - two units, 500 men each

#### GOVERNMENT FORCES

- 1 Lieutenant-Colonel Strachan's Troop
- 2 36 Musketeers detached from Campbell of Lawers' Regiment - Quartermaster Shaw
- 3 Strachan's Main Body - four troops of horse in two squadrons
- 4 80 picked men from the Highland levies - Major William Ross
- 5 400 local Highland levies - David Ross of Balnagowan and John Munro of Lemaire

 Advance guard  
**LISLE**





## THE AMBUSH AT CARBISDALE

27 April 1650, viewed from the southeast. Having established the Royalist camp on the shore of the Kyle of Sutherland, the Marquis of Montrose is lured into an ambush by Lieutenant-Colonel Archibald Strachan.



especially after Montrose's mercenaries constructed a breastwork on top of a bluff at its entrance, and had he been attacked there, even by overwhelming numbers, a small rearguard would have sufficed to hold it long enough for the army to get away.

Instead, ever careless of proper reconnaissance, even now when it mattered more than ever, he proceeded to blunder into an ambush on Sunday 27 April 1650.

At the time Lieutenant-General David Leslie was still trying to concentrate the greater part of the Scots army far to the south at Brechin, near Dundee. Montrose was under the mistaken impression that there was only a single troop of hostile cavalry in the area. Seeing it dangled as bait in front of him he swiftly broke camp and went after it, hoping that an easy victory would bring in the recruits he needed.

In fact his opponent, Lieutenant-Colonel Archibald Strachan, had *five* troops of veteran cavalry totalling about 230 men, together with 36 musketeers under a Quartermaster Shaw detached from Campbell of Lawers' Regiment at Inverness.

Ironically enough, as Strachan marched north from Inverness to rendezvous with Sutherland at Tain, this modest cadre of regulars was unexpectedly joined by around 400 local levies under David Ross of Balnagowan and John Munro of Lemlair – some of the very same clansmen whom Montrose had been expecting to pick up. While there were certainly some doubts as to Lemlair's reliability since he had been 'out' with Pluscardine the year before, there is no evidence to support the popular story that he was actually marching to join Montrose when he accidentally fell in with Strachan and prudently switched sides.

At a council of war held in Tain that morning some of Strachan's officers piously argued against fighting on the sabbath, but hearing a report that the Royalists were approaching they put aside their scruples. Sutherland and his men were hurriedly shipped across the Dornoch Firth to block the coast road and prevent reinforcements reaching Montrose from the north, while Strachan marched directly on the Royalists by way of Wester Fearn and after a few psalms exhorted his men in fine style:

'Gentlemen, yonder are your enemies, and they are not only your enemies, they are the enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ; I have been dealing this night with Almighty God, to know the event of this affair, and I have gotten it: as sure as God is in heaven, they are delivered into our hands and there shall not a man of us fall to the ground.'

Meanwhile Montrose, learning of this movement, sent forward his own 40 cavalry under Hurry and a Major Lisle and then, perhaps suspecting all was not quite as it seemed, followed after with the main body of his infantry. In so doing he was playing directly into Strachan's hands. Even taking his Highland levies into account Strachan was still badly outnumbered, as in total the Royalists may have had as many as 1,200 infantry, albeit most of them were raw Orcadian levies. However, he had no intention of trying to force the pass and so by dangling a single troop of horse as bait, he easily drew the Royalists out into the open.

To his front, hidden in the thick patches of broom lining the Culrain Burn, he placed the remainder of his cavalry, screened no doubt by the handful of musketeers borrowed from Campbell of Lawers' Regiment.



**James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, engraving after Gerard van Honthorst. During the 1640s Montrose had led a spectacular but unsuccessful Royalist rebellion. His second attempt in 1650 not only failed but also triggered the English invasion and ultimately the battle of Dunbar.**

Apart from 80 picked men under Major William Ross, the Highland levies under Ross of Balnagowan were ordered to swing to the left after leaving Wester Fearn. Crossing the River Carron they came over the hills towards what would be the Royalist right.

The result, when his troopers sprang their ambush at about 3.00pm, was all that Strachan could have hoped for. The little band of Royalist cavalry was ridden down at once. Lisle was killed, Hurry was captured and the survivors driven straight back on the Orcadian levies who, without further ado, threw down their arms and ran for their lives. They may well have been hastened on their way by the appearance of Balnagowan's and Lemlair's men on the hillside above their wide open right flank. At any rate, Montrose's apparent numerical superiority simply evaporated in the first few moments of the battle. According to tradition, a great many of the Orcadians then drowned trying to flee across the Kyle. Only the German and Danish mercenaries put up any sort of a fight, retiring into a convenient birch wood until finding themselves menaced by Strachan's Highland levies, at which point they promptly surrendered to his regulars! In all 11 Royalist officers were killed and a further 30 captured, along with 28 NCOs, drums and

trumpets, and 386 common soldiers. Strachan himself was bruised by a musket ball that struck him on his sword belt, but only lost one man in the fight.

Montrose managed to flee from the battlefield. He was soon captured, however, hauled off to Edinburgh and summarily executed there on 21 May. With his bargaining position fatally undermined Charles sailed from Holland, duly signed the Covenant on 23 June and next day came ashore at Speymouth on the Scots government's terms.

Having thus decisively defeated the Royalist threat in the north, the Scots could have been forgiven for thinking the crisis was over. In fact the worst was yet to come, for the English government at Westminster had jumped to completely the wrong conclusion.

The defeat, capture and execution of Montrose was, of course, welcome news in itself. The fact that the Scots had notwithstanding patched up a settlement with Charles and invited, or at least allowed, him to come home, was held by the English to be an ominous sign of weakness. Failing to appreciate the very real difference between Scots and English notions of kingship, the arrival of Charles was perceived as a direct threat. No matter that the return of the King was to be hedged about by so many restraints as to reduce him to a mere figurehead, the very fact of his being allowed into the country at all confirmed English suspicions that the Scots still acknowledged his authority. The English reasoned it therefore followed that, sooner or later, the Scots would invade England once again and seek to place their King on the throne at Westminster.

Charles himself undoubtedly hoped as much, but the reality was that the immediate Royalist threat had indeed vanished in Montrose's debacle. The Scots army, although pitifully small, was firmly behind the

government. It is more than a little ironic that it was only after the army was expanded to counter the English invasion that Royalist sympathies emerged – within the ranks of the new levies. Even then, as late as August, after the campaign was well under way, some influential officers such as Archibald Strachan assured Cromwell that their hatred towards the King was more implacable than towards the English.

Nevertheless on 12 June, a bare three weeks after the Marquis of Montrose was hanged, Thomas, Lord Fairfax, and Oliver Cromwell (who had just returned from campaigning in Ireland) were appointed to command the English army as General and Lieutenant-General respectively. Initially Fairfax assumed that this was a precautionary move; that he was only to command in case of another Scots invasion. A week later, however, Parliament declared its intention of invading Scotland first. This was too much for Fairfax: considering the rush to war to be far too precipitate, he had sufficient scruple to refuse the charge. Oliver Cromwell did not and on 26 June was created Lord General in his stead.

In the meantime, despite the starkly obvious signs of English preparations for war – which included buying up horses in markets on both sides of the border – the Scots government, far from acting aggressively, remained desperately anxious to avoid any moves that could be construed as provocative. In June 1650 the Scots army that was so exercising the English government still numbered something in the region of only 2,500 horse and 3,000 foot. This small force was barely adequate for ordinary internal security purposes; the necessity for which had been clearly demonstrated by both Pluscardine's uprising and Montrose's subsequent invasion. It was not until 25 June, nearly two weeks after the English concentration began, that a full mobilisation of the army was ordered – not to invade England but to defend Scotland.

Less than a month later on 22 July, Oliver Cromwell's army crossed the border at Berwick and the war began.



**Typical 17th-century blue bonnets, excavated from various sites in the north of Scotland.**

# OPPOSING COMMANDERS

## THE SCOTS

**C**ommand of the Scots army during the campaign was hampered considerably, not only by political interference, but also by the fact that it effectively had two generals. The titular commander was **General Alexander Leslie, 1st Earl of Leven** (1580?–1661). The illegitimate son of an Aberdeenshire laird, George Leslie of Balquhain, and a ‘wench in Rannoch’, Leven had served first in the Dutch and then in the Swedish armies for upwards of 30 years before returning to Scotland in 1638. He led the Scots army to victory over the English in 1640, defeating Viscount Conway at Newburn and easily capturing the fortress city of Newcastle upon Tyne for the first time in more than 600 years of cross-border conflict. In 1644 he again easily outmanoeuvred the Cavaliers on Tyneside and then, ignoring a strong Royalist garrison still sitting athwart his supply lines at Newcastle, he pursued them to their eventual destruction at Marston Moor outside York. A thoroughly professional soldier he has a fair claim to being the ablest strategist of the Civil War period and ‘Such was the wisdom and authority of that old, little, crooked souldier,’ wrote Robert Baillie, ‘that all, with an incredible submission, from the beginning to the end, give over themselves to be guided by him, as if he had been Great Solymán.’



The defeat and execution of Montrose meant that Charles II had no alternative but to accept the Scots' terms if he was to return from exile. This well-known print from 1651 depicts 'Jockie'; the best surviving image of a Scots soldier in the characteristic broad bonnet, loose cassock and breeches.



He was therefore the natural choice for command during the crisis that so suddenly developed in the summer of 1650. Unfortunately, although he would again demonstrate his strategic mastery over Cromwell, he was by now showing his age and tactically at least he was falling behind the times. Whilst wisdom and experience were reflected in near faultless strategic planning, Leven, like many elderly commanders had long since lost the physical stamina and mental agility necessary to cope with rapidly changing situations on the battlefield. Some of his subordinates were even beginning to complain that he was 'a silly old thing' and he himself, pleading age and infirmity, tried to resign on 23 June. The government however refused to accept his resignation in the crisis and reassured him that since he had a very able deputy in Lieutenant-General David Leslie, the younger man would be able to handle the more arduous aspects of the job. Consequently from the very outset of the campaign, day-to-day control of the army and its operations was very largely delegated to David Leslie. In effect, although named and deferred to as Lord General, Leven appears to have acted as a military adviser to his nominal deputy. Consequently it is in fact very difficult to establish just who was actually in charge at any given moment, and while the overall strategic direction of the campaign may be attributed to Leven, tactical command at Dunbar certainly rested with Leslie.

**Lieutenant-General David Leslie** (d.1682) was, notwithstanding a very widespread assumption, neither Leven's nephew nor even a near kinsman. He was instead a younger son of Sir Patrick Leslie of Pitcairnie in Fife and Lady Jean Stewart, a daughter of the Earl of Orkney. Like Leven he had served his time in the Swedish army, but otherwise they had very little in common, for David Leslie's career displays no evidence of any exceptional talent – quite the reverse. Leven retired from the Swedish service as a field marshal while Leslie left it as a colonel of horse, and a wounded one at that. A cavalryman by training, he certainly performed well as a brigade commander at Marston Moor in 1644 and indeed made a very significant contribution to the Allied victory there. Commanding what still amounted to little more than a reinforced brigade group, he also decisively defeated the Marquis of Montrose at Philiphaugh in the following year, but otherwise his career was far from distinguished. At Dunbar and again at Worcester in 1651 he would prove to be sadly out of his depth in command of a large army.

Leslie largely owed his advancement not to his rather mediocre military prowess, but to his relatively high social standing and above all to his political connections with the Kirk party. This in itself would prove to be a considerable handicap during the campaign, for whilst he was actually sensible enough of his own limitations to defer to Leven's judgement on most matters, he was also far too deeply obligated to his patrons to display much independence in the face of their political interference with military operations.

Immediate tactical command of the Scots infantry at Dunbar should have been exercised by **Lieutenant-General Sir James Lumsden** (1598?–1660), a professional soldier who had completed an obligatory, and apparently quite distinguished, stint in the Swedish Army and later fought well at Marston Moor. He nevertheless appears to have been



The belted plaids usually associated with Highlanders were little worn in the far north of Scotland in the 17th century. Many clansmen instead wore the tartan coats depicted by Koler, whilst others had tartan trews. The regiment raised by Ross of Balnagowan, who fought against Montrose at Barbisdale, was described in 1651 wearing red tartan trews.



Alexander Leslie, 1st Earl of Leven, as depicted in *England's Worthies*.

absent when the battle of Dunbar began and was wounded and captured while commanding a single infantry brigade.

The cavalry was, or at least should have been, led by **Major-General Robert Montgomerie** (d.1684), a younger son of the Earl of Eglinton. Unusually he was not a professional soldier but served creditably enough under his father at Marston Moor in 1644, where he was badly wounded in the arm. Afterwards he fought under John Middleton against the Royalist rebels under Huntly and Montrose in the north of Scotland and in 1648 played a prominent part in the 'Whiggamore' uprising when the Kirk party seized control. He subsequently got on very well with Cromwell and obtained authority from him to sell 2,000 of the prisoners taken at Preston for service in the Low Countries. With refreshing impartiality they were offered to both the French and the Spanish armies at the same time! During the Dunbar campaign, although only holding the rank of major-general, he commanded the cavalry as David Leslie's deputy. In this role he displayed some considerable dash and, although ultimately beaten, he certainly got the best out of his troopers and arguably out-classed his opposite number, John Lambert, during the early stages of the campaign. At Dunbar however he may also have been one of those officers who were absent from their posts when the battle began as he is not mentioned in any accounts of the battle.

## THE ENGLISH

Unlike most of his opponents, **General Oliver Cromwell** (1599–1658) was not a professionally trained soldier but rather a politician who quite late in life had embraced the sword – and thereby considerably furthered his parliamentary career. Beginning the war in 1642 as a mere captain of volunteer horse, he soon expanded his troop into a large regiment before taking command first of all of the Eastern Association cavalry. Then, having engineered the removal of his superior, the Earl of Manchester, he became second in command of the 'New Model' army in 1645 under Sir Thomas Fairfax. Three years later, while Fairfax was tied up in besieging Royalist-held Colchester, he was assigned to the defence of the north of England and completely destroyed the Scots Army in a running battle at Preston. Notwithstanding the way in which his political backers shamelessly promoted his personal role in the victory, his successful handling of the Preston campaign demonstrated that, while he was not a scientific soldier, he had certainly grasped the doctrine of applied force. He was also the antithesis of Leven in that, lacking the Scots general's experience, he was an unsophisticated strategist who performed best on the actual field of battle rather than in getting there. What above all really distinguished Cromwell as a soldier, however, was the religious faith that provided him with an unshakeable conviction that he would, or rather could, win. It is important to appreciate, however, that he was by no means content to rely on divine intervention to win the day. To his mind, he and God were unquestionably on the same side but it was up to him to win the battle. His victories in consequence resulted from ruthless determination rather than blind faith alone.



Although identified as the Earl of Leven, this officer is clearly recognisable as David Leslie, the actual commander of the Scots army at Dunbar.

Cromwell's notional second in command in Scotland, **Lieutenant-General Charles Fleetwood** (d.1692), was a competent officer but outwardly seems a rather colourless and undistinguished one. A Northamptonshire gentleman, he had begun his military career in 1642 as a volunteer member of the Earl of Essex's Lifeguard. By 1644 he was commanding a regiment of horse, which he took into the New Model, but then played no military role in the Second Civil War. Instead he was active in the political field and it would appear that he owed his appointment in 1650 to a combination of seniority and his important political connections. During the early part of the campaign he appears to have served as chief of staff rather than taking a more active role. At Dunbar however he was in overall command of the vanguard, which comprised two cavalry brigades under Lambert and Lilburne and one infantry brigade under Monck. Cromwell's official report on the battle rather damns him with faint praise, and other participants have even less to say about his conduct that morning. At first glance this might suggest that his role was a nominal one, but on the other hand he may simply have been upstaged in the undignified scramble to claim credit for the victory. He would, however, play a significant role in the battle of Worcester in the following year.

**Major-General John Lambert** (1619–83) largely exercised operational command of the cavalry during the campaign. Lambert was a Yorkshireman who, once again, had no military experience prior to his



taking up arms in 1643. He immediately proved to be a natural soldier, however, fighting well under Fairfax, particularly at Nantwich and Marston Moor in 1644. He temporarily commanded the Northern Association forces after Fairfax was appointed to command the New Model Army, and again after Sydenham Poyntz was deposed during the Army Crisis of 1647. As such he served very creditably against the Northern Royalists and the Scots in 1648 and therefore accompanied Cromwell to Scotland in 1650 as an officer of proven ability.

The most prominent of the three infantry brigade commanders was **Colonel George Monck** (1608–70). The son of Sir Thomas Monck of Potheridge in Devon, he was a professional soldier who began his military career with the Cadiz expedition of 1625 and the subsequent Isle of Rhe expedition, before entering the Dutch service. Returning home in 1639 he was one of the few officers to emerge with any credit from the debacle at Newburn in 1640, successfully getting the English guns away. Afterwards he served in Ireland until recalled by the King in 1643. Ironically his loyalty was initially considered suspect, but he was eventually restored to command only to be taken prisoner at Nantwich in January 1644. After a long spell in the Tower of London, he again served in Ireland between 1647 and 1649 before being assigned to the Scottish expedition. Although initially no more than a brigade commander, Monck's professional abilities were evidently highly regarded by Cromwell, who like most of his colleagues had a cavalry rather than an infantry background. At the outset of the campaign he had no regiment of his own and it was initially intended to give him Colonel John Bright's after that officer declined to serve. Unfortunately the regiment's soldiers flatly refused to serve under the man they had fought against just six years before: "What! To betray us! We took him not long since at Nantwich prisoner; we'll have none of him!" Consequently the regiment went instead to John Lambert while a new regiment was formed for Monck by consolidating five companies of Sir Arthur Hesilrige's Regiment and five of Colonel George Fenwick's – it ultimately became the Coldstream Guards.

# OPPOSING ARMIES

## THE SCOTS ARMY

**T**he Scots were nearly all conscripts raised under the long-established 'fencible' system. Since medieval times all men in Scotland between the traditional ages of 16 and 60 had been liable to turn out in times of crisis. Naturally enough, while old men and young boys might occasionally be pressed into service to meet a local emergency, those actually taken for active service with the army were drawn from lists of those adjudged young enough and fit enough to be capable of bearing 'arms defencible'; hence their designation as 'fencibles'. Having been notified by the Committee of War established in each sheriffdom of the numbers supposedly available, the central government in Edinburgh would normally issue instructions to call out one man in eight from the lists, or even one man in four, according to the scale of the perceived threat. These recruits were supposed to be 'put out' by the local committees properly clothed, armed and equipped and provided with 40 days' pay and provisions. They could of course be retained in service for much longer periods, but after the first 40 days were up, responsibility for feeding, clothing and paying them theoretically passed to central government. In practice, the government all too often merely delegated the responsibility back again by requiring the committees to provide provisions, money and recruits as and when required, either for their original levies or simply for any units that happened to be quartered in the locality at the time.

### Raising the Army

By 1650 this mustering system, which was originally geared to sustain a single campaign, had been in more or less continuous operation for nearly 12 years and the government was reduced to exercising a very rudimentary rule of thumb in simply demanding a certain number of men to be levied from each sheriffdom. Unfortunately the terrible drain on the available resources of both men and materiel over that period meant that ordering the men to be levied out and actually mustering them into service were often two entirely different things. Some areas with zealous local officials such as in Fife and Kinross were fairly diligent in rounding up the required numbers, while others were much more backward.

On 28 February 1649 for example, Viscount Arbuthnott had been commissioned to lead 800 men raised out of Aberdeenshire and the Mearns, but by 31 July that year they still only comprised a single company of 80 men. A year later Arbuthnott was allotted a further 900 men but the only recruits who can actually be verified are 30 out of the 90 men demanded from the burgh of Aberdeen.



**Cavalryman's closed helmet of a style associated with three-quarter or cuirassier armour, little worn except by some senior officers.**



**Colonel George Monck, a professional soldier who commanded one of Cromwell's infantry brigades. Initially successful he was defeated by Lawers and his real contribution to the battle was greatly exaggerated by his biographer, Gumble. Nevertheless he was regarded sufficiently highly to be placed in command of those English forces remaining in Scotland when Cromwell pursued Leslie's army to its eventual destruction at Worcester.**

Unsurprisingly, Scots infantry regiments were almost invariably smaller than their English counterparts. There was also a considerable difference in size between the units newly raised in 1650 and some of the rather dilapidated regiments of the 1649 levy. Musters carried out in July 1649 reveal that the majority of the 'old' regiments were generally only four companies strong and varying wildly in size between Arbuthnott's 80 and Campbell of Lawers' 644 men. Consequently on 21 June 1650, Lieutenant-General David Leslie requested the Estates that 'old troops and regiments may by your new leavies be completed to 75 each troop, and 108 each regiment of foot, a mixture being better than to keep the new entirely by themselves'. Although the wording is ambiguous he presumably meant there should be 108 men in each company of foot, which would have given the smaller regiments a minimum of 432 rank and file. He then went on to underline the point by requesting that no new regiments should be formed until the old ones were complete.

To that end, on 25 June the Estates duly ordered the levying of some 9,749 foot and 2,882 horse, largely to reinforce existing units although some new ones were authorised. This particular levy had actually been sanctioned the year before, and the failure to implement it should have given pause for thought. However, a week later on 3 July 1650, the Estates threw all caution to the wind when a second and much larger levy was ordered that was even more optimistically expected to produce an additional 19,614 foot, forming 21 new infantry regiments. Unsurprisingly this second demand for men, following so soon after the first, largely proved to be counter-productive and, once the 'old' regiments had been brought up to strength, many of the new ones existed only as cadres.

Lord Balmerino evidently raised a few men in Edinburgh, as a colour bearing his crest was taken at Dunbar, but his men almost certainly fought there attached to Colonel Alexander Stewart's Regiment. On the other hand the two regiments ordered to be raised out of Berwickshire, Roxburgh and the other Border sheriffdoms simply did not appear at all, largely as a result of the collapse of the civilian administration in the face of the invasion. Any men actually levied should have gone into the badly depleted ranks of Wedderburn's and Greenhead's regiments, which had originally been raised in Berwickshire and Teviotdale respectively. There is similarly little trace of the Haddingtonshire men, although some of them at least must have formed the garrison of Tantallon Castle.

To the west matters were rather more problematic, since opposition to the King was greatest in that area and the levies were consequently reluctant to turn out in his service. Lord Kirkcudbright certainly raised some men but appears to have mounted them as dragoons, which suggests there were comparatively few of them. Similarly Lord Mauchline and the Earl of Cassillis were originally commissioned to raise infantry regiments but instead sought and received permission to mount their levies as troopers, on the basis of one trooper per three infantrymen. Both subsequently led cavalry regiments at Dunbar, although it seems unlikely that they should have mustered as many as 580 troopers between them. Nor for that matter is there any evidence that Douglas of Darroch ever raised any men in Dumfries or that Sir William Carmichael brought out the Lanarkshire levies in accordance with the government's decree.





FAR, LEFT Scots cornet belonging to a colonel of horse, white field, green wreath, gold crown with red cushion, gold lettering and gold and white fringe.

LEFT Unidentified Scots cornet of horse (BM Harl.1460/31); blue field and fringe, white saltire, silver cloud, gold hand, sword, wreath and lettering.

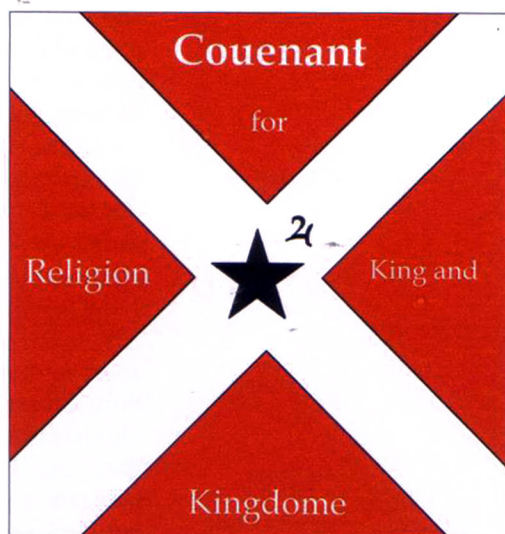
The levies in Fife, Linlithgow, Stirling and Clackmannan on the other hand were reasonably successful, largely because no fresh recruits were ordered for the two existing regiments that came from the area; Pitscottie's and Holburne's. Two new regiments were to be formed out of both the first and second levies, but while all four were certainly represented at Dunbar, they had to be consolidated into two composite battalions. Similarly four more regiments were ordered out of Perthshire and appear to have again been formed in two composite battalions.

In both instances it would appear that little more than half the levies called for actually appeared at the mustering places on time. This was certainly borne out by the experience of Colonel John Lindsay of Edzell, who was commissioned to raise some 1,200 men in neighbouring Forfarshire, but only succeeded in getting about 600.

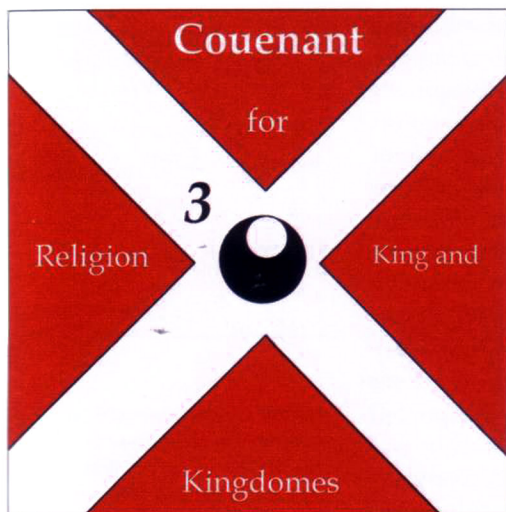
Further north time was also very much against the recruiters. There was already a small regiment in Aberdeenshire commanded by the Master of Forbes, which should have been brought up to strength by fresh drafts from the first levy. Viscount Arbuthnott and John Forbes of Leslie were expected to raise new regiments in the second levy. Instead, recognising the increasing urgency of the situation, all three were consolidated into a single composite unit under Leslie's command. On the other hand Sir Alexander Sutherland of Duffus, charged with raising a regiment in Moray and Nairn, did not commence his recruiting until after Dunbar. Similarly, the Master of Lovat's Regiment marched south to Dunbar with a mere three companies, albeit they were consolidated with the better part of Argyle's Regiment, drawn out of the Highland garrisons.

In mentioning Lovat's and Argyle's men, it should perhaps be noted that there were no undisciplined and bucolically armed Highland contingents serving in the Scots Army at Dunbar. It is true that the Master of Lovat's three companies were largely composed of his clansmen and there could have been as many as 300 of Argyle's Regiment in the same brigade, but even Argyle's men were regulars and, so far as is known, most of them were

Captain's colour, Sir George Preston of Valleyfield's regiment (BM Harl.1460/51). This red and white colour is identified by the black distinctions in the centre. Ordinarily the black star or mullet would designate the third captain, but this one is amended by the addition of a number '2'.

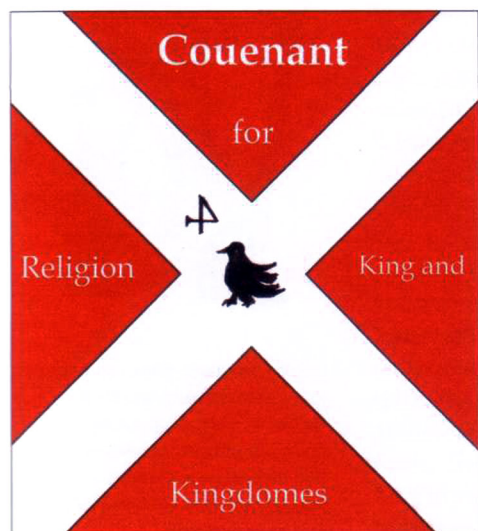






Captain's colour, Sir George Preston of Valleyfield's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/49). In this case the black crescent in the centre should have denoted the second captain, but this is contradicted by the addition of a number '3'.

Captain's colour, Sir George Preston of Valleyfield's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/68). For once both the number and the black martlet are in agreement in identifying the fourth captain's company.



clothed, equipped and trained in conventional fashion. This is particularly worth emphasising in the case of Sir James Campbell of Lawers' Regiment, which is all too frequently (and quite erroneously) cited in secondary sources as being a Highland regiment.

Scots cavalry units also tended to be quite small and frequently comprised just two or three troops. On 25 June it was ordered that they should each be made up to six troops apiece but it seems unlikely that this actually took place. With the exception of Mauchline's and Cassillis' levies all the Scots cavalry at Dunbar were 'old' regiments, albeit heavily reinforced by the addition of new recruits.

### Internal Conflicts

However, aside from the natural exhaustion produced by over a decade of warfare, the Scots government now faced two major problems in raising an army to meet the threatened English invasion in 1650. In the first place, while a sizeable number of men were, in spite of everything, called out and formed into regiments fairly quickly, some of the regiments, like those forming Innes' Brigade, then had to quite literally march the length of Scotland in order to join the army at Edinburgh. In the end, thanks to Leven's cautious strategy, a successful concentration was achieved there.

His immediate response was to stand on the defensive behind a formidable line of fortifications in order to gain as much time as possible for the more distant levies to arrive, and for all of them to receive as much training as the circumstances allowed. Allied to this he sanctioned or at least tolerated two major purges of his officer corps.

These purges are perhaps one of the best known and least understood aspects of the Scots' handling of the campaign. The ominous-sounding Committee for Purging the Army was first set up on 21 June, largely as a means of countering potential Royalist support amongst the new levies who were about to be mobilised. Hostile commentators, the most eloquent of whom was the English Cavalier Sir Edward Walker, charged that the purges that eventually took place between 2 and 5 August resulted in as many as 4,000 good soldiers being expelled from the army simply because of their Royalist sympathies. They were then replaced, he said, with 'ministers' sons, clerks, and such other sanctified creatures, who hardly ever saw or heard of any sword but that of the spirit'.

This might well have been the intention of some of the more extreme adherents of the Kirk, such as Archibald Johnston of Wariston and Colonel Archibald Strachan, who were opposed to the return of the King and even prepared if necessary to enter into secret negotiations with Cromwell. However, in reality a much more modest total of only about 80 officers and men were dismissed, rather than 4,000, albeit with the threat that more would follow at the end of the month. Moreover, while there is ample documentary evidence of English Cavaliers and Scots 'Engagers' being dismissed from some regiments, in others their services were retained.

Ironically a number of the trophies afterwards taken by the English army at Dunbar reveal that Leven may actually have been using the Committee for an entirely different purpose from that originally intended by its sponsors.

All Scots infantry companies carried saltire colours in a variety of tinctures and ordinarily it was customary to place the captain's crest or some other device in the centre. In 1649, however, perhaps because the regiments raised in that year were intended to form a standing army, a system of heraldic cadence marks was applied to their colours in order to designate the seniority of each company within the regiment. However, most of those 1649 pattern colours captured at Dunbar are in some measure disfigured by the hasty application of numerals indicating a quite different seniority from that apparently designated by the cadence mark.

At first sight this might simply be taken as evidence of the original company commanders having been 'purged' and replaced by others. Yet the officers of these particular regiments ought to have been amongst the most politically reliable and free from the taint of Royalism.

The answer to this apparent paradox is that in the haste to levy new companies and troops in 1650, a great many unsuitable officers were appointed to lead them by the local authorities responsible. Some of the new men may well have been politically suspect, for there is certainly ample evidence of an upsurge in Royalist support, particularly when the King actually visited the army while it was in the Leith lines. On the whole it is far more likely, however, that as in the case of the burgh levy from Aberdeen, the local worthies who led them lacked military experience and were simply not up to the job. Leven therefore took advantage of the purges to have them turned out in favour of the veteran officers already serving in the 1649 regiments. The ministers' sons and other 'sanctified creatures' complained of by Walker were merely slotted in at the end of the process to fill the vacancies at the most junior grades created by promoting or transferring the veterans, rather than actually being given command of regiments or companies as he scathingly implies.

In short, the purges were ultimately a positive step, notwithstanding an undoubted but relatively brief period of disruption that must have involved a great many inter-regimental transfers rather than wholesale sackings of experienced officers. In any case if some of the new men brought into the army were filled with religious zeal that was perhaps no bad thing, for as Cromwell himself demonstrated fanaticism and military efficiency are by no means incompatible.

## THE ENGLISH ARMY

In contrast to the conscripts who served in the ranks of the Scots army, the English one was almost entirely composed of long-service volunteers.

The seven regiments of cavalry and nine regiments of infantry that fought in the Dunbar campaign are routinely, but quite erroneously, identified in many histories as the New Model Army, or even more dramatically as Cromwell's *elite* New Model Army. In fact the celebrated 'new modelling' of early 1645 had been no more than an essential

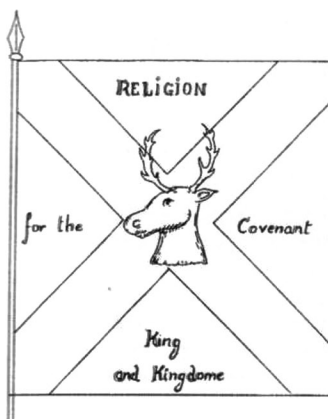
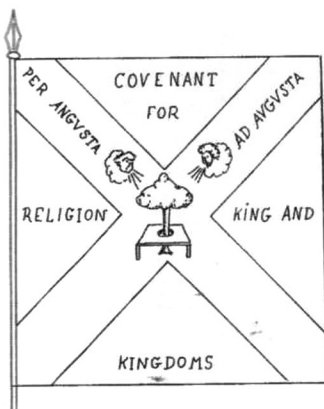


Rather archaic colonel's colour bearing the silver bear crest of the Master of Forbes (BM Harl.1460/57) and presumably therefore carried by Colonel John Forbes of Leslie's Regiment, which was built around the Master's old regiment.



English infantry officer as depicted in a contemporary woodcut. Halberds were supposedly the badge of office of a sergeant, yet this individual is clearly of much higher rank and his weapon may in fact be a poll-axe.





**TOP Forbes of Leslie's Regiment; yellow saltire on green field. The arms in the centre are those of Captain Cristall; ginger-headed cherubim, with a tree and table proper. Red lettering on saltire, gold lettering on field. (BM Harl.1460/74)**

**ABOVE Forbes of Leslie's Regiment; yellow saltire on green with stag's head proper – probably a Captain Forbes. (BM Harl.1460/75)**

restructuring exercise. The aim was to consolidate the battered remnants of a great many small regiments, some of which were reduced by casualties and desertion to little more than cadre strength, into a rather smaller number of units that were fully recruited up to their theoretical establishment: the Scots army went through exactly the same process in 1647. It was inevitable however that the disappearance of so many regiments both in the new modelling and in the much more widespread reductions in troop numbers that followed the end of the Civil War meant that there were far too many officers to fill the limited number of posts remaining.

Consequently the nomination, or rather the re-assignment of officers to the 'New Model' regiments was a highly charged political affair in which the various factions tried to ensure that as many of 'their' officers were placed in charge of the army. In the end of course it was the Independents – including Oliver Cromwell – who managed to secure the majority of appointments and so shaped the army's increasing politicisation.

However, over the course of time the various semi-independent regional armies, such as the Northern Association forces, were subsumed into what became a single national army. With the end of the Civil War proper most of the 'provincial' regiments were disbanded, although conversely some new ones were raised either to counter renewed Royalist insurrections or for service in Ireland. By 1650 less than half of the regiments that fought at Dunbar could trace their history back to the original 'New Model'.

Five of the seven cavalry regiments did form part of the original New Model, but John Lambert's had belonged to the old Northern Association and Francis Hacker's Regiment was only recruited in 1648. On the other hand only three of the eight infantry regiments at Dunbar (Alban Coxe's, the Lord General's and Thomas Pride's) came directly from the 'New Model'. Although George Monck's Regiment was formed at the outset of the campaign, it had combined five companies of Sir Arthur Hesilrige's Regiment and five companies of Colonel George Fenwick's, and both parent regiments could trace their history under various commanders back to the New Model and beyond. (Oddly enough, at the last minute the remaining five companies of Fenwick's Regiment also marched north with the army). While never associated with the 'New Model', John Lambert's Foot was also a good old regiment that had served since 1643 under Colonel John Bright in the Northern Association. Both Charles Fairfax's and John Malverer's regiments, however, were raised as recently as 1648 and, while present at the siege of Pontefract in that year, they had otherwise seen virtually no action. The last regiment, Colonel William Daniel's, was newly recruited in 1650 and had originally been intended for service in Ireland.

English cavalry units were normally supposed to muster six troops apiece with 100 troopers besides officers, while infantry regiments were to have 1,200 men in ten companies – normally divided for tactical purposes into two wings or divisions. In practice, while there was generally little difficulty in fully recruiting the cavalry regiments, at least at the very outset of a campaign, the infantry still tended to be under strength, and their ranks occasionally had to be filled out with pressed men.

The clothing and equipment (including the infantry's famous red coats), the training, and the tactical doctrines espoused by the

consolidated regiments in 1645 were not truly new. The troopers were all heavy cavalymen, wearing helmets and either buff leather coats or iron corselets (but not usually both) and armed with a broadsword and a pair of pistols. No armour was worn by the infantry, and like their counterparts in other armies (including the Scots) the musketeers had long since abandoned their musket-rests. Otherwise the only real difference between the 'new' regiments of 1645 and those who had first marched off to war in 1642 was that the 1645 formations had a fair number of veterans in their ranks and the social composition of the officer corps had to some extent changed.

On the whole, the English cavalry was excellent, but the quality of the infantry was rather less good and this would be reflected by a heavy rate of attrition during the campaign.

### Tactical Doctrine

Infantry brigades on both sides normally comprised three regiments, and usually deployed with two regiments up and the third one behind, acting as a tactical reserve. The regiments could in turn be formed, according to the numbers actually mustered, either into a single 'battalia' or into two wings of up to 500 men apiece – though usually rather less. Military manuals of the time normally called for infantry to form up in six ranks, but as units became progressively weaker on campaign it was common to find them instead forming five deep, or even in some cases only four deep in order to preserve a reasonably broad front. As a general rule of thumb and allowing for intervals between sub units, one metre should be allowed for each file and ordinarily a regiment of 500 men would therefore have occupied a frontage of about 100 metres.

Contemporary doctrine called for one-third of the rank and file in each regiment to be armed with 16ft (5m) pikes, but wartime experience had taught that a much lower proportion was preferable. In 1645 the 7,500 infantry of the English 'New Model' had been completely re-equipped with 5,650 muskets but only 2,000 pikes. This was obviously, a ratio of 3:1 rather than 2:1 and there seems to have been nothing unusual in this. Some units, particularly in the English Royalist army, had already dispensed with pikemen altogether and accounts of the Carbisdale campaign suggest that the Danish and German mercenaries serving under Montrose were all musketeers. Nevertheless, there is no real evidence that any of Cromwell's Dunbar regiments were entirely comprised of musketeers.

The ratios were similarly varied in the Scots army and there is no reason to think that any of the regiments that fought at Dunbar were poorly equipped. While it is certainly the case that most of those men levied out in 1650 only received 'four-tailed' coats in the ubiquitous hoddie grey rather than complete suits of clothes as were issued in the early 1640s, none of the surviving documentation complains of a lack of weapons or ammunition. All Scots units certainly contained a due proportion of pikemen. There is no evidence that the Scots were disadvantaged by

BELOW Archibald Johnstone of Wariston, one of the more prominent Scottish politicians – although present with the army throughout the campaign interfering in military decision-making he held no military command.



having fewer musketeers than their English counterparts, however, so the relative proportions of musketeers to pikemen must have been pretty similar.

In fact commanders on both sides still considered that pikemen performed a vital role as shock troops. Once the opposition had been sufficiently softened up by the musketeers, the pikemen, who formed a five- or six-deep 'stand' in the centre of the formation, were to roll forward, engage the enemy at 'push of pike' and quite literally push them back and so burst the opposing formation apart. Despite the fact that infantry armour had long since been discarded by both sides, the notion that the opposing front ranks mutually impaled each other is a myth, and all too often intimidation alone was sufficient to achieve the desired effect without a serious struggle.

Pikemen also had a secondary defensive role against cavalry troopers. However, when attacked by cavalry, infantry units did not hastily form themselves into some kind of a square or circle with pikes bristling out in all directions. Instead, as Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Elton declared in his *Complete Body of the Art Military*, wartime experience in the 1640s had taught that: 'The best way of opposing the Horse charge ... was Files closing to the midst of their closest order, insomuch that there was not above half a foot intervall of ground between File and File, the pikes Porting, and after closing their ranks forward so close, that they locked themselves one within another, and then charged on. Which in my judgement is so secure a way from routing, that it is impossible for any body of Horse to enter therein.'

The musketeers meanwhile turned up the butt ends of their weapons and covered the flanks and if necessary the rear of the pikemen. The bayonet had not yet been invented, but if resolute enough musketeers were quite capable of facing down cavalry attacking from the front. A flank attack, however, as Lawers' Brigade would learn at Dunbar, was a very different matter.

Like the pikemen, the musketeers ordinarily formed five or six deep and in action normally fired rank by rank on the assumption that by the time the last rank had fired the first would have reloaded and that a steady rolling fire could be maintained thereby. Increasingly however use was made of massed volleys or 'salvees' in order to have a more decisive effect, especially if the volley was intended to be the prelude to a violent assault.

They were however hampered by being armed with matchlock muskets. It is very easy to overemphasise the deficiencies of the matchlock as in fact it was a simple, relatively robust, and soldier-proof firing mechanism, and in good weather it was surprisingly reliable. However, in bad weather of the kind encountered during the Dunbar campaign, it is very susceptible to misfiring even in moderately damp conditions. It also consumes formidable quantities of slow-match, particularly if kept waiting in readiness for any length of time and for that reason it was common to extinguish the match if action was not considered imminent. Once again this was especially important if it was liable to get wet when exposed, since even when it is successfully lit moderately damp match will often not burn hotly enough to ignite gunpowder – a point worth bearing in mind when considering Major-General Holburne's decision to order the Scots infantry to extinguish their match during the night before the battle.

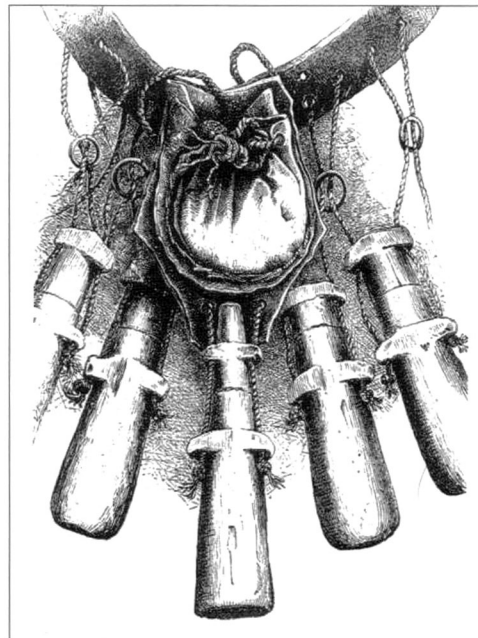


A number of infantry on both sides were, however, armed with firelock muskets – more familiarly known today as flintlocks. One anonymous account specifically credits Campbell of Lawers' Regiment being so equipped, though this is unlikely since there was a shortage of such weapons in the Scots army. Stores inventories reveal that the Scots army possessed no more than 150 in the 1640s and all of them were lost when Sir Alexander Fraser's little regiment of 'Firelocks' was forced to surrender in the debacle at Preston in 1648.

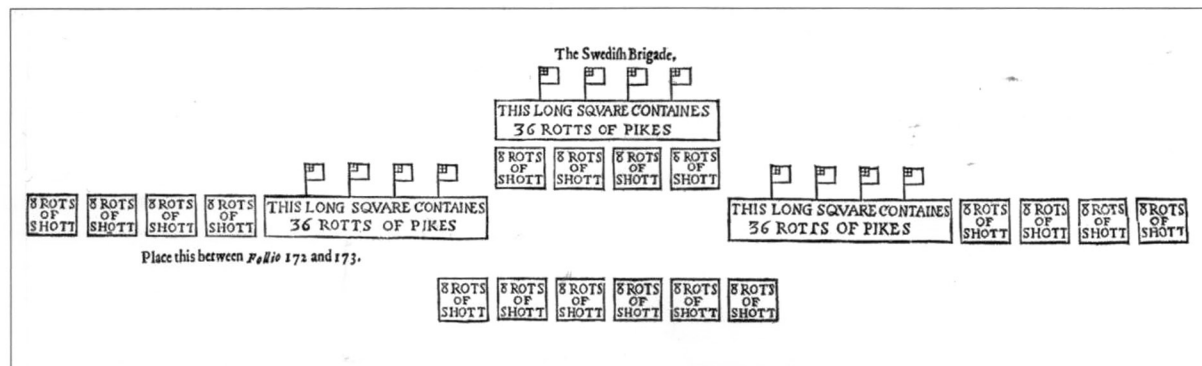
Nevertheless, notwithstanding the limitations of the common matchlock, the infantry musketeer was pre-eminent in both armies. On either side, winning the infantry battle effectively depended on winning the firefight – or on the dramatic intervention of the cavalry on one or other flank.

Tactically, however, there were very significant differences between Scots and English cavalry. The English were all heavy cavalry, mounted on large strong horses. When attacking they locked themselves up tightly, knee-to-knee, and advanced at a steady trot. If the opposition did not obligingly run away before contact was made they would then quite literally try to push back the enemy formation in order to burst it apart – very much in fact as pikemen did. Being mounted on much lighter horses the Scots were obviously at a considerable disadvantage in such a fight and, after their service in England during the First Civil War, they sought to compensate for this disparity by arming themselves with lances rather than pistols and carbines. In practical terms, as they had already proved at Preston in 1648, this meant that in the initial onset the faster moving Scots lancers often had a good chance of beating their opponents, particularly if the unit being attacked was not 'locked up' or had already been disordered by an earlier fight. Obviously however if that initial onset was successfully withstood, and it came down to a matter of pushing, the greater weight of the English troopers would inevitably triumph in the end.

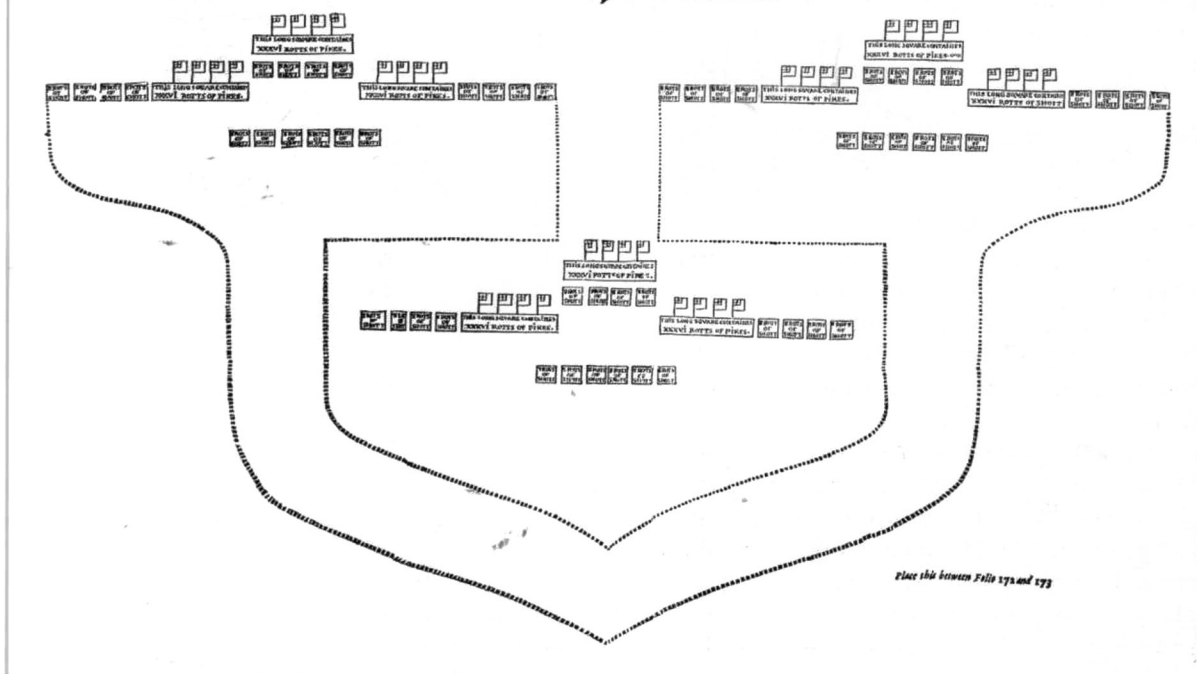
Both sides also had a small number of dragoons, or dragooners as they were sometimes known. At the outset of the Civil War period these men were simply mounted infantry – in the early days some of them even appear to have carried pikes rather than muskets – but by 1650 they tended to stay on their horses for as long as possible and were often



Musketeers carried their ammunition in collars of bandoliers – simple shoulder straps from which were suspended a varying number of 'boxes' or 'bandoliers' each containing a pre-measured charge of gunpowder. At the bottom of the collar depicted here was a bullet bag and an additional 'box' with a nozzle that served as a priming flask.



# THREE SWEDISH BRIGADES drawne vp & imbattelled



ABOVE 'Three Swedish Brigades drawne vp & imbattelled'; Since the English intelligence summary afterwards credited the Scots with having 15 infantry regiments in five brigades, those brigades must have been deployed in this formation with two 'battalions' up and one in reserve.

carrying pistols and carbines rather than infantry muskets. Nevertheless, their primary role as scouts and skirmishers remained. They were well on the way to becoming true light cavalry and in the Scots army they would metamorphose during the campaign into 'Moss Troopers', akin to the continental *crabbates* and other marauders (see *Men-at-Arms 331 Scots Armies of the English Civil Wars*, Plate H).

Artillery was still of little tactical importance in battle, being quite immobile once emplaced. It was of course indispensable for siege work, but most guns were simply too heavy to drag around, particularly in Scotland where almost all the roads could be traversed only by pack-horses. For that very reason Cromwell carried all his heavier guns by ship while James Wemyss, the commander of the Scots artillery, had introduced a range of pack-mounted 'leather guns'. The latter, which had originally been experimented with by the Swedish army, were necessarily of very small calibre and therefore of limited effectiveness, except in a close support role.

OPPOSITE The Swedish 'brigade' formation as depicted by William Barriffe. This may have been employed by the Swedish-trained officers in the Scots army, but it is more likely that they (and their English counterparts) opted for the simpler German formation with two battalions drawn up side by side. In theory a single regiment could be drawn up in this manner, but all too often, especially in the Scots army, two or even three regiments might be consolidated.

# ORDERS OF BATTLE

## THE SCOTS

**T**he Scots order of battle at Dunbar still cannot be established with complete certainty, although the majority of the units actually present are identified in an English intelligence summary (BM Harl.6844 fol.123). Probably based on prisoner interrogations this report positively credits the Scots with having 15 regiments of foot organised in five brigades.

Leutenant Gen Lumsdale	(Sir James Lumsden)*
Maj Gen Hoburn	(James Holburne)*
Maj Gen Pettscobbie	(Colin Pitscottie)*
Coll Lawnes	(Sir James Campbell of Lawers)*
Coll Innis	(John Innes)*
Coll Glanagis	(Haldane of Gleneagles)
Coll Tallfield	(Preston of Valleyfield)
Lord Kilcowberry	(Lord Kirkcudbright)
Lord of Egell	(Lindsay of Edzell)
Mr Loveit	(Master of Lovat)
Lord of Buchanan	(Buchanan of Buchanan)
Sir Elex Stuart	(Col Alexander Stewart)
Gen: of the Artillery's Regi: Weams	(LtCol David Wemyss)
Coll Hume	(Home of Wedderburn)
Coll ffreeland	(Ruthven of Freeland)

*\* indicates a brigade commander*

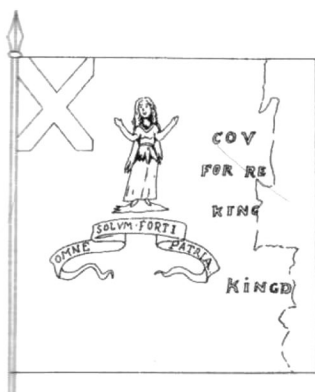
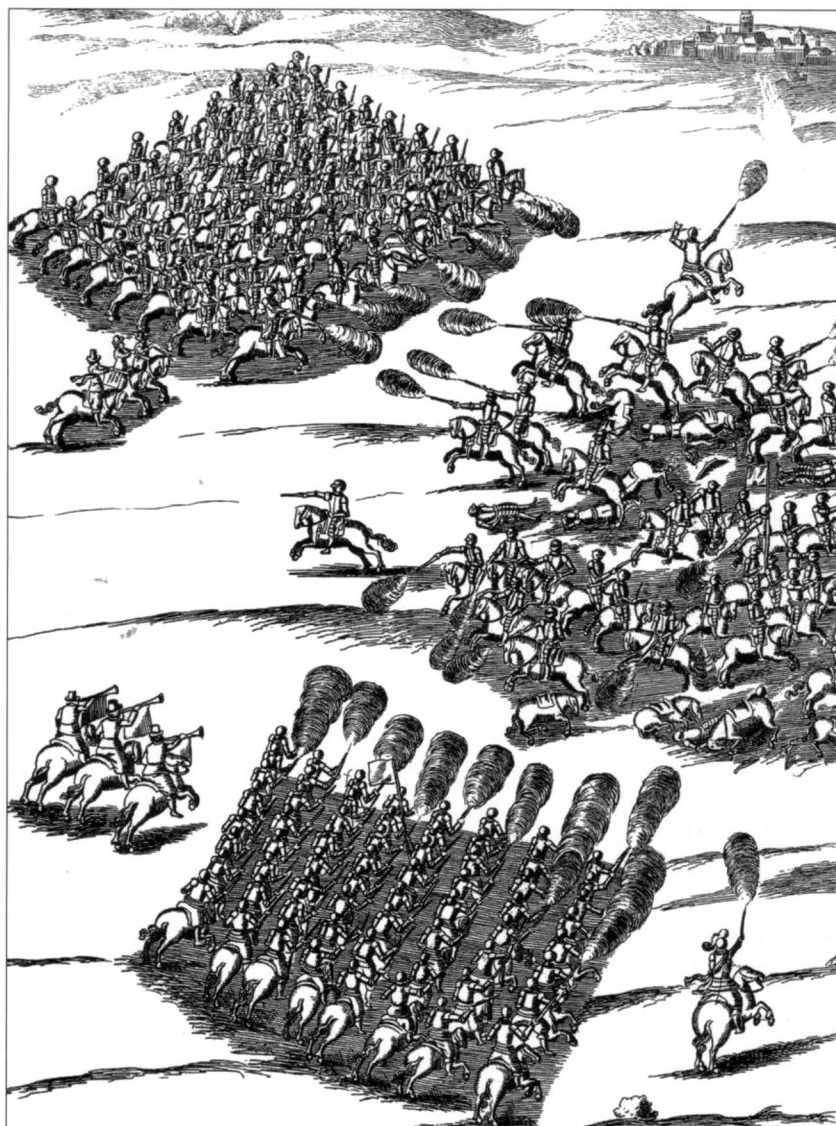
In tactical terms this assessment is no doubt reliable enough, although obviously not all the Scots units were correctly identified. There were in fact elements of as many as 22 regiments present and the apparent discrepancy arises from the fact that a number of the 15 'regiments' that fought in the battle were actually composite formations.

Only those units marked below with an asterisk had been freshly raised in the summer of 1650. The others had been around at least since the previous year and although their ranks were to a greater or lesser extent filled out with new recruits, it is clear that the army was not quite so raw and undisciplined as is often suggested.

The precise make-up of each of the brigades is not entirely clear and the order of battle below is largely confined to identifying the three major units in each brigade – taking BM Harl.6844 as a starting point. Some of the attributions are necessarily tentative, although the available evidence indicates that so far as possible brigades were organised on a geographical basis: Sir James Lumsden's was from Fife; Sir James Campbell of Lawers' men were all raised in and around Perthshire; Pitscottie's was formed in



Cavalry skirmish as depicted by John Cruso, author of the standard work on cavalry tactics during the Civil War period. Scots lancers were most effective if they could catch their opponents while disordered.



Colonel's colour, Balfour of Burleigh's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/126); black field, white cross, maiden proper, green base, bare feet, gold skirt, blue tunic, gold belt, bare arms and golden hair. Gold scroll beneath edged red with red lettering.

Forfarshire although most of the regiments actually came from outside the area; Innes's brigade came down from the north, and Holburne's from Stirling, Linlithgow and Edinburgh.

## Infantry

### Lieutenant-General Sir James Lumsden's Brigade

*General of the Artillery's Regiment\**

*Sir William Douglas of Kirkness' Regiment\**

*Sir James Lumsden's Regiment\**

Lord Balfour of Burleigh was also nominated to command a regiment in the second levy from Fife and as a colour was taken at Dunbar bearing his crest, his men were presumably consolidated with Kirkness; the latter is not mentioned in BM Harl.6844, probably because he was confused with Lord Kirkcudbright. The General of Artillery's Regiment was intended to be recruited by taking drafts from each regiment in the

army, but actually appears to have found them all from Fife. The brigade must have been a fairly strong one as between 15 and 22 July some 2,700 men should have been mustered for service in Fife. Albeit a proportion of them were put out as horse, which would reduce the theoretical total to some 2,100 men, but even allowing for the usual wastage there must still have been about 2,000 in the ranks at Dunbar.

#### **Sir James Campbell of Lawers' Brigade**

*Sir James Campbell of Lawers' Regiment*

*Sir George Preston of Valleyfield's Regiment\**

*Sir John Haldane of Gleneagles' Regiment\**

In addition to the above BM Harl.6844 mentions a 'Coll ffreeland' who is presumably the Sir Thomas Ruthven of Freeland nominated along with Preston of Valleyfield to command the first levy from Perthshire. A colour was also taken bearing the crest of Lord Coupar, who was similarly nominated together with Haldane of Gleneagles to command the second levy. Presumably in both cases the levies were consolidated into one regiment rather than two, commanded by Valleyfield and Gleneagles respectively. Lawers' own regiment had been 644 strong in six companies the previous summer, far bigger than the other regiments and despite fighting hard at Dunbar still had 413 men in the ranks in June 1651, so a figure of some 600 would not seem unreasonable at Dunbar. The other two regiments probably mustered about 700–800 apiece and the brigade therefore probably had around 2,000 men in all on the morning of 3 September.

#### **Major-General Colin Pitscottie's Brigade**

*Major-General Colin Pitscottie's Regiment*

*Sir David Home of Wedderburn's Regiment*

*Colonel John Lindsay of Edzell's Regiment\**

This brigade appears to have been formed in Forfarshire and, in addition to the three named (all identified in BM Harl.6844), must have included two small veteran regiments commanded by Sir Andrew Ker of Greenhead and Sir James Douglas of Mouswall, from Teviotdale and Dumfries respectively, which were also quartered there at the outset of the campaign. It is likely that all three border regiments, which collectively mustered no more than 400 men before the campaign began, were consolidated in a single battalion under Wedderburn, for it seems very unlikely that they should have been able to pick up many recruits. Nevertheless, even if 600 are allowed for Wedderburn's 'battalion', another 600 for Edzell's newly raised regiment and 400 odd for Pitscottie's, the brigade may still only have mustered something in the region of 1,600 men

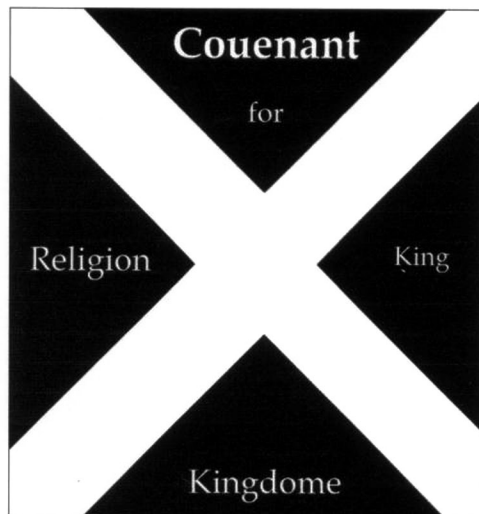
#### **Colonel John Innes' Brigade:**

*Colonel John Innes' Regiment*

*Colonel John Forbes of Leslie's Regiment*

*Master of Lovat's Regiment\**

Innes' own regiment appears to have had something in the region of 400 men at the outset of the campaign, but a total of 170 of them were ordered to be left behind in various garrisons and thus only 230



**A total of 13 black colours were taken at Dunbar, most of them very tattered. It is just possible that some may have belonged to Balfour of Burleigh's Regiment, which was destroyed with the rest of Lumsden's Brigade early in the battle.**

marched south to Dunbar. Forbes of Leslie's Regiment is not mentioned in BM Harl.6844, no doubt because Leslie was confused with the army commander. Formed around a nucleus of the 200-strong Master of Forbes' Regiment it should have been at least 400 strong and may well have been bigger. The Master of Lovat's Regiment on the other hand was of itself only about 100 strong but with the addition of a part of Argyle's regiment could have mustered as many as 400 at Dunbar. Consequently, the brigade was probably about 1,200 strong or 1,500 as a maximum, and therefore the smallest of the five.

It should also be noted that this brigade only joined the army at the very end of August and did not therefore participate in the earlier part of the campaign.

### **Major-General James Holburne**

*Sir George Buchannan of Buchannan's Regiment\**

*Major-General James Holburne's Regiment*

*Colonel Alexander Stewart's [Edinburgh] Regiment*

Buchannan had been allotted no fewer than 1,124 men in the levying, although it is extremely unlikely that all of them were rounded up. Holburne, meanwhile, should have had at least in the region of 430 men in his own regiment, but may have had more since he still had about 400 that winter. The same applies to Stewart's Regiment. A colour taken at Dunbar bore the crest of Lord Balmerino, who was nominated to command the second levy from Edinburgh. Presumably his men were added to Colonel Alexander Stewart's Regiment although neither unit survived. Overall therefore the brigade could well have been 2,000 strong. Not included in the above is 'Lord Kilcowberry', who is presumably Lord Kirkcudbright. He was certainly present at Dunbar but there is no clue to which brigade the regiment may have belonged, and indeed his men appear to have been dragooners rather than infantrymen.

One other regiment traditionally claimed to have been present at Dunbar was the King's Lifeguard of Foot. However there is absolutely no evidence of this and James Wallace of Auchans, one of its officers said to have been killed there, actually survived to lead the first of the Covenanted uprisings in 1666! On the contrary, given that the Lifeguard's real primary purpose at this time was not to protect the King but to secure and restrain him, it is highly unlikely that King and Lifeguard would be parted.

### **Cavalry**

In contrast to the infantry, no brigade structure was evidenced in the intelligence summary for the 18 Scots cavalry regiments identified as taking part in the battle, although one certainly existed. While the majority of units had originally been raised in 1649 they had then had a strength of no more than three troops apiece and often fewer. Some comprised just a single independent troop. However, additional troops were raised and added to some of the regiments in 1650, and consequently although the cavalry would at first sight appear to be more experienced than the infantry, all of the regiments must have contained significant numbers of new recruits and unschooled horses.

Earl of Leven's Regiment

Lieutenant-General David Leslie's Regiment





Major-General Robert Montgomerie's Regiment  
 Major-General Sir John Browne  
 Colonel Thomas Craig of Riccarton  
 Sir Charles Armott's Regiment  
 Colonel Archibald Strachan's Regiment  
 Master of Forbes' Regiment  
 Colonel Walter Scott's Regiment  
 Sir James Halkett's Regiment  
 Lord Mauchline's Regiment  
 Lord Brechin's Regiment  
 Sir Arthur Erskine of Scotsraig's Regiment  
 Sir Robert Adair of Kinhilt's Regiment  
 Colonel William Stewart's Regiment  
 Earl of Cassillis' Regiment  
 Colonel Robert Halkett's Regiment  
 Colonel Gibby Carr's Regiment

## Artillery

The Scots were by no means backward in their use of artillery, but the absence of proper roads effectively confined their heavier guns to castles and other fixed defences while their armies were for the most part accompanied by lighter pack-mounted pieces.

The Scots train of artillery at Dunbar appears to have been captured in its entirety and the highest estimate offered by those who had the agreeable task of counting them was '32 pieces of ordnance, small, great, and leather guns'. Another account however refers to just nine guns. At first sight the two figures might appear quite incompatible, but presumably Leslie had just nine field guns of conventional style and weight, and 23 small-calibre, pack-mounted leather guns. Most of them were mounted or rather 'bundled' in pairs or even in fours and it is not entirely clear whether the reference is to 23 'bundles', or to 23 tubes mounted in a variety of combinations. Some of the single barrelled ones were very light, firing just a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb ball and being 'handled like a musket'. These may have been something like the various grenade launchers that were experimented with by a number of European armies in the early 18th century, but it is perhaps more likely that they were closer to the old *hakenbusch* or hook-guns, fired while resting on a collapsible tripod.

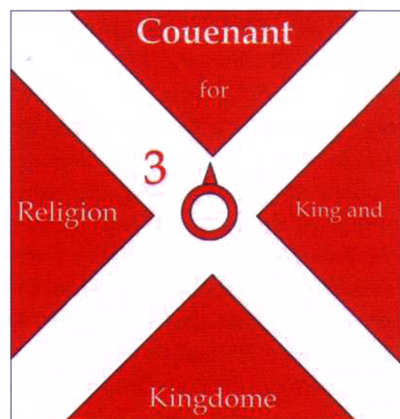
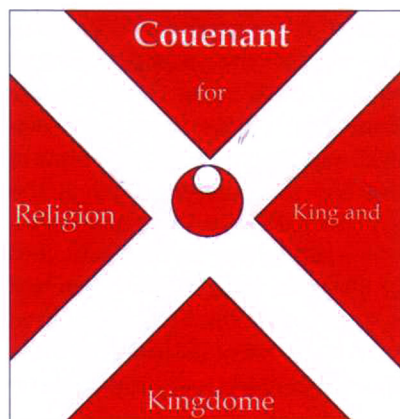
**FAR LEFT** This yellow colour with a black saltire (BM Harl.1460/116) probably belonged to Sir James Lumsden's Regiment, which was mustered as part of the first levy from Fife on 15 July 1650 and completely destroyed at Dunbar. Yellow seems to have been traditionally associated with units from Fife and the gold star or mullet denotes the third captain.

**LEFT** This yellow colour with a black saltire (BM Harl.1460/114) appears to be another of the same set. The gold ring in the centre identifies the fifth captain. At least five other colours taken at Dunbar can be identified as belonging to this particular regiment. A very similar set featuring some heraldic crests rather than cadence marks probably belonged to the second levy, which combined Sir William Douglas of Kirkness' and Balfour of Burleigh's regiments.

TOP LEFT Red colour with white saltire. (BM Harl.1460/103). The red crescent in the centre denotes the second captain. A process of elimination would suggest that the colour may have belonged to Colonel John Innes' Regiment.

TOP RIGHT Red colour with white saltire. (BM Harl.1460/104). The red ring in the centre should denote the fifth captain but the number 3 says otherwise. Once again this colour may have belonged to Colonel John Innes' Regiment.

BOTTOM Red colour with white saltire. (BM Harl.1460/67). According to the system introduced in 1649 a single rose would have denoted the seventh captain. The significance of three cinquefoils, or roses, is not known.

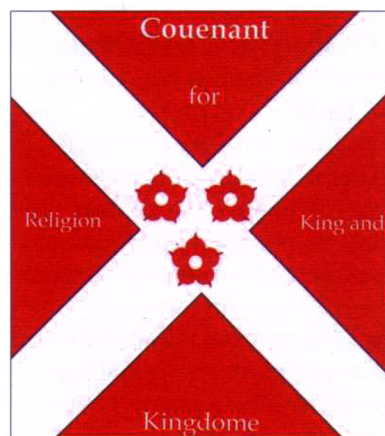


### Numbers

One of the abiding problems in reconstructing what really happened at Dunbar is that historians have generally accepted without question Oliver Cromwell's greatly magnified claims as to the strength of the Scots army – and his near biblical numbers of the dead and prisoners afterwards. In actual fact if all 15 of the Scots infantry 'regiments' identified in BM Harl. 6844 were assigned a notional 1,000 men apiece then that might be the justification for Cromwell's exaggerated claim that he was faced by 16,000 foot and 6,000 horse. The highly unreliable account by the English Royalist Sir Edward Walker also evidences a remarkably similar 16,000 foot and 7,000 horse, but notwithstanding the suspicious similarity, the total is far too high. As we have already seen, David Leslie asked for the older regiments to be recruited up to a strength of 432, while the majority of the new regiments were intended to be 700–900 strong. In the circumstances few of them can have succeeded in raising that number, but allowing for the widespread pairing of units a rough average of 600–700 men per 'regiment' appears to be about right, except in Innes' Brigade. At the very outside therefore there could have been as many as 10,000 infantry but more probably rather less and a more realistic estimate would be about 9,500 infantry.

It should however be stressed that this estimate is largely based on the numbers mustered at the outset of the campaign. There is every reason to suppose that the high levels of wastage attributable to sickness and exposure suffered by the English army applied equally well to the Scots, and that the numbers present and fit to fight on 3 September may have been considerably less, and the actual numbers of Scots and English about even.

Similarly, while the intelligence summary identifies no fewer than 19 cavalry units, all of them were considerably smaller than their English counterparts. Scots regiments rarely mustered more than three troops at this period, and some were probably still represented only by a single



troop. Nevertheless, assuming an average of three troops per regiment would produce a total of 60 troops. At the outset Leslie asked that each of them should be recruited up to a strength of 75 men, which would have produced a total of 4,500 cavalymen rather than the 6,000–7,000 imagined by Cromwell and Walker. Notwithstanding, there is no reason to suppose that the levying of troopers was any more successful than the levying of infantrymen and consequently just 3,000 cavalry is probably a much more realistic estimate. Even this may still be on the high side, and interestingly enough, at Marston Moor six years earlier the Scots had contributed about 9,000 infantry to the Allied battle-line – comparable to the numbers fielded by Leslie in 1650 – but at the most fielded only some 2,000 cavalry, which would tend to support a similarly low proportion at Dunbar.

## THE ENGLISH ARMY

### Infantry

#### Colonel George Monck's Brigade

Colonel George Monck's Regiment  
Colonel John Malverer's Regiment  
Colonel George Fenwick's Regiment (5 coys.)

#### Colonel Thomas Pride's Brigade

Colonel Thomas Pride's Regiment  
Lord General's Regiment  
Major-General John Lambert's Regiment

#### Overton's Brigade

Colonel Alban Coxe's Regiment  
Colonel William Daniel's Regiment  
Colonel Charles Fairfax's Regiment

### Cavalry

The command structure of the cavalry is not entirely clear, but it appears to have been organised in two brigades, each of three regiments, with Cromwell's own regiment operating independently under his personal command.

#### Lord General (reserve)

Lord General's Regiment

#### Major-General John Lambert's Brigade

Lieutenant-General Charles Fleetwood's Regiment  
Major-General John Lambert's Regiment  
Colonel Edward Whalley's Regiment

#### Colonel Robert Lilburne's Brigade

Colonel Robert Lilburne's Regiment  
Colonel Francis Hacker's Regiment  
Colonel Philip Twisleton's Regiment



Colonel's colour, Alexander Stewart's Edinburgh Regiment, identified by the castle badge of the burgh, and the arm and sword of Stewart. White field, pale grey castle with red windows on blue-grey rock, surrounded by green wreath. (BM Harl.1460/42)





Lieutenant-Colonel's colour, Stewart's Edinburgh Regiment. The field is red but otherwise the colouring is as for the Colonel's colour. Note how the castle is of slightly different style and very noticeably set off centre. The unidentified crest features a black Bible suspended by a gold chain from a palm leaf. (BM Harl.1460/88)

In addition Cromwell also had six companies of Colonel John Okey's Dragoons, although it appears that two of them were already mounted and equipped as proper battle cavalry. There may perhaps have been some volunteer militia 'dragoons' as well, although these irregulars are very poorly documented.

### Artillery

It is unclear how much artillery Cromwell actually had with him on the battlefield at Dunbar. Some of his heavy guns may have already been embarked on board ship in preparation for a retreat, but one account states that he placed 'two field pieces in each regiment of foot' on 2 September in anticipation of the Scots attack.

### Numbers

Lacking anything like a morning state it is difficult to be categorical about the fighting strength of Cromwell's army at Dunbar. The 16,354 men that he led across the border on 22 July had seemingly shrunk to 12,080 by 3 September as a result of sickness and exposure. Some 2,000 of them were sufficiently ill and enfeebled to be evacuated by sea, others had presumably died, but there must still have been upwards of 1,000 sick still with the army. Ordinarily of course they would have remained in camp or their quarters during the battle, but if the army was actually trying to break out (as will become apparent) then just about every man still fit to walk or sit in a saddle must have been in the ranks. At any rate Cromwell quite categorically stated afterwards that his army was 'drawn down, as to sound men, to about 7,500 foot and 3,500 horse', which presumably does not include dragooners, gunners and non-effectives, such as wagoners and baggage guards.





GRAHAM TURNER '03







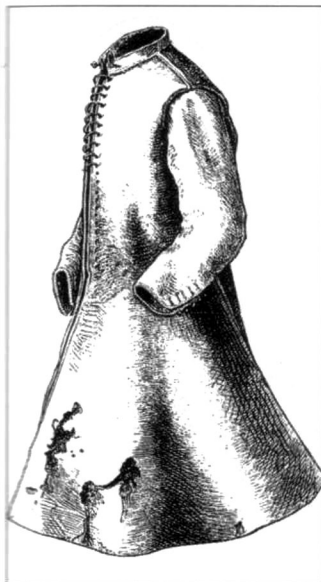


#### THE FORTIFIED LINES AT LEITH (pages 42–43)

When Cromwell arrived before the Scottish capital he found it defended by a formidable line of batteries and entrenchments on a scale virtually unparalleled in the history of the Civil War. One end of the line was firmly anchored on the defences of Edinburgh itself, from where a line of entrenchments stretched from Holyrood Park and the Abbey Hill pretty much along the line of the present Leith Walk (which was subsequently laid out on top of the works) to the port of Leith, which was itself strongly fortified and defended by heavy booms. The front of the lines was swept to some extent by the guns of Leith at one end and at the southern end by a battery on the Calton Hill. Finally, the existing road connecting the capital with its seaport served to provide good lateral communications just behind the lines. Secure within these lines, the Scots commanders, Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven (1) and Lieutenant-General Sir David Leslie (2), commenced to organise and train their levies as they gradually came in, but while good progress was made and on some days they succeeded in drawing out and manoeuvring complete brigades (3), they also had to contend with very serious interference from political figures such as Archibald Johnstone of Wariston (4) and other extremists belonging to the 'Kirk' party (5). Constituted as a Commission of the Estates they in effect acted as political and religious commissars. Under their baleful influence no work or military drill was permitted on the sabbath, since 'Blessed God had given us this day uninterrupted for our fast and humiliation' –

the fact that the English conducted military operations on Sundays was regarded as nothing short of scandalous – and soon they also insisted in trying to impose their will on purely military matters. The most notable intervention in the army's affairs was of course the purging of those officers who had formerly supported the 'Engagement' or were otherwise considered 'Malignants'. As it happened Leven was able to take some advantage of this purge to weed out some of the more inefficient officers but the business did not make for a happy atmosphere at headquarters. A further cause of tension arose when the young King briefly made an appearance in the camps and worse still the Commissioners soon graduated from the administration of the army to attempting to interfere in tactical decisions. When Cromwell's forces appeared before the lines they loudly insisted that the army should thereupon march out and fight the English in the open. Having taken very great pains to avoid just such an encounter Leven, who was old enough and crusty enough not to be afraid of interfering civilians with exaggerated notions of their own importance, refused point blank. However when a fresh dispute then arose over the appointment of Major-General John Leslie (6) to command the garrison of Leith: 'the Generall and the Lieut.-General took their huff ... and went away in a passion.' To his credit David Leslie evidently sided with his commander rather than the Commissioners on this occasion, but at Dunbar, perhaps lacking Leven's active support, he would prove dangerously pliable. (Graham Turner)

# OPPOSING PLANS



Buff coat of the kind worn almost universally by cavalrymen. This very thick leather garment provided good protection against cuts and even pistol balls, but as Cromwell's troopers discovered to their dismay, was ineffective against lance thrusts.

## THE SCOTS

**T**he Earl of Leven was forced to surrender the initiative at the outset of the campaign. The English build-up at Berwick clearly presaged an advance from that direction on Edinburgh and once under way that advance would be swift for the distance was short, but in the early stages of the campaign Leven had nothing to oppose it. Only too well aware that his army would neither be properly concentrated nor fit for action by the time Cromwell appeared in front of Edinburgh, but equally aware that surrendering the capital without a fight was unthinkable, Leven sought to delay that fight for as long as possible.

Almost as a matter of course the Scots began the campaign by obeying "King Robert's Testament", and as in the days of the Bruce they slowly withdrew before the invaders, taking with them everything on four legs and burning everything that was not. While this measure did not greatly inconvenience the English at first, particularly once they reached Dunbar and regained contact with the fleet, it did effectively confine them to the high road and serve notice that the Scots would fight rather than negotiate.

In the meantime Leven planned to stop the English advance outside Edinburgh. The capital itself was still protected to some extent by the old Flodden Wall, erected after that famous defeat nearly 140 years before. Like most medieval fortifications it was still effective at keeping marauders at bay, and could perhaps even withstand an escalade, but it was no longer tenable against a regular siege. Leven therefore declined to throw his growing army within the walls, but instead, drawing upon his continental experience, he set them to constructing a new and much more extensive line of earthworks. This line was anchored on the southern flank by Edinburgh itself and the rough country beyond, and on the northern flank by the fortifications of Leith and ultimately of course by the Firth of Forth. Consequently the line could not easily be turned. Secure behind these formidable defences, Leven won himself the time he needed to train his raw levies and prepare them for battle, and to gradually make life increasingly difficult for the baffled invaders.

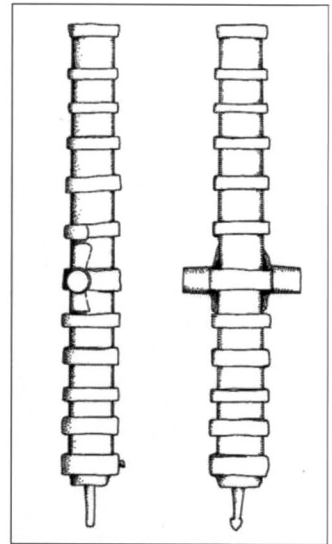
## THE ENGLISH

It is probably fair to say that Oliver Cromwell's strategic aims at the outset of the campaign were similarly limited. There is certainly ample testimony in his correspondence to his very genuine reluctance to fight the Scots, for notwithstanding their considerable doctrinal differences, he still respected them both as former allies and colleagues, and as a



staunch bulwark of Protestantism. He considered their support for the young King Charles mistaken and therefore throughout the campaign sought to convince them, by force if necessary, of their error. As late as 3 August he would famously implore the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland; 'I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken.' In all fairness it has to be said that he was actively encouraged in this approach by many of the Scots themselves; men such as Archibald Johnstone of Wariston and Major-General Archibald Strachan, who made no secret of the fact that they were bitterly opposed to the return of the King. Consequently Cromwell's primary objective was to impose a settlement on the Scots government that firmly excluded the King – very much in fact as he had done in 1648. In short, when he marched north he planned only a limited campaign with clearly defined political objectives, not the war of conquest that it ultimately became.

Then as now there were only two practicable routes by which an army could march into Scotland. The western route by way of Carlisle and then over the hills was not only far longer but much more difficult to supply. The eastern route, by way of Berwick and up the line of the present A1, was by contrast far easier. Not only did the fortress city of Berwick provide an ideal jumping-off point and supply base, but once the initial stages of the route, culminating in the dangerous defile of Cockburnspath, had been negotiated it would be possible to keep the army re-supplied by sea, by using harbours such as Dunbar. Moreover, once beyond Cockburnspath there were no other significant natural obstacles to a direct advance on Edinburgh along the coastal plain and if the Scots gave battle there to defend their capital, Cromwell had every confidence in the outcome, both military and political.

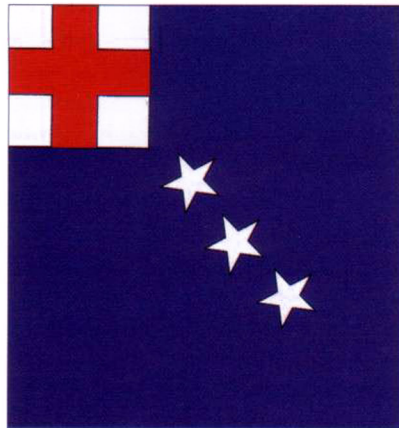


**One of the so-called 'leather guns' built by James Wemyss. This is actually constructed by rolling and welding a tube of sheet iron, strengthened with rings and then bound with rope before being covered with leather.**

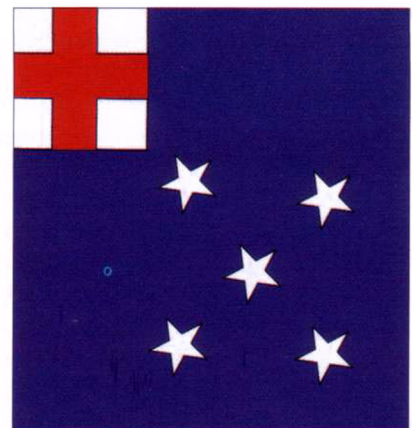
# THE CAMPAIGN

**A**t Berwick on 22 July 1650 Oliver Cromwell crossed the border from England into Scotland with 16,354 men. Initially of course he met with no opposition, and duly arrived in the small town of Dunbar four days later. Things had so far gone according to plan. He was now in possession of a good seaport, which would serve as an excellent base for future operations and avoid the necessity of bringing all his supplies up the rather exposed road from Berwick. So far he had met with no one but women and children, who claimed that that all the men had been taken by the army. It soon transpired, however, that in reality their husbands and sons were much closer at hand and the road soon became worryingly infested with bandits and partisans locally known as 'Moss Troopers'. Equally worrying was that although 15 ships, including four men-of-war, had been ordered to support the army, not

TOP LEFT **Third Captain's colour, Colonel Charles Fairfax's Regiment of Foot.** The colours belonging to this regiment are the only English ones to be identified with any certainty as having been carried at Dunbar.



TOP RIGHT **Fifth Captain's colour, Colonel Charles Fairfax's Regiment of Foot.** The Colonel's own colour was plain blue and in 1649 he instructed that it 'must have (within a well wrought round) these two words (one under the other) "Fideliter Faeliciter", and a handsome compartment round about the word.' – modern reconstructions of this colour usually omit the 'handsome compartment'.



BOTTOM LEFT **Second Captain's colour, Stewart's Edinburgh Regiment (BM Harl.1460/95).** Red field, white saltire, gold stars and lettering. Five other very similar colours with varying numbers of stars were taken.



BOTTOM RIGHT **Third Captain's colour, Stewart's Edinburgh Regiment (BM Harl.1460/98).** Note that those here are set at an angle, the fifth and sixth captains' colours had them set square. All-in-all nine colours were lost by this regiment.



all of them had yet arrived at Dunbar and consequently the supplies unloaded in that first lift amounted to a mere 'pittance'. It was an ominous sign for the future.

Nevertheless, from Dunbar Cromwell next began to push westwards across the coastal plain and also occupied the town of Haddington without resistance, but at Gladsmuir he at last encountered Leven's outpost line and thereafter Scots soldiers were increasingly in evidence. The English cavalry, under Lambert, were unable to penetrate Leven's cavalry screen but nevertheless the Scots continued to fall back steadily. On 29 July, just beyond Musselburgh and the river Esk, the English at last uncovered the main body of the Scots army, causing first Lambert and then Cromwell to halt in dismay.

Cromwell now discovered that the wily Leven had dug his raw army in behind a line of forts and entrenchments stretching all the way from Edinburgh to Leith. The works were impossible to outflank, and a probe into Holyrood Park encountered stiff resistance.

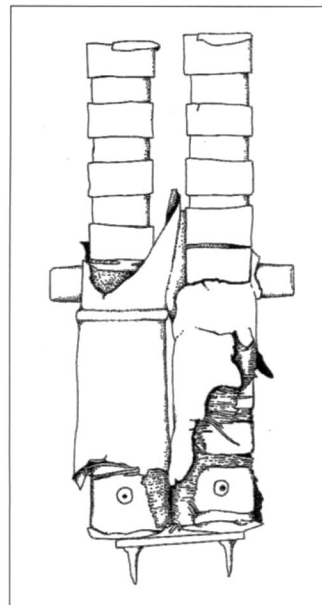
A Scots outpost there was quickly overrun, but just as quickly recaptured by Sir James Campbell of Lawers 'quho doublett alone, mounted hill at St. Leonards chapell, and dange them from ther cannon ...' A cavalry charge then recovered the guns, but by then Lawers' men were well ensconced on the slopes of the rocky outcrop known as Arthur's Seat and 'from the hedges and rockes played wncessantlly with ther musketts'.

Cromwell quickly recognised that there could be absolutely no question of mounting a formal frontal assault on the main position when the professionalism and experience of his outnumbered men would count for much less than in the open field. Nevertheless, encouraged by the Scots' willingness to engage in skirmishing, he rather optimistically tried to tempt Leven to come out and fight. He placed his cavalry at Restalrig and his infantry at Jock's Lodge while four warships bombarded Leith, but Leven refused to rise to the bait. Then to make matters worse, the weather turned bad. The army spent the night in makeshift bivouacs under pouring rain and next morning 'the ground being very wet, and our provisions scarce' Cromwell disgustedly decided to fall back on Musselburgh 'there to refresh and revictual'.

The withdrawal began at about 10.00am on 30 July and it is a measure of collapsing morale that discipline broke down almost at once. Cromwell, with the infantry simply hurried down the road at their best speed and soon left Lambert and the rearguard dangerously exposed. Recognising the signs, Leven sent his cavalry in pursuit, one body debouching from Edinburgh through the Canongate port and the other from Leith.

### Musselburgh

Notwithstanding the understandable gloss afterwards placed upon the affair in Cromwell's letters and in some later memoirs, there is no doubting that what followed was a severely chastening experience for the vaunted Ironsides. The Scots who sallied out from Leith were seemingly quickly driven back by Colonel Hacker, but on the Edinburgh road it was a very different matter. Captain William Evanson's troop of Whalley's Regiment, the rearmost unit, 'received the charge; but being overpowered by the enemy, retreated', which was perhaps only to be



Some of the leather guns were mounted in pairs and a few even in fours, though it is not clear if the 23 claimed as captured at Dunbar were complete 'sets' or whether the total referred to the number of tubes, however mounted. This surviving pair usefully illustrates the method of construction.



White colour belonging to a Scots colonel of foot (BM Harl.1460/45) – judging by the crest he was probably Colonel John Innes. Gold cockerel with red beak, crest and wattles on a blue and white orle. Scroll is edged black and red.

expected since they were of course badly outnumbered. Cromwell's own regiment of horse – the original Ironsides whom he had personally raised and trained in 1643 – then charged forward to their rescue and initially checked the Scots pursuit, but more lancers came up, put in another charge, wounded Captain John Gladman and sent the Ironsides tumbling back in considerable confusion. Next Colonel Whalley countercharged with four more troops of his regiment and Lambert also brought up his own regiment, only to become sucked into a fierce, whirling melee in which the greater weight of the English horses counted for nothing.

Worse still Lambert had his horse 'shot in the neck and head; himself run through the arm with a lance, and run through another part of his body', and in the process was thrown off his horse and taken prisoner. As he was being led off towards Edinburgh however Lieutenant Empson of Cromwell's Regiment charged and rescued him, and shortly the Scots drew off. According to Cromwell the scales were finally turned by Captain Chillenden with the sixth troop of Whalley's Regiment who 'being in good order, charged them, and put them to the run, pursuing and killing them, even to and within their line'. Cromwell also went on to boast of having 'killed divers of them upon the place, and took some prisoners, without any considerable loss; which indeed did so amaze and quiet them, that we marched off to Muscleborough, but they dar'd not send out a man to trouble us'.

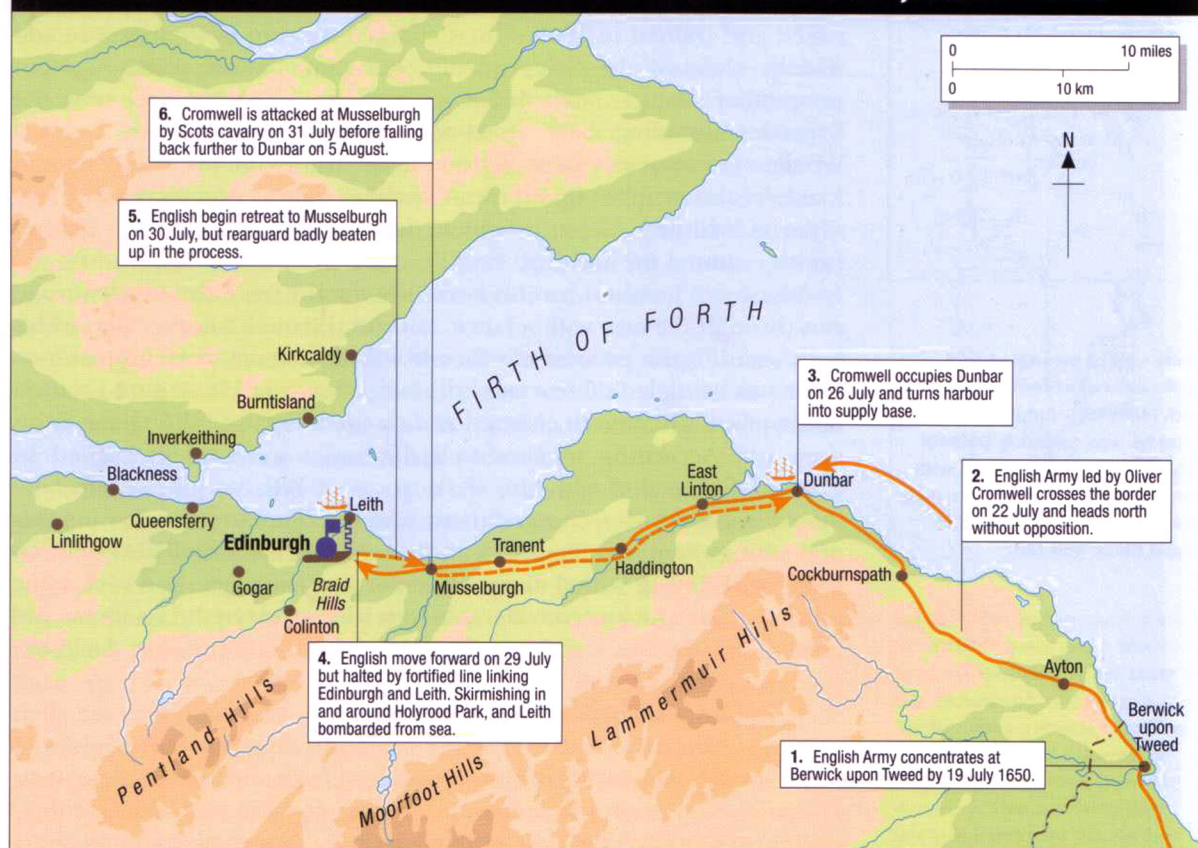
It would perhaps be more accurate to say that having made their point the Scots decided to call it a day and effectively quit while they were ahead. For their part they equally predictably claimed to have killed 5 colonels and lieutenant-colonels, mortally wounded Lambert and 'above 500'. They too claimed to have returned with 'no grate losse'. Moreover far from marching off triumphantly as he claimed Cromwell and his men eventually arrived at Musselburgh, 'so tired and wearied for want of sleep, and so dirty by reason of the weather, that we expected the enemy would make an infall upon us'. Indeed, just by way of rubbing it in, they found that Musselburgh had been occupied and barricaded against them by a large body of partisans – perhaps some of the Haddingtonshire levies who were supposed to have been raised by Angus – and although the rabble were soon chased out again, it was an ominous sign. Worse was to follow. That very night the Scots did indeed proceed to follow up their success by mounting a heavy raid on the English camp.

Sometime between 3.00am and 4.00am on the morning of 31 July Major-General Robert Montgomerie attacked out of the darkness with what some observers estimated to be as many as 15 troops of horse numbering 800 or more picked cavalymen, belonging to his own, Sir James Halkett's and Gibby Carr's regiments, and, according to at least one account a couple of hundred infantry as well.

Despite the fact that their arrival was nervously anticipated, Montgomerie successfully achieved tactical surprise by posting a number of English Royalists at the head of his column. The familiar accents of these Cavaliers misled the outlying picquets into thinking that the approaching troopers were in fact a friendly patrol ... until it was too late. Those picquets were furnished that night by two troops of Colonel Robert Lilburne's Horse and while an English account states that the



## CROMWELL'S INITIAL ADVANCE ON EDINBURGH, JULY 1650



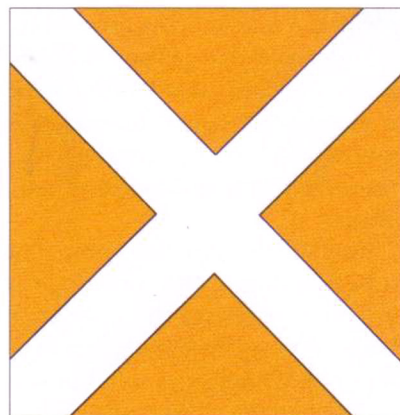
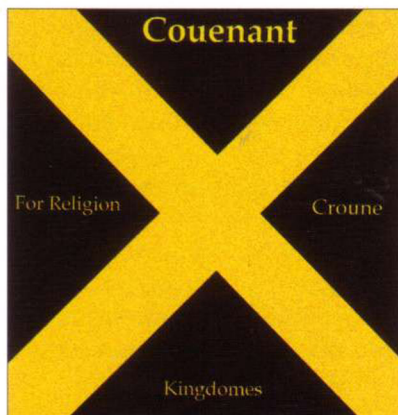
Scots were received 'very gallantly', one of Lilburne's cornets was killed in the melee and his colours taken. At least the picquets' doomed fight gave time for their commander, Captain George Watkinson, 'a person of great worth for conduct and valour', to sound the alarm and rouse the infantry. Some of Lambert's Foot managed to get off a volley and this seemingly was enough to see off Hackett and his men, and as Sir James Balfour sneered: 'Sir Jams Hackett receavid a grate fryte at a skirmishe with the enemy, he should haue secondit the L. Generall, bot turnit and never lowsid a pistoll against the enimey, bot tooke him to the speed of his horsse heels.'

Nevertheless the rest of the Scots successfully laid about them, inflicted a fair few casualties and best of all spread a suitable degree of confusion, fear and despondency, before withdrawing in time-honoured fashion just as quickly as they had come. Their casualties were negligible and they were not pursued, although oddly enough there was an unrelated skirmish on the way back with some English dragoons – ironically this was presumably the very same patrol for which the Scots had earlier been mistaken by Lilburne's unfortunate picquets.

Naturally enough Cromwell, just as he had done the day before, brazenly proclaimed the Scots' departure as a famous victory, released his handful of prisoners, and then at midnight on 5 August hastily pulled his army right back to Dunbar, where he remained until 12 August. The decision to withdraw so far back was prompted in large part by the rough

**RIGHT** This yellow and black colour (BM Harl.1460/107) corresponds to descriptions of those carried by the Marquess of Argyle's Regiment in the 1640s. A detachment from the regiment fought at Dunbar in Innes' Brigade.

**FAR RIGHT** Two of these plain yellow colours (BM Harl.1460/118 & 119), together with a fragment of a third lacking the white saltire were taken at Dunbar. Yellow colours were traditionally carried by units raised in Fife and as only three belonging to this particular set were taken they probably belonged to Colonel Colin Pittscottie's Regiment, which was the only Fife unit to escape more or less intact.



weather, which prevented any supplies being landed at Musselburgh, and by the fact that having elected to rely on the ships rather than the usual train of wagons he had great difficulty in bringing supplies forward from Dunbar instead. Even more importantly, having gambled on good weather and a swift campaign he had not encumbered his army with tents and had suffered accordingly. The tents were at last landed at Dunbar and issued to the soldiers but already the foul weather and scarcity of provisions was producing an appallingly high rate of sickness.

### **The Second Attempt**

Nevertheless, on 11 August Cromwell resolved on another attempt to bring Leven to battle. This time he planned to swing right around to the south and west of Edinburgh, more or less along the line of the present City Bypass. In theory it would of course mean temporarily cutting himself off from his base at Dunbar, but as he had no overland supply lines to worry about this was not quite the gamble it might at first appear, since his aim was to re-establish contact with the fleet at Queensferry, to the west of Edinburgh. On the contrary, he would then have successfully interdicted Leven's line of communications to Stirling and the West and would thus force the Scots out into the open where he wanted them.

At 5.00am on the morning of Sunday 13 August he had two cannon fired as a signal to his ships and marched west again. The move initially took the Scots by surprise, not least because it was the Lord's Day. However, his lack of transport meant Cromwell could only carry three days' supplies, and instead of pushing blindly into hostile territory he initially contented himself with seizing a strong position on the Braid Hills in the Pentlands. Next day, having established his camp, he sent a letter to his old colleague, David Leslie, urging a peaceful settlement. This produced a meeting of officers from both armies later that day on the sands between Musselburgh and Leith, but although some of the Scots again declared their detestation of the King they were not prepared to change sides. Negotiation having failed and the three days' supplies having been consumed, Cromwell was compelled to fall back again to Musselburgh the next day.

The futility of this rather dot and carry mode of campaigning was quickly exposed when Leven, in Cromwell's absence, duly came out and occupied a strong blocking position on Corstorphine Hill without any molestation. Hurrying back into position on the Braid Hills, Cromwell



stormed a minor Scots outpost in a house at Redhall on 26 August but then decided that Leven's main fighting position was far too strong, and so decided instead to shift further westwards once again in the hope of cutting the Scots' lines of communication with Stirling. However, Leven, who was of course operating on interior lines, rather predictably forestalled him again and this time blocked his path at the village of Gogar.

Initially the situation looked fairly promising for the Scots appeared to be standing in the open. Cromwell accordingly prepared to attack, only to have to call the operation off on realising that both of Leven's flanks were secured by boggy ground and that his invitingly open front was not only boggy as well but swept by artillery.

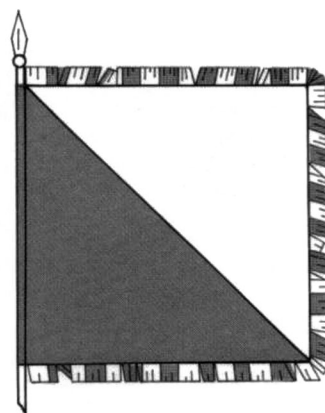
Unwilling to risk a battle under less than favourable conditions, unable to break through to the sea, short of supplies and increasingly concerned about his own line of communications and lack of transport, Cromwell once more fell back first to Musselburgh and then on 31 August pulled out for Dunbar. On the previous night Cromwell had convened a council of war that eventually resolved to retreat there on the rather curious grounds that it would be 'a place for a good magazine', as well as affording shelter for the sick, while they dug in to await reinforcements. Cromwell also rather disingenuously justified the move by expressing the hope that Leven might thereby be tempted to come out and fight. In this at least he was not disappointed for at this point the Scots army suddenly went over on to the offensive.

Throughout this period Leven and Leslie had been working hard to improve the efficiency of their raw levies, both by 'exercising' them and by overseeing two successive purges of unsuitable officers. Now, leaving the aged Leven behind in Edinburgh, David Leslie took the army out of its trenches not to pursue but to destroy the English army.

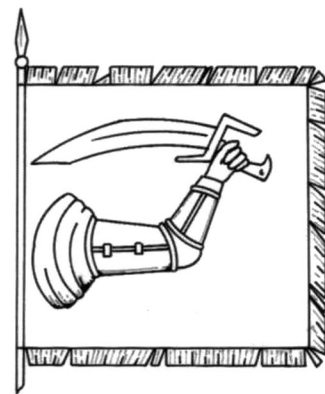
## Retreat

Notwithstanding his publicly expressed hope that the Scots would come out to fight, Cromwell now showed no disposition whatever to stand and face them but instead hurried straight for Haddington, although with what must have seemed like depressing inevitability his rearguard was beaten up there that night. Once again the rearguard was thrown into disorder as it approached the town but fortunately 'the Lord by his providence put a cloud over the moon', and so the rear brigade of horse managed to break contact under cover of the resulting darkness. Nothing daunted the Scots tried again at midnight. This time, according to John Hodgson the attackers included 'a party of mounted musketeers' – presumably Lord Kirkcudbright's Dragoons – and although details of the fight are lacking this must have been an altogether much more serious affair for it took an hour's fighting before they were repulsed by Colonel Charles Fairfax's Foot. Just what the English cavalry were doing, or rather not doing during the battle, was not explained.

Next morning Cromwell drew up his exhausted army in order of battle, 'into an open field on the south side of Haddington', in the expectation that a full-scale assault was imminent. Whether at this point in time the army was in much condition to withstand that attack is perhaps a moot point, but as the morning wore on Cromwell took the opportunity to send his baggage and sick safely back to the town. Then



ABOVE Cornet belonging to Major-General Sir John Browne's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/93); white over red with a white and red fringe. The troop commander is unknown but Lieutenant Colonel William Bruce of the same regiment had a very similar cornet (BM Harl.1460/47) which was red over white, counter-charged with a silver and red fleur de lis, surrounded by the usual motto and edged with a blue and white fringe.



ABOVE Scots cavalry cornet (BM Harl.1460/73); the crest would suggest it belonged to Major William Johnston's troop of Sir Charles Arnett's Regiment; gold arm and sword on red field surrounded by gold fringe.

OPPOSITE Musket drill, based on William Jenner's *Military Discipline* of 1642, but omitting the obsolescent musket rest. These figures provide a much better picture of English musketeers than the popular Dutch illustrations of half a century before.



Bring come to y<sup>e</sup> feet stand hold your Musket barrell in y<sup>e</sup> hand about y<sup>e</sup> height of y<sup>e</sup> shoulder to the butt end on y<sup>e</sup> ground



Strike down your right hand not bowing y<sup>e</sup> body then wipe your musket and lift it up then bring about y<sup>e</sup> left hand and poise it to your musket.



Put back with your right leg to your former stand then hold the thumb of y<sup>e</sup> right hand behind the sculdrion of the pan and with your two former fingers draw back the cover of the pan



Should y<sup>e</sup> touch box between y<sup>e</sup> thumb and forefinger of the right hand only and for Prime as in y<sup>e</sup> figure



Lay y<sup>e</sup> thumb over the barrell neere the Ram, and with your two former fingers find the Pann. Should your Musket fall with the right hand on the barrell the left as before turning the Pann downwards that the Loose Powder may fall off



Should y<sup>e</sup> Musket in both hands as before, leave it up towards your mouth not blowing blow off y<sup>e</sup> Loose Powder.



Hold your Musket in both hands as before, leave it up towards your left side and with all flip forwards the right leg then holding the Musket only in the right hand at the breech take y<sup>e</sup> Musket in y<sup>e</sup> left hand about y<sup>e</sup> middle of y<sup>e</sup> barrell so as y<sup>e</sup> butt end touch not the ground.



Take your charge in your right hand with the thumb and fore finger thereof thrust of the cover Put back your left hand with the Musket as before, conveniently you can and with your right hand strike the Powder into y<sup>e</sup> middle of y<sup>e</sup> barrell building y<sup>e</sup> charge between y<sup>e</sup> thumb and forefinger only.



With your right hand of Prime turned from you draw forth your scouring stick having your back and left hand to y<sup>e</sup> Musket as far back as you can.



Put your scouring stick down in to your Musket and Rame home hard twice or thrice



With your right hand turned draw you y<sup>e</sup> scouring stick out of your Musket as before Put the scouring stick to his place from whence you had it



Bring forward y<sup>e</sup> Musket w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> left hand and leave it right up take it in y<sup>e</sup> right hand at y<sup>e</sup> breech and so hold it in y<sup>e</sup> right hand as y<sup>e</sup> figure



Take your match from between y<sup>e</sup> two little fingers to the thumb and second finger of your right hand Bring the right hand of the match backward and your left hand at y<sup>e</sup> musket forward turning your face somewhat backward blow your match off.



Holding your match between y<sup>e</sup> thumb and second finger bring it to the cock and press it into the cock with the thumb



Recover your right hand to your former and y<sup>e</sup> second finger to y<sup>e</sup> breech



Lift up your right elbow and place the butt end of y<sup>e</sup> musket within y<sup>e</sup> shoulder neere y<sup>e</sup> butt standing with the left leg foremost and the head bent and the right leg standing stiff.



Take the match from the cocks with the thumb and second finger of y<sup>e</sup> right hand holding the musket in the left hand only. Draw from hence y<sup>e</sup> prime and charge as before.



Having y<sup>e</sup> musket poised bring it before y<sup>e</sup> body and go with both hands by y<sup>e</sup> gently on y<sup>e</sup> shoulder and without turning y<sup>e</sup> right leg up to y<sup>e</sup> left then fall back againe with y<sup>e</sup> right leg.



This edition figured and compiled by Stank Reid anno 1788.



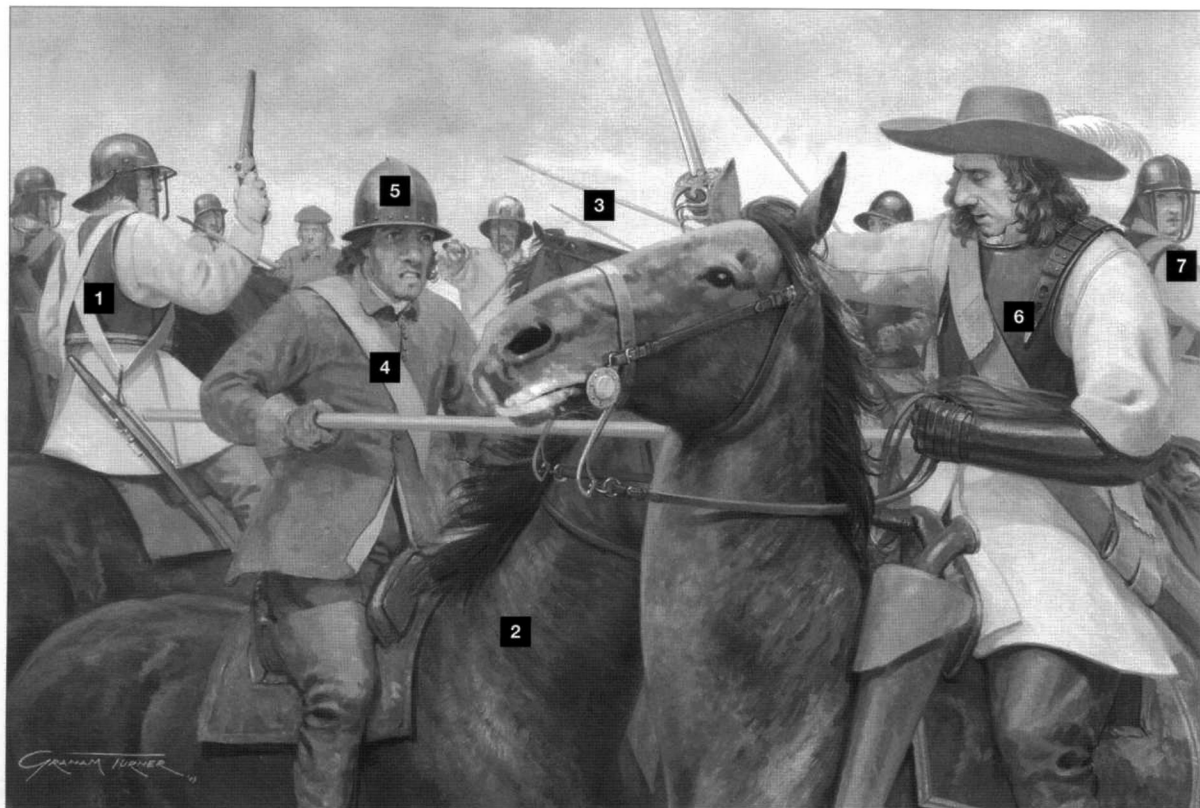


GRAHAM TURNER '03









#### CALEDONIA TRIUMPHANT – THE CAVALRY ACTION AT MUSSELBURGH (pages 54–55)

Cromwell and his Ironsides had not been impressed by the Scots cavalry, whom they encountered during the First Civil War. After Marston Moor Lord Saye and Sele had commented that 'the Enemies Horse ... stood a very long time, coming to a close fight with the Sword, and standing like an Iron Wall, so that they were not easily broken, if the Scots light, but weak Nags had undertaken that work, they had never been able to stand a charge, or indure the shock of the Enemies Horse.' Indeed for that very reason the two Scots cavalry brigades present at Marston Moor had been posted in reserve. However, instead of simply adding their negligible weight to the back of the scrum the Scots cavalry had used their superior mobility to move around on to the flank and into the rear of the Royalist line. This manoeuvre proved decisive and David Leslie and his officers drew the appropriate lessons. The original mustering instructions in the 1640s had called for cavalry troopers to be armed and equipped with swords and pistols, body armour and helmets, in similar fashion to the English cavalry (1). Lances were permitted but only as a substitute if better arms could not be provided. Afterwards the instructions changed. Recognising that their 'weak Nags' (2) were unable to 'indure the shock' of a conventional cavalry scrum, Scots officers had all their men armed with lances (3), and body armour was dispensed with entirely (4), lancers being protected by a steel cap (5) at best. Thereafter they relied on the speed and manoeuvrability conferred by their nags rather than weight

and solidity. This in turn meant there was no longer a need to maintain a long unbroken frontage and so led to cavalry units being organised in only three troops rather than the six or more common at the time of Marston Moor. In short the Scots, recognising their limitations, turned themselves into good light cavalry rather than second-rate heavy cavalry. At Musselburgh the Scots lancers proved frighteningly effective, as even Cromwell himself was forced to admit: 'The enemy, when we drew off, fell on upon our rear and put them into some little disorder, but our bodies of horse being in some readiness, came to a grapple with them; where indeed there was a gallant and hot dispute; the Maj.-Gen [Lambert] (6) and Col. Whalley being in the rear and the enemy drawing out great bodies to second their first affront. Our men charged them up to the very trenches, and beat them in. The Major General's horse was shot in the neck and head; himself run through the arm with a lance, and run into another place of his body, was taken prisoner by the enemy, but rescued immediately by Lieut. Empson of my regiment. Coll. Whalley, (7) who was then nearest to the Maj. Gen., did charge very resolutely and repulsed the enemy, and killed divers of them upon the place and took some prisoners, without any considerable loss, which indeed did so amaze and quiet them, that we marched off to Musselburgh, but they dared not send out a man to trouble us.' Unsurprisingly the Scots told a very different story, crowing that they had mortally wounded Lambert, killed hundreds of the enemy and come off again without any 'grate losse'. (Graham Turner)



'having waited about the space of four hours to see if he would come to us and not finding any inclination in the enemy so to do, we resolved to go, according to our first intendment, to Dunbar.'

According to Cromwell this time the move went well. At first the Scots seemed inclined once again to hustle the retreat. 'By the time we had marched three or four miles,' he reported, 'we saw some bodies of the enemy's horse draw out of their quarters; and by that time our carriages were gotten near Dunbar, their whole army was upon their march after us; and indeed our drawing back in this manner, with the addition of three new regiments added to them (presumably Innes' brigade from the north of Scotland), did much heighten their confidence, if not presumption and arrogance.'

Captain John Hodgson on the other hand recalled the retreat rather less complacently and described how: 'We staid until about ten o'clock, had been at prayer in several regiments, sent away our wagons and carriages towards Dunbar, and not long afterwards marched, a poor, shattered, hungry, discouraged army; and the Scots pursued very close, that our rearguard had much ado to secure our poor weak foot that was not able to march up. We drew near Dunbar towards night and the Scots ready to fall upon our rear: two guns played upon them, and so they drew off and left us that night, having got us unto a pound as they reckoned.'

Expecting a direct attack, Cromwell halted and drew up his army 'in battalia in the town fields, between the Scotch army and the town ready to engage'. The baggage train and the guns were at first secured in the churchyard but as night came on Cromwell drew the guns out again and placed them in the middle of his lines, no doubt expecting an attack early in the morning.

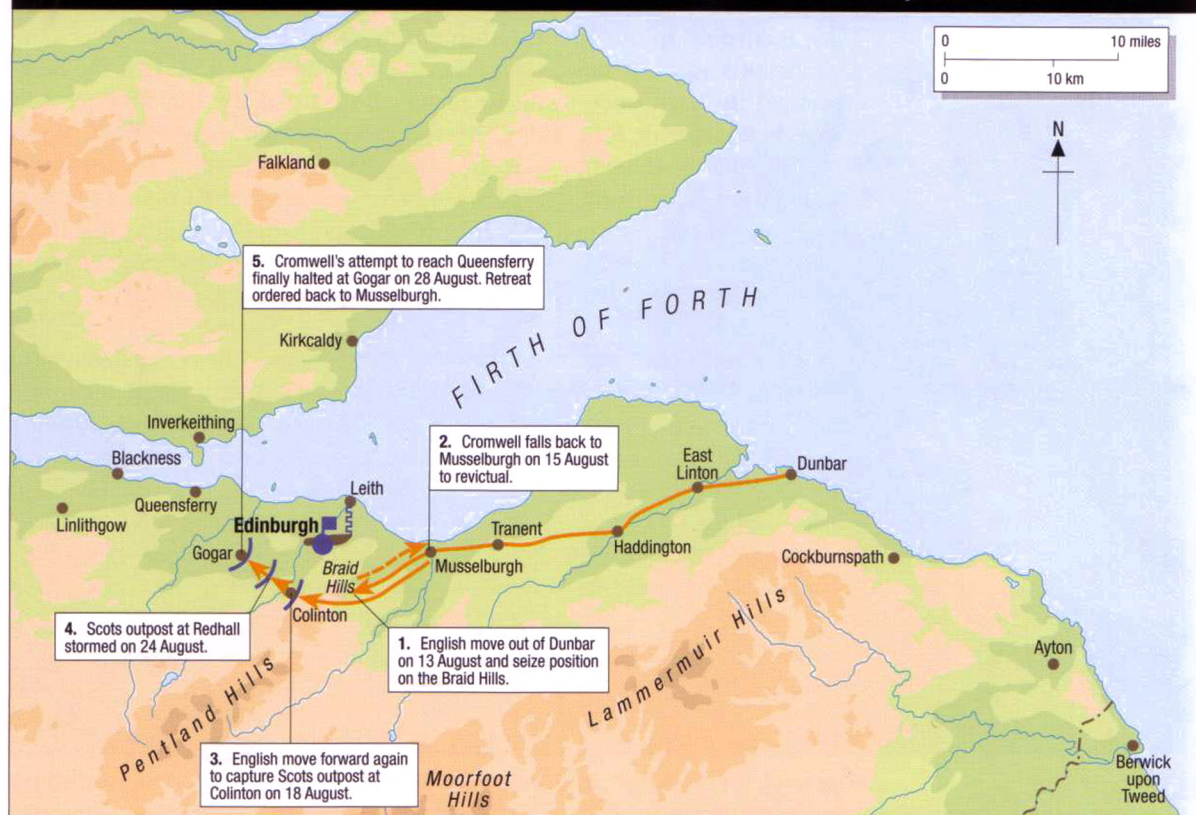
However, while the English rearguard was being vigorously hustled by the Scots cavalry, the greater part of Leslie's army, instead of following on Cromwell's heels as he supposed, slid eastwards. The previous night, while Cromwell's men were fighting off the attacks on the camp at Haddington, a Scots infantry brigade had been flung into the defile at Cockburnspath, cutting the Berwick road and ensuring that no reinforcements could come up it. Now the bulk of the Scots army secured the commanding eminence of Doon Hill, overlooking Dunbar and the Berwick road. To all appearances Cromwell was now trapped, and a major battle was all but inevitable.

### **Preparations for battle**

The only questions remaining were where and when the battle was to be fought, and more importantly perhaps why? In answering these questions, and particularly the 'why', it soon becomes apparent that there are excellent grounds for believing that neither the defeated Scots nor the victorious English were particularly candid in their explanations.

For the Scots, the widely accepted story is that after having taken up an impregnable position on top of Doon Hill the army's officers were prevailed upon by a hideous travelling committee of clerics and politicians to come down off the hill and engage in a vainglorious battle of annihilation rather than tamely await the inevitable surrender. This view of events was certainly widespread on both sides at the time, but takes little account of the military realities of the tactical situation.

## CROMWELL'S SECOND ADVANCE ON EDINBURGH, AUGUST 1650



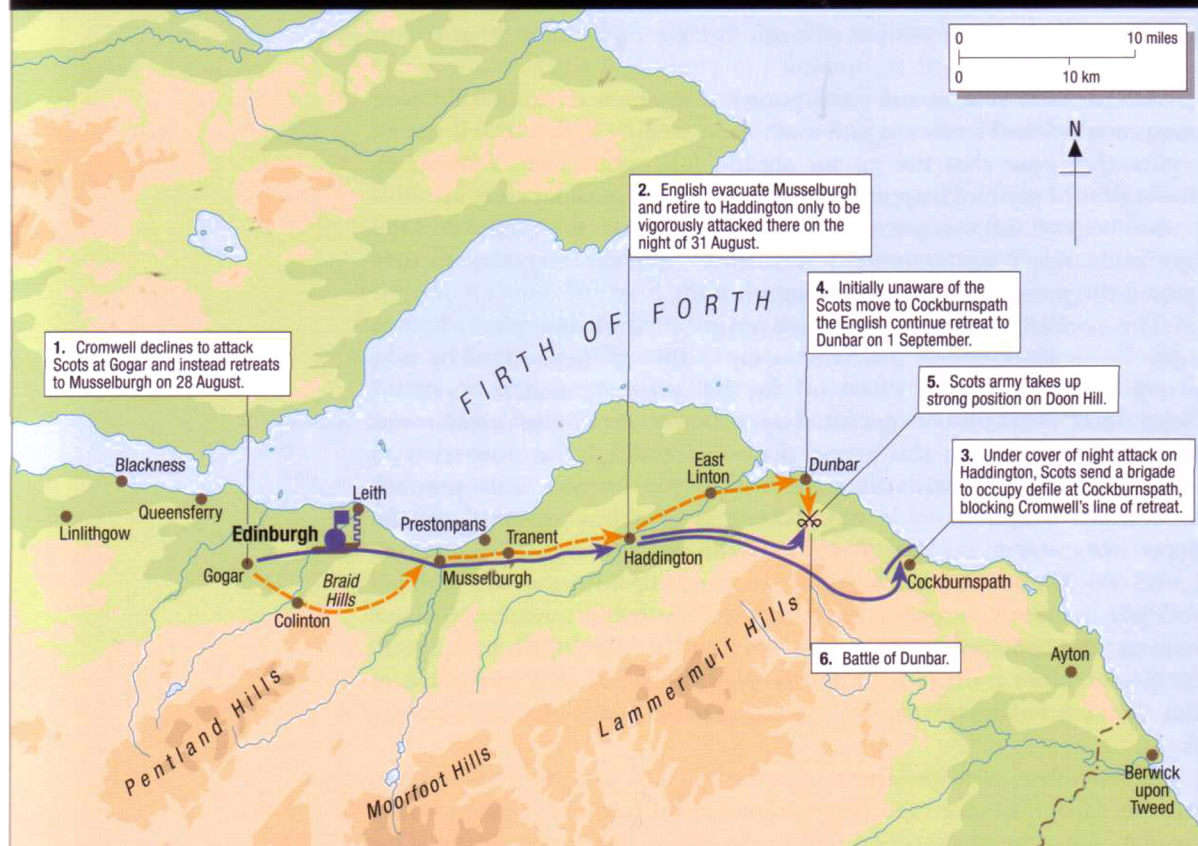
When the Scots first flung themselves across Cromwell's line of retreat on 1 September it was only natural that they should secure the dominant heights of Doon Hill. Once they were actually on top of the hill it would very soon have become apparent – if indeed it had not been obvious from the very start – that the position suffered significant drawbacks and was in reality no place to fight a battle.

In the first place the bad weather that had so far characterised much of the campaign was now turning much worse. The hilltop offered no shelter from either wind or rain and it is significant that in the immediate aftermath of the battle Cromwell released a large number of 'sick' Scots captives who were undoubtedly suffering from exposure. Set against this the position certainly offered a magnificent view of the coastal plain and the English army below, and its steep slopes were undoubtedly unassailable, but those advantages counted for nothing if the English were not so accommodating as to attempt such a hopeless assault. On the other hand, so long as the Scots remained on top of the hill there was very little they could do to hinder or impede the movements of the English army, particularly since they lacked heavy guns.

Instead, as the Reverend Robert Baillie recorded, the subsequent inquiry into the conduct of David Leslie concluded that he was guilty of 'no maladministration ... but the removall of the armie from the hill the night before the rowt, which yet was a consequence of the Committee's order, contrare to his mind, to stop the enemie's retreat, and for that end storm Broxmouth House so soon as possible.'



## DUNBAR ENDGAME



This then is clear enough. The army was ordered to descend the hill, not to attack the English but to more effectually block the Berwick road. Of itself this decision was a perfectly sensible one, but it provoked an immediate response from the English, which in turn led Leslie to take up a false position.

The move began shortly before sunrise on 2 September but it took some time and it was not until about four in the afternoon that the artillery and baggage was finally brought down and secured beside Meikle Pinkerton farm – the length and complexity of the operation once again emphasising the impracticality of the original hill-top position.

In the meantime Cromwell brought his army forward from Dunbar and formed a battle-line on the north side of the Broxburn. Leslie, no doubt wary of being attacked before all of his men could be brought down and properly deployed, conformed by arranging his own battle line along the southern side. At no time, however, did he contemplate launching a frontal assault of his own across the burn. The Broxburn, although neither particularly deep nor broad, for the most part runs through a broad trench-like ravine and constitutes a significant military obstacle, particularly since the northern or English side of the ravine is rather higher than the southern side and very largely dominates it.

Between the Berwick road and the sea on the other hand it is much easier to cross the stream and as Baillie noted, Leslie had designs upon the main crossing point near Broxmouth House. To that end there was some



skirmishing during the latter part of the afternoon, since Cromwell was equally alive to its importance and at one stage a particularly vicious fight took place for possession of a minor crossing point at what is now Brand's Mill:

'On the side of the bank was a poor house which stood in a shelving pass; Lieut.-Gen. Fleetwood and Col. Pride sent 24 foot and 6 horse to secure that pass, that the enemy should not come over. The enemy about four of the clock drew down about two troops of lancers into this pass to beat off the said party; the six horse gave way; they killed 3 of the foot and took 3, and wounded and drove away the rest, and so they gained the pass, but nevertheless kept it not.'

This seemingly pointless skirmish was presumably intended to cover a partial deployment of the Scots army. Although Leslie had by now brought all of his army down off the hill without mishap he rather belatedly realised that having lined up opposite the English army, it was actually positioned in the wrong place. Accordingly he now tried to extend his right towards the sea, but in this he was only partially successful. Cromwell noted the movement of about two-thirds of the Scots horse from the left flank to reinforce the right, which took place shortly after the skirmish at Brand's Mill, but otherwise Leslie's redeployment was considerably hampered by the very restricted space between the Broxburn and the foot of the hill. Consequently by nightfall on 2 September most of his infantry were still positioned to the left of the Berwick road with the all but impassable ravine directly to their front.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the unsatisfactory deployment, he had now very firmly blocked the Berwick road and Cromwell knew he was in trouble. Once he was satisfied that Leslie had suspended operations for the night he and his senior officers 'went and supped at Dunbar for refreshment, and presently after, before five of the clock, they took horse and went into the fields, and then called a council of war.'

## **Decision**

The battle that followed was undoubtedly a stunning victory and all of those concerned were afterwards at considerable pains to individually claim the credit for both urging the attack and planning its execution. However these claims do not stand up to serious scrutiny and are flatly contradicted by a vital piece of evidence.

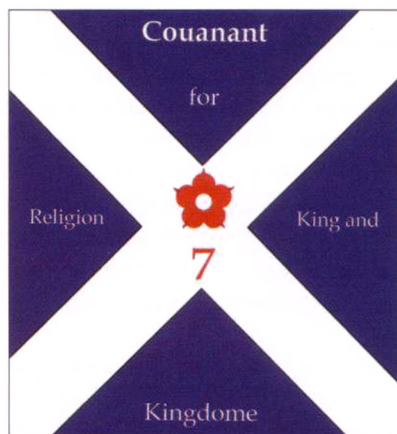
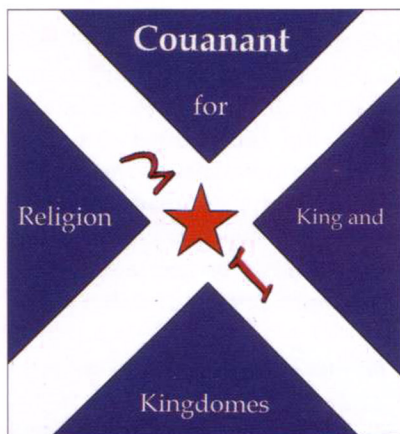
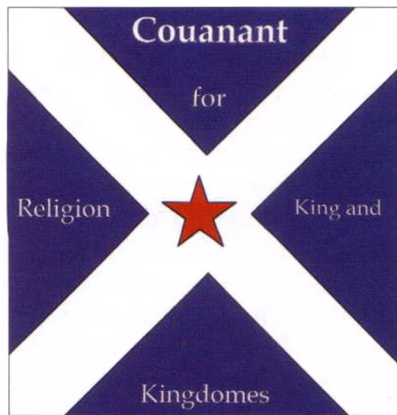
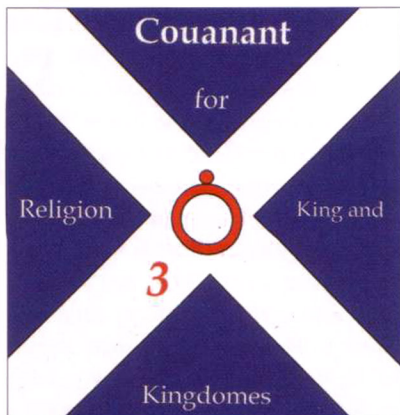
There is little doubt that by the evening of 2 September the 'poor, shattered, hungry, discouraged' English army was pretty well at the end of its tether. In the six weeks since crossing the border on 22 July, every offensive move had been frustrated by the Scots and every retreat harried by the ever-present lancers. Even the famous Ironsides had found themselves running away at one point. The weather alone had been depressingly bad; the army had suffered constant privation and in consequence may have lost something between 4,000 and 5,000 sick! Captain Hodgson, although not present at the council of war (unless of course he provided its security) memorably recalled that 'many of the colonels were for shipping the foot, and the horse to force the passage'. Instead, he claims, his own commanding officer, Major-General Lambert, very properly opposed that notion, pointing out that 'there was no time to ship the foot, for the day would be upon us, and we should lose all our

carriages'. What was more the inability of the navy and the hired transports to adequately supply the army must have raised considerable doubts as to whether they would be able to lift any appreciable number of the infantry at all. In short, any attempt to evacuate the army by sea would almost certainly result in a re-run of the disaster at Lostwithiel in 1644 when the Earl of Essex's Parliamentary army had been trapped and forced to surrender.

Instead, according to the ever-loyal Hodgson, Lambert forcefully, if not inspirationally, advocated an all-out assault on the Scots' position with the object of turning Leslie's right, pinning the army against the slopes of Doon Hill and then destroying it. This was pretty well what actually happened next morning and if Hodgson's account is true, the plan reflects considerable credit upon his commander. Cromwell's version is not inconsistent when he described in his official dispatch how: 'The Major General and myself coming to the Earl of Roxburgh's house (Broxmouth House) and observing this posture, I told him it did give us an opportunity and advantage to attempt upon the enemy. To which he immediately replied that he had thought to have said the same thing to me. So that it pleased the Lord to set the same apprehension upon both of our hearts at the same instant. We called for Colonel Monk and showed him the thing ...' Similarly Monck's biographer, Gumble, attributes the advocacy of the attack to *him*, but on the other hand a one-time professional soldier turned hack writer named Fitzpayne Fisher silently, and perhaps unwittingly reveals that the



English Dragooners, such as these troopers of Okey's depicted by Shaun Hart, were equipped with firelock muskets and carried their ammunition in leather cartridge boxes rather than in the old-fashioned collar of bandoliers. (Partisan Press)



TOP LEFT Captain's colour with white saltire on blue. (BM Harl.1460/24) Probably belonging to a regiment raised in 1649, the red ring originally denoted the fifth captain, but he has evidently been promoted.

TOP RIGHT Captain's colour with white saltire on blue. (BM Harl.1460/23). The red star or mullet in the centre may denote the third captain according to the scheme introduced in 1649, but two other colours in this set bear crudely applied figure threes.

BOTTOM LEFT Captain's colour with white saltire on blue. (BM Harl.1460/21). Once again the red star or mullet in the centre should identify the third captain. However, this particular company obviously underwent some considerable disruption during the purges.

BOTTOM RIGHT Captain's colour with white saltire on blue. (BM Harl.1460/27) In this case the red rose and figure 7 are in agreement, as are the devices and numerals indicating the first, fourth and sixth captains on other captured colours belonging to this unit.

council of war almost certainly produced a rather different resolution and that the 'opportunity' was not the destruction of the Scots army.

When the English army flung itself into Dunbar on 1 September the baggage train was secured within the walled churchyard beyond the eastern end of the town. When the resolution was taken to fight at the council of war on the night of 2 September it would have been sensible to have left it there, or even to have sent it into the town itself for greater security.

Yet Fisher's contemporary picture map of the battle, prepared from eyewitness testimony for a proposed official history of the campaign, shows both the churchyard and the adjacent English camp to be empty. Instead the baggage train is clearly and unambiguously placed within the grounds of Broxmouth House – Cromwell's tactical headquarters and the jumping-off point for the assault!

Ordinarily this would be a most extraordinary place for a 17th-century army to place its baggage train, but the fact that Cromwell brought it so far forward indicates that the attack at dawn next morning was not the outcome of a bold resolution to go forward and fight the enemy, as the principal actors and their partisans afterwards claimed. Rather it was a desperate attempt to force open the Berwick road in order that the army could cut its way out of the trap and escape southwards. To that end the baggage train had all too evidently been brought up in order that once the withdrawal commenced it could be passed down the road as soon as possible rather than left to become entangled with the rearguard.





**Dunbar: Doon Hill as seen from the original English start-line to the north of the Broxburn.**

This in turn no doubt explains why Cromwell, 'rid all the night before through the several regiments by torchlight, upon a little Scots nag, biting his lip till the blood ran down his chin without his perceiving it, his thoughts being busily employed to be ready for the action now at hand'. There was little wonder he was nervous, for having declined the admittedly risky option of trying to evacuate at least a part of his army by sea, he was now gambling everything on re-opening the road and escaping overland. If the dawn attack failed, the army, even if not actually defeated (for it could always fall back behind the Broxburn), would have little alternative but to surrender.

Notwithstanding, the proposal, desperate as it no doubt seemed, was assented to by all of the assembled colonels and under cover of a black night and heavy rain the army was pulled out of its battle-line along the Broxburn and assembled, one brigade stacked behind the other, astride the Berwick road.

# THE BATTLE OF DUNBAR

It was, remembered John Nicoll, 'a drakie nycht full of wind and weit'; or as Walker put it in English, 'very rainy and tempestuous'. The Scots Army seems to have been aware that something was happening for it remained standing to its arms for much of the night and at 'ten o'clock the enemy did give an alarm to ours. The whole army then being in a readiness they were repulsed.' This was probably no more than a demonstration mounted by some of Okey's Dragoons to cover the redeployment of the English Army. After it was over the Scots began to settle down and at about midnight Major-General Holburne gave permission for all but two musketeers in each company to extinguish their slow-match. Ordinarily this would have been a sensible enough precaution that not only prevented waste and ensured that the match could be kept dry within the soldiers' clothing, but also meant that the soldiers themselves could try to snatch some sleep. It also once again indicated that contrary to what is often said, the Scots had no plans to mount an offensive of their own, but were content to sit tight and block the high road to England.

As the soldiers 'made themselves shelter of the corn new-reapt', many of the cavalymen and officers retired to their tents and Leslie complained two days after the battle that 'I know I get my share of the salt for drawing them so near the enemy, and must suffer in this as many times formerly; though I take God to witness we might as easily have beaten them as we did James Graham at Philiphaugh, if the officers had stayed by their own troops and regiments.'

Thus they were quite unprepared when at about four in the morning Fleetwood moved forward to secure the crossing points over the Broxburn.

## INITIAL DISPOSITIONS

Cromwell afterwards reckoned that he had 7,500 infantry and 3,500 cavalry fit to fight at Dunbar on the morning of 3 September. His leading brigade was commanded by John Lambert and comprised Fleetwood's, Lambert's and Whalley's regiments of horse. Immediately behind was another cavalry brigade made up of Lilburne's, Hacker's and Twisleton's regiments, almost certainly commanded by Colonel Robert Lilburne. Assuming Cromwell's estimate to be correct, the two brigades presumably mustered about 1,500 men apiece. Next came Colonel George Monck's rather weak infantry brigade comprising his own and Malverer's regiments, and the five remaining companies of Colonel George Fenwick's, probably totalling something in the region of about 2,000 men. Cromwell's official report on the battle rather perfunctorily implies that Lieutenant-General Fleetwood was in overall charge of this 'vanguard', although Hodgson



Colonel's white colour bearing the gold crest of Lord Balmerino, on a silver and red orle (BM Harl.1460/41). Scroll is edged red and all lettering is gold. Balmerino was certainly ordered to raise a regiment in the Edinburgh area in 1650, but this colour is the only real evidence of its existence. His men were presumably attached to Colonel Alexander Stewart's Edinburgh Regiment.



**Dunbar: The Broxburn, as seen from the top of Doon Hill looking towards Easter Broomhouse and Dunbar. Many of the Scots were to flee across it here only to be captured on the sands of Belhaven Bay seen in the left distance.**

rather predictably claims that 'one [of the council] steps up and desires that Colonel Lambert might have the conduct of the army that morning, which was granted by the general freely'.

Next came two more infantry brigades. Pride's Brigade was made up of his own regiment of course, together with the Lord General's, under Major Goffe, and Major-General Lambert's. Behind Pride's was Overton's Brigade. His own regiment was not present, but he did have those of Coxe, Daniel and Charles Fairfax. Each of them must have had about 2,500 men. Finally in the rear of all came Cromwell's own regiment of horse acting as a reserve. His official dispatch however actually refers to two regiments in the reserve, which presumably means that his regiment was brigaded with the two companies of Okey's Dragoons equipped as Horse.

This then was the force assigned to destroy the Scots right wing and re-open the Berwick road. As to the rest it would appear that the mounted infantry element of Okey's Dragoons still maintained a picquet line along the edge of the Broxburn while the artillery was in all probability placed on the high ground above Brand's Mill where, as Lambert allegedly recommended they 'might have fair play at their left wing while we were fighting their right'.

On the other side of the Broxburn information on the Scots dispositions remains scanty, at least as far as the cavalry is concerned. All that can be established with any certainty is that the majority were on the



1. 2 SEPTEMBER. Having come down from Doon Hill, the Scots army forms its battle-line on the south side of the Broxburn.

8. Monck's infantry brigade crosses the Broxburn and engages Lumsden's infantry brigade, which it rapidly destroys. General Lumsden is badly wounded and captured and a large number of Scots colours are taken.

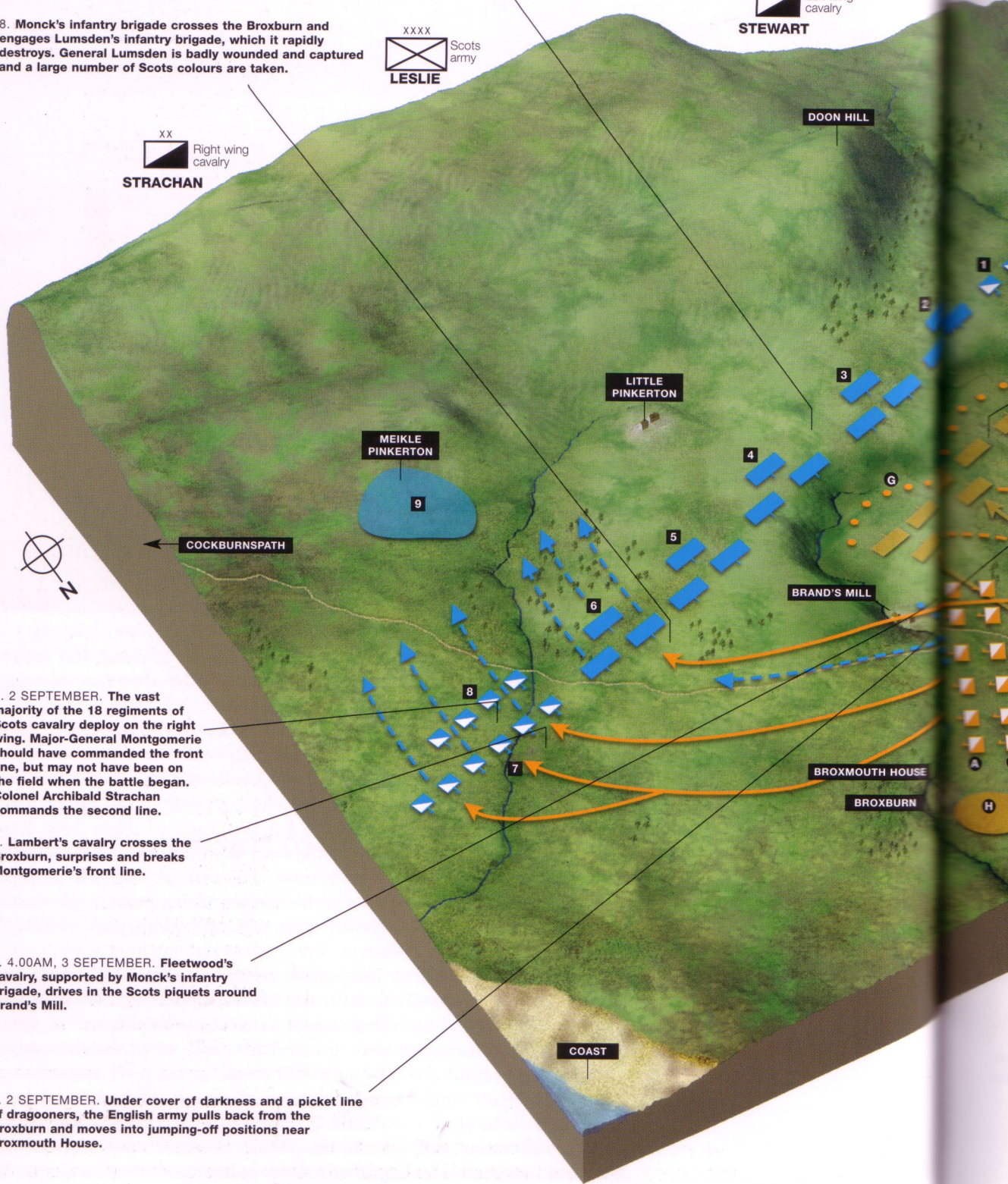


2. 2 SEPTEMBER. The vast majority of the 18 regiments of Scots cavalry deploy on the right wing. Major-General Montgomerie should have commanded the front line, but may not have been on the field when the battle began. Colonel Archibald Strachan commands the second line.

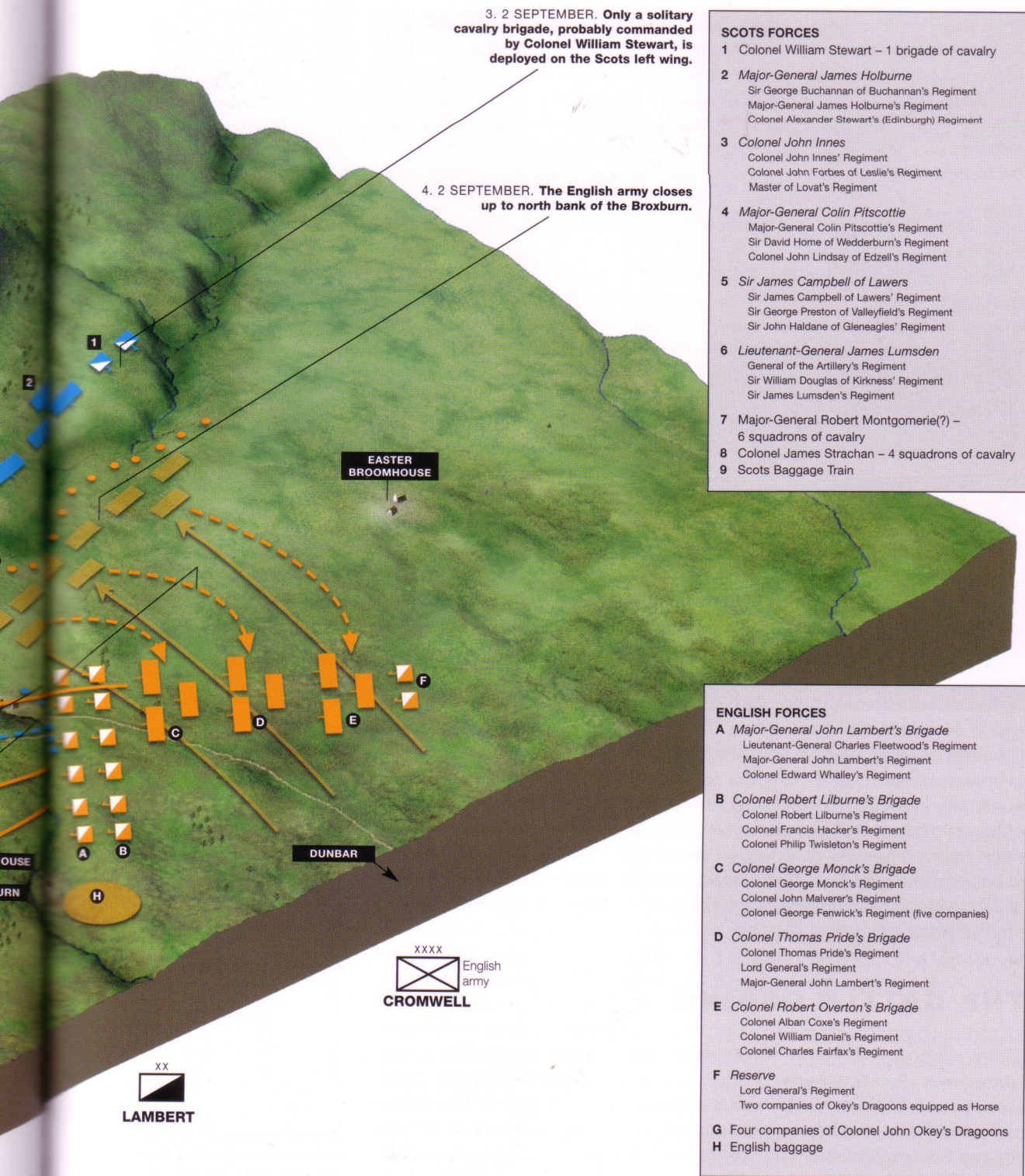
7. Lambert's cavalry crosses the Broxburn, surprises and breaks Montgomerie's front line.

6. 4.00AM, 3 SEPTEMBER. Fleetwood's cavalry, supported by Monck's infantry brigade, drives in the Scots piquets around Brand's Mill.

5. 2 SEPTEMBER. Under cover of darkness and a picket line of dragoons, the English army pulls back from the Broxburn and moves into jumping-off positions near Broxmouth House.







## BATTLE OF DUNBAR

2–3 September 1650, viewed from the northeast. The Scots army moves off Doon Hill and deploys along the Broxburn. The English withdraw from the Broxburn under cover of night and the next morning attempt to punch a way through to the Berwick road.



right wing and largely posted between the Berwick road and the seashore. Major-General Robert Montgomerie should have commanded the first line, while the second is known to have been led by Colonel Archibald Strachan. No more than a single brigade remained on the left wing and the only unit that can be identified there is Colonel William Stewart's – he may well have been the brigade commander. Allowing for this solitary brigade, those cavalry on the right, facing Fleetwood's 'vanguard' may have numbered about 2,500 troopers and as such will have found themselves outnumbered by Fleetwood's 3,000 when the battle began.

As to the infantry, the five brigades can be placed with rather more confidence. As the senior infantry commander, Sir James Lumsden's Brigade will have been on the extreme right either beside or astride the Berwick road. As next in seniority, Major-General James Holburne's Brigade will by convention have stood on the extreme left, while the third major-general, Colin Pittscottie, had the centre. As to the intervening brigades there is ample evidence that Sir James Campbell of Lawers' Brigade was posted on the right between Lumsden's and Pittscottie's men, which by a simple process of elimination leaves Colonel John Innes' Brigade standing between Pittscottie's and Holburne's.

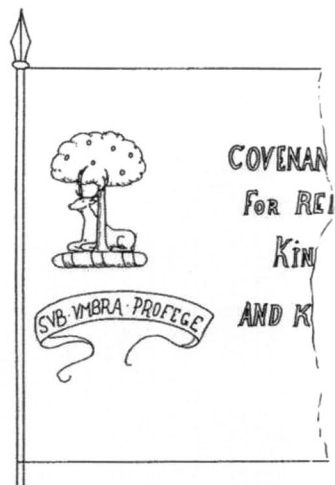
Sir James Lumsden's brigade was at least a fairly strong one, mustering over 2,000 men at the outset of the campaign. Unfortunately, although long-standing custom in all armies placed the brigade on the right, it was unique in being entirely made up of new recruits. Lawers' had about the same, while Pittscottie's had about 1,600, but as we have seen Innes probably only had something between 1,200 and 1,500, although Holburne must have had another 2,000.

In total the Scots infantry may have mustered as many as 9,500 men, and if so might still have given them something of an edge against Cromwell's 7,500 infantry had they met head on, although it does need to be stressed once again that this estimate does not allow for wastage. It is entirely possible that far from outnumbering the English the actual numbers present and fit to fight may have been about the same on both sides. In any case any advantage in numbers that might have existed was to be compromised both by the Scots' faulty dispositions and by the trick of fate which placed their rawest brigade squarely in the path of the English assault column.

## THE BATTLE BEGINS

There were probably only three places where it was practicable to get troops over the Broxburn; a narrow 'pass' at Brand's Mill, the main crossing point where the Berwick road led over it, and then further down on the fairly flat area between Broxmouth House and the sea. For obvious reasons Cromwell planned to pass most of his men across by the latter, but control of the road was essential if he was to get his infantry and baggage train across.

At about four in the morning therefore Fleetwood moved to secure the crossing points. At once Lambert's Brigade ran into the Scottish picquet line and quickly drove them back on their supports. There the attack stalled until Monck came up with his infantry brigade and a furious



**Plain white colonel's colour, bearing the crest of James Elphinstone, Lord Coupar (BM Harl.1460/46); brown stag, gold antlers, green tree with gold acorns, all resting on silver and red orle. Red edge and lettering on scroll, other lettering is gold. Although nominated to command a regiment of foot from Perthshire, this colour is the only evidence that any men were actually raised. In all probability they were attached to the regiment commanded by his fellow Perthshire colonel, Haldane of Gleneagles.**



**Colonel's colour, Sir George Preston of Valleyfield's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/48). All white field with Valleyfield's black unicorn crest – horn, beard and mane highlighted with gold. Scroll is edged red with black letters and tassels. This regiment was part of Lawers' brigade.**





**Dunbar: The top of Doon Hill, looking northwards past Dunbar to Belhaven Bay, the Bass Rock and Tantallon Castle. Although no fighting took place on top of the hill this photograph emphasises just how bleak and exposed to the elements the Scots camp really was.**

firefight erupted in which the artillery of both sides joined. The semi-official *True Relation* is rather light on detail but nevertheless describes how: 'A party of ours, advancing to gain the wind of the enemy, were discovered by a party of theirs who came to alarm us; but notwithstanding (through the Lord's great mercy), after above an hours dispute at the pass upon the Broadway between Dunbar and Berwick, our men obtained their end, possessed the pass, whereby we might with ease come over with our army.' By now the heavy rain had eased and the clouds were breaking up, for Cadwell reported that they fought for a time by moonlight, but it evidently closed in again and after nearly an hour both sides gave over and waited for first light, which came at about 5.30am.

For the Scots it should have been an opportunity to regroup but, as Leslie complained, far too many officers were absent and although he implied that it was regimental officers who were missing, the truth appears to be that they also included many of the brigade commanders and other senior officers. The most notable one, obviously, was the Earl of Leven, who is conspicuously absent from every surviving account of the battle – though at 70 years old he at least had some justification for remaining behind in Edinburgh on a wet and stormy night. Unfortunately it is probably significant that the authorisation to extinguish the musketeers' slow-match was given by Holburne, who was only a brigade commander.

It is also significant that when the fighting resumed after about half an hour Lambert, commanding the cavalry, got safely across the Broxburn,



9. 3 SEPTEMBER. Lawers' Brigade is overrun, although Sir John Haldane of Gleneagles' Regiment fight a bitter rearguard action. The regiment is largely destroyed losing its colonel, lieutenant-colonel and major.

8. 3 SEPTEMBER. With their commanders now determined to crush the Scots, Cromwell's own regiment of cavalry crosses the Broxburn and swings into the flank of Lawers' brigade, decisively tipping the balance in the infantry fight.

XX  
Right wing cavalry  
**STRACHAN**

10. 3 SEPTEMBER. With Lawers' Brigade destroyed, the English quickly roll up the remainder of the Scots battle-line.

XXXX  
Scots army  
**LESLIE**



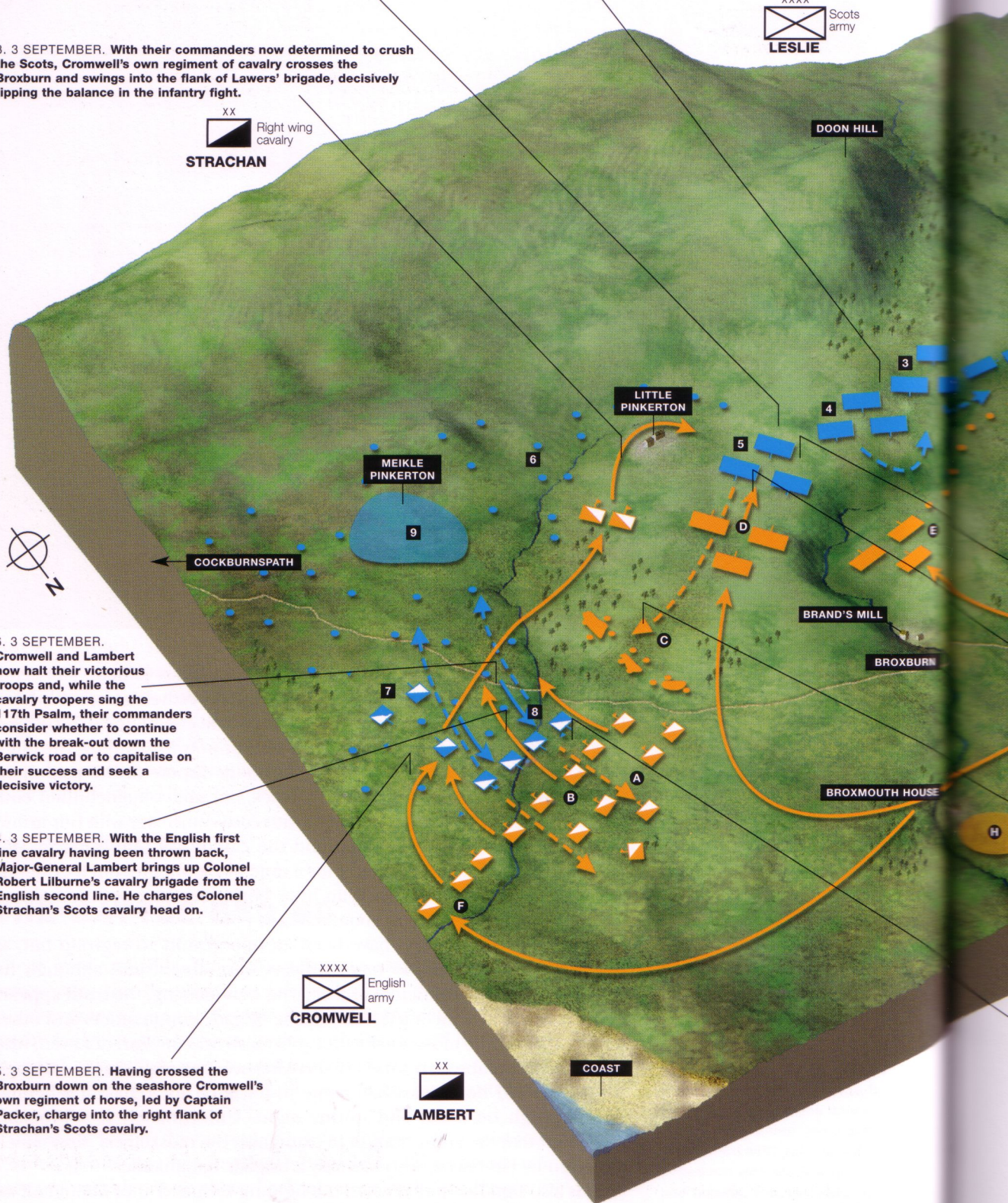
6. 3 SEPTEMBER. Cromwell and Lambert now halt their victorious troops and, while the cavalry troopers sing the 117th Psalm, their commanders consider whether to continue with the break-out down the Berwick road or to capitalise on their success and seek a decisive victory.

4. 3 SEPTEMBER. With the English first line cavalry having been thrown back, Major-General Lambert brings up Colonel Robert Lilburne's cavalry brigade from the English second line. He charges Colonel Strachan's Scots cavalry head on.

XXXX  
English army  
**CROMWELL**

5. 3 SEPTEMBER. Having crossed the Broxburn down on the seashore Cromwell's own regiment of horse, led by Captain Packer, charge into the right flank of Strachan's Scots cavalry.

XX  
**LAMBERT**







## BATTLE OF DUNBAR

3 September 1650, viewed from the northeast. Having swept the cavalry on the Scots right wing away, Cromwell abandons the break-out and turns on the Scots infantry seeking a decisive victory.





immediately scattered the first line of Scots cavalry and even got in amongst their tents before being halted and then driven back by a series of Scots counterattacks led not by Major-General Montgomerie, but by Colonel Archibald Strachan.

In the meantime Monck, charging forward again at the head of the vanguard infantry, crashed into Lumsden's Brigade on the right of the Scots infantry. Despite the fact that they must already have been engaged in the firefight when the Broxburn crossings were seized an hour earlier, Lumsden's men were all too evidently unprepared for the onslaught. The musketeers can hardly have still been trying to relight their slow-match, but it is entirely possible that being raw and untried they might have already shot off all their ammunition during the earlier fight. Certainly if Lumsden himself was late in arriving on the scene it would explain an apparent breakdown in command and control. At any rate, whatever the cause, there was no dispute about the result. The brigade disintegrated immediately. Lumsden was badly wounded and captured and Douglas of Kirkness was killed, as was Lieutenant-Colonel David Wemyss, the commander of the General of the Artillery's Regiment. A very large number of colours can be identified as having been taken from the



OPPOSITE **Dunbar: The Broxburn** in the area where both Colonel Pride and Colonel Monck crossed with their brigades. Although this was one of the easier crossing points it still represented a significant military obstacle. Nevertheless, the photo also emphasises the degree to which it was far more of an obstacle to an attacker approaching from the Scots side.

brigade and afterwards the General of the Artillery's was the only regiment to continue in service – albeit only fit for garrison duty.

## LAWERS' BRIGADE

Nevertheless, the fight cannot have been entirely one-sided, for Lumsden and his men managed to hold on just long enough for Campbell of Lawers' Brigade to get turned around and to completely knock Monck's Brigade out of the fight. At the same time Colonel Strachan rallied the second line of the Scots cavalry and, catching Lambert while he was still regrouping, likewise flung him back across the Broxburn. Things were looking serious for Cromwell and the break-out must have seemed in jeopardy, but he persevered and committed Colonel Thomas Pride's infantry brigade:

'... our first foot after they had discharged their duty (being overpowered with the enemy), received some repulse, which they soon recovered. But my own regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Goffe, and my major, White, did seasonably come in; and, at push of pike, did repel the stoutest regiment the enemy had there.'

Actually it was not quite so straightforward as that for in wheeling around to engage Lawers' men, Pride's brigade seems to have come adrift and consequently engaged piecemeal. The *True Relation* states that 'The Lord General's regiment of foot charged the enemy with much resolution, and were seconded by Colonel Pride's,' while Lambert's Foot scarcely got into the fight at all. According to Hodgson, then a captain in the regiment: 'The General himself comes in the rear of our regiment and commands to incline to the left; that was, to take more ground to be clear of all bodies.' The result was that the regiment came up on to the higher ground by Little Pinkerton and became bogged down in petty skirmishing with 'straggling parties' – presumably the remnants of Lumsden's Brigade.

BELOW **Dunbar: Panoramic view** of the battlefield looking north from the initial Scots position on top of Doon Hill. The line of the Broxburn is clearly visible. The town of Dunbar is just visible one-quarter of the distance along the coast from the left, being marked by a prominent church. The open ground on the right is the scene of the cavalry battle.







English accounts refer to the artillery on both sides joining in the pre-dawn fight for the crossings. These Scots gunners are depicted with a four-barrelled 'fframe' or light gun, by Shaun Hart. The appearance of the frame on which the barrels are mounted is entirely conjectural since none have survived. All that is known with any certainty that they were pack-mounted rather than wheeled. (Partisan Press)

Behind them meanwhile, Lambert brought Robert Lilburne's cavalry brigade forward from the second line and charged Strachan in front, while Cromwell's own regiment of horse led by Captain Packer, having crossed the Broxburn down by the sea-shore, charged him in flank. This time the Scots cavalry were knocked out of the fight for good. Some, naturally enough, fled down the road towards Cockburnspath while the others swung around the rear of the Scots infantry in order to make for Haddington.

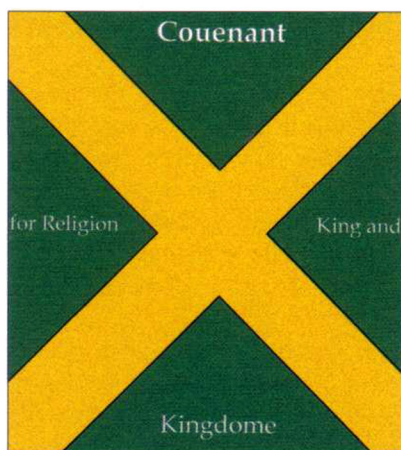
Instead of pursuing, Cromwell and Lambert now halted their victorious troopers and paused long enough to put them in order again and decide what to do next. Traditionally the cavalymen are said to have sung the 117th Psalm: *Oh Give you praise unto the Lord*, while they

**Dunbar:** The scene of the main infantry battle – between the trees and Little Pinkerton Farm on the extreme right, as seen from Doon Hill. It is likely that Lawers anchored his right wing on the farm and his left on the trees. Unfortunately most of the ground fought over by the cavalry of both sides has been quarried away by the cement works behind the farm.





Yellow on green captain's or field officer's colour belonging to Forbes of Leslie's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/70, 71 & 78), which served in Colonel John Innes' Brigade and appears to have lost seven colours in total.



waited and it must have been at this point rather than the night before that Cromwell, if he was still thinking in terms of a breakout, took the decision to encompass the total defeat of the Scots army instead.

The constricted nature of the battlefield was probably causing problems for both sides by this time. Monck's Brigade was still out of action and it was proving difficult for Overton's to get into the fight effectively, but the Scots were in a much worse position,

hemmed in as they were between the Broxburn and the base of Doon Hill. As the sun rose Cromwell saw and seized his opportunity, pushing his cavalry around the flank of Lawers' position and into the rear of the Scots infantry.

Thus far, although he himself may have been one of the absent officers, Lawers' men had been holding their own and Gumble, in his well known *Life of Monck* describes how 'onely Lawers his regiment of Highlanders made a good defence, and the chief officer, a lieutenant colonell, being slain by one of the general's sergeants (the colonel was absent), of the name of the Campbells, they stood to the push of pike and were all cut in pieces'. Actually they must have 'stood' it pretty well, for contradicting the unctuous Gumble, another English commentator related how the Scots 'would not yield though at push of pike and butt-end of musket until a troop of horse charged from one end to another of them, and so left them to the mercy of the foot'.

## RETREAT

The destruction of this regiment appeared to an elated Cromwell and his officers to precipitate a total collapse of Scottish resistance. Cadwell for one reported simply that, 'Our horse immediately rallying and our foot advancing charged the enemy, and put them to the run very suddenly, it being near six o'clock of the morning. Which rout the enemy's foot seeing, threw down their arms and fled.'

The few surviving Scots accounts, none written by eyewitnesses, are even more laconic, but by analysing the known casualties, captures of colours and some later events, it is possible to build up a fairly detailed picture of this last phase of the battle and the long drawn out agony of the Scots infantry as they struggled to reach safety.

Perhaps one of the more surprising things to emerge is that the 'battalia which stood very stiffly to it' was probably not Campbell of Lawers' Regiment at all, but Sir John Haldane of Gleneagles'. Haldane himself certainly died there, together with his lieutenant-colonel, Robert Melvill, and Major John Cockburn, and the regiment was never reconstituted. Yet the other two regiments in the brigade, Lawers' and Valleyfield's, both escaped without serious loss and with the addition of a new regiment raised



This English musketeer, by Shaun Hart, is wearing a civilian doublet rather than a mass-produced and probably ill-fitting coat. It is unlikely to be red. Soldiers at this period attached far more importance to wearing sound clothing than to maintaining a uniform appearance. (Partisan Press)

in Aberdeenshire by Sir James Wood of Balbegno, the brigade was soon fit to take the field again.

Clearly Gleneagles' Regiment stood and fought so hard because it was serving as a rearguard. This in turn indicates that recognising his right had been well and truly turned, Leslie may already have been trying to withdraw when Cromwell launched the decisive attack. As if by way of confirmation, while Fisher's useful picture-map of the battlefield naturally centres on the fighting around Little Pinkerton, he also depicts the attempted retreat not of a mob of fugitives but of formed bodies of Scots infantry.

Significantly, analysis of casualties and captures also suggests exactly the same experience was repeated with Pitscottie's Brigade. If they were to escape, Leslie and Holburne first had to get their men across the Broxburn and the only practical place to do this was on the far left at what is now Doon Bridge. Holburne's and Innes's brigades and perhaps a part of Pitscottie's Brigade may have crossed successfully, but Wedderburn's combined battalion of Borderers was not so lucky. They may simply have thrown down their weapons when the English cavalry caught up, but like Gleneagles' men, more likely went down fighting to give the rest of the brigade time to cross.

Indeed one anonymous Scots account explicitly states that: 'Two regiments of foot fought it out manfully, for they were all killed as they stood (as the enemy confessed),' and while it might be natural to assume



**Oliver Cromwell, as depicted in *England's Worthies*. At the time of this portrait (1645) he was only commanding the cavalry under Thomas Fairfax.**



**Typical Scots musketeer, by Shaun Hart. The only real difference between this soldier and his English counterpart is the wearing of the very distinctive Scots blue bonnet. His clothing is grey, but there was no uniformity as to the colour although most was either of undyed wool or else oxidised to a brownish shade – much like Confederate butternut. (Partisan Press)**



**Dunbar: The scene of the cavalry battle (to the left of the cement works) as seen from Doon Hill. This photograph usefully illustrates the steepness of the hill slope.**

that the two regiments fought side by side, the evidence clearly indicates that the regiments actually fought in two quite separate actions.

As we have seen, Gleneagles' men certainly fought and died alone while Lawers' and Valleyfield's regiments escaped. Now Wedderburn was killed, together with both his son, Lieutenant-Colonel George Home, and Lieutenant-Colonel James Ker, the commander of Greenhead's Regiment. Sir James Douglas of Mouswall and a Major William Menzies appear to have been the only field officers from the battalion to escape and a particularly large number of colours were also taken from the combined unit. Once again however both of the other regiments in the brigade, Pitscottie's and Edzell's, escaped more or less intact.

Having crossed the Broxburn the surviving Scots' infantry marched hard for Haddington, but their retreat was harried all the way by the English cavalry and even some infantry in what must have been a long-drawn-out running battle.

Unsurprisingly, Colonel John Innes' little brigade was badly cut up in the retreat, but although he lost his lieutenant-colonel, both his own regiment and the Highland battalion under Lovat survived to be rebuilt again in their old garrisons. Forbes of Leslie's Regiment, on the other hand, certainly disintegrated, but while it lost all or most of its colours it does not actually seem to have lost many officers or men and it too was afterwards reconstituted. As for Holburne, the evidence suggests that he also got most of his brigade away intact, although Colonel Alexander Stewart was killed and his regiment completely destroyed, losing all its colours – perhaps in another forlorn rearguard action.





GRAHAM TURNER '03









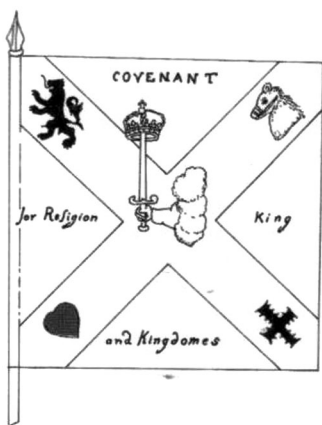
#### LAST STAND OF LAWERS' BRIGADE AT DUNBAR

(pages 78–79)

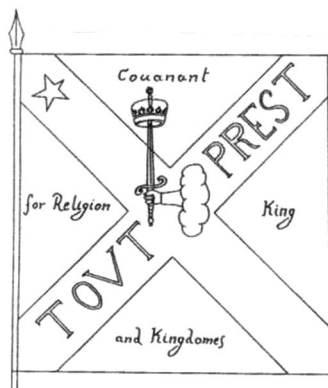
In the opening stages of the battle George Monck's infantry brigade stormed straight over the Broxburn, dispersing Lieutenant-General James Lumsden's large but raw Fife brigade within a matter of a few minutes. However, when Monck then turned on the brigade commanded by Sir James Campbell of Lawers it was a very different matter. Monck was evidently beaten off in pretty short order for even Cromwell admitted that: 'Our first foot, after they had discharged their duty (being overpowered with the enemy), received some repulse.' With Monck's Brigade out of the fight, Thomas Pride's Brigade came up and the struggle that followed was a tough one. It fell to Cromwell's own regiment of foot under Lieutenant-Colonel Goffe and Major White to take on the Scots at 'push of pike and butt end of musket'. Even so the Scots still held their ground until some of Lambert's troopers (1) came in on the flank of the regiment and according to Rushworth charged right through their ranks 'from one end to the other of them'. It has been suggested that this unit was armed with firelocks and so unaffected by Holburne's order for all but two musketeers in each company to extinguish their slow-match. One Scottish account certainly hints at this, declaring that, 'those that fought had most part firelocks; Lawers' regiment of foot was one' and Monck's biographer, Gumble, also stated that 'only Lawers his regiment of Highlanders made a good defence ... they stood to the push of pike and were all cut to pieces.' However, on closer examination it soon becomes apparent that although the unit in question certainly belonged to Lawers' Brigade, it is most unlikely to have

been his own regiment. Far from all 'being killed as they stood' Lawers' Regiment in fact soldiered on after Dunbar and was still 413 strong in the following June. The other regiment in the brigade, Sir George Preston of Valleyfield's, appears to have been rather harder hit and certainly lost a number of colours, but nevertheless it too won free from the debacle to fight again in the following summer. Instead the regiment in question actually appears to have been Sir John Haldane of Gleneagles' (not 'Gleneggies'), which was more likely armed with conventional matchlocks (2). In common with most of the Scots infantry units, Haldane's regiment is shown here equipped in a similar manner to their opponents in the English infantry. The Scots' coats (3) and knee breeches (4) are shown as grey, in contrast to the English red. The coats and breeches were dyed grey, although undyed wool was commonly used, which also gave a greyish appearance. When exposed to sunlight, the grey dye rapidly took on a brownish tinge similar to that of Confederate 'Butternut'. Although 'steill bonnets', such as the morion (5) shown here, were worn, the Scots bonnet (6), or 'Scotch blew capp', was the most common item of headwear and was knitted and felted in a similar manner to the popular and contemporary 'Montero cap'. Stockings and hose were of woollen cloth and worn with low shoes. The linen used to make the shirts, known as 'harden', was famously so coarse that it was also used to make tents! Haldane's regiment lost its colonel, lieutenant-colonel and major and was indeed to all appearances wiped out during what must actually have been a rearguard action while the rest of the brigade made its escape. (Graham Turner)





Unidentified Scots colour taken at Dunbar (BM Harl.1460/16); white saltire on blue field. The central device of a blue-clad arm emerging from a grey cloud and supporting a crown on the point of a sword is a common one on Scots coinage of the period. The significance of the other devices: the red lion (Wemyss?); silver bear (Forbes); black cross (Sinclair) and red heart (Douglas), is unclear.



Unidentified Scots colour taken at Dunbar (BM Harl.1460/38); white saltire on blue field. Presumably belonging to the same regiment as the previous one, although the central device is very slightly different. Red star in canton.

As they struggled towards safety, some units may simply have broken up under the pressure, while those that attempted to stand and fight were shot up by the pursuing infantry. Most of the prisoners and the colours were taken during this final stage of the battle, as some regiments threw down their arms and scattered. Some fugitives, according to both Hodgson and Gumble, actually fled towards Dunbar and were taken on the sands at Belhaven, but most held on their course for eight terrible miles until they reached Haddington. There the pursuit ended although Hacker's Regiment followed them a little further just to make sure.

Characteristically, Cromwell boasted at the time of having slain 3,000 Scots 'upon the place or near it' and taking as many as 10,000 prisoners, which rather absurdly exceeds the total number of Scots present at the battle. Balfour on the other hand, while admitting that many of the foot were taken prisoner, noted in his journal that there were '8 or 900 killed'. Walker for his part, commenting that 'not many of them in proportion were either slain or made prisoners' put the number of prisoners at 6,000, of which 1,000 wounded and sick were released, which would in turn suggest no more than about 300 were killed – and this is borne out by reports that next day Leslie was falling back on Stirling with an estimated 4,000–5,000 men, at least half of whom must have been formed bodies of infantry.

## AFTERWARDS

Meanwhile, with his own army to all intents and purposes undamaged – he only admitted to some 30–40 killed – Cromwell moved swiftly to follow up his victory. On the day after the battle Lambert was sent forward to Edinburgh with a regiment of infantry and all of the cavalry except Hacker's Regiment, which was assigned the job of escorting the prisoners southwards. Having cleared the battlefield and gathered the spoils, which of course included all the Scots guns and baggage, Cromwell followed after with the rest of the army two days later. Edinburgh was surrendered without a fight on 7 September (the castle held out until 23 December), but by that time Leslie had fallen back to Stirling. There Cromwell, intent on finishing him off, followed on 14 September only to realise that he had bitten off more than he could chew.

Hampered by heavy rain and bad roads he marched just six miles that first day and, after sending back two of the heaviest guns, only reached Linlithgow the next. From there he marched as far as Falkirk on 16 September, vainly summoned the Scots garrison in Callendar House to surrender and struggled on through 'extraordinary wet and stormy' weather to arrive outside Stirling on the following day.

Leslie, understandably shaken by the defeat, had laid down his commission, but like Leven before him was persuaded to take it up again, and as the English approached he threw himself into the task of reconstituting his shattered forces. Three of his five infantry brigades had escaped from Dunbar battered but more or less intact and to them were added those levies who had either not reached the army in time to fight, or who had been left behind as insufficiently trained or equipped. It was very much a scratch force, many were 'green new levied sojourns' and Stirling was 'not yet fortified as it should be', but it was enough.



Scots Dragoon, by Neil Wright – note the use of bandoliers, and the sling on the musket, both features of contemporary illustrations. One account of the fight with Cromwell's rearguard at Haddington mentions that many of the Scots were mounted musketeers – presumably dragooners and probably belonging therefore to Lord Kirkcudbright's Regiment. (Partisan Press)

Cromwell duly summoned the town on the morning of 18 September, and when his trumpeter was refused admission ladders were brought up and at one o'clock in the afternoon orders were given to storm the place. The Scots were unimpressed, no one in the English army had the stomach for an assault and Cromwell was just going through the motions. Even in their incomplete state the defences were too strong for a frontal assault and the position could not be outflanked. Nor did Cromwell have sufficient heavy guns for a regular siege. On the day after that, the English





**Typical English musketeer in full marching order, by Shaun Hart. Note the duffle bag-like snapsack on his back and the simple cut of his breeches. All of the English infantry at Dunbar wore red coats, but breeches were generally grey. (Partizan Press)**

fell back again to Linlithgow and, having established a strong outpost there Cromwell himself retired all the way back to Edinburgh and commenced a desultory siege of the castle which would drag on until Christmas.

For the next 10 months Linlithgow bridge would effectively serve as the frontier between the English army and the King's army and thus mark the limit of Cromwell's success. Whatever the actual numbers involved there is no question that the Scots suffered a catastrophic military defeat at Dunbar, but yet at the same time from the English point of view it was an inconclusive and unsatisfactory victory which achieved none of their aims – save of course their own immediate deliverance from impending disaster.

The fact of the matter was that while the Scots army had been crippled it had not been destroyed and far from neutralising the supposed Royalist threat, Cromwell's victory actually made it a reality. Not only were the Presbyterian fanatics of the Kirk party discredited by the defeat, but a considerable number of the more vocal ones hurriedly took refuge in Edinburgh Castle rather than accompany the wreck of Leslie's army, and once besieged there were effectively silenced. As for Archibald Strachan, Gibby Carr and the other Covenanters amongst the soldiers, instead of falling back with Leslie on Stirling they rode for the west to raise their own army before ultimately

being crushed by Lambert. Reports that King Charles fell on his knees to give thanks for the victory may be apocryphal but they certainly reflected the mood of the Royalists.

This resurgence of Royalist support even led to a brief civil war in the unoccupied part of Scotland. On 4 October the Earl of Atholl openly declared for the King and in what was afterwards celebrated as 'The Start', Charles slipped away from his guards in an attempt to reach him, but was apprehended by David Leslie in Glen Clova the next day. However, having also declared for the King, Major-General John Middleton then attacked and defeated Sir John Browne in a vicious little skirmish at Newtyle in Forfarshire on 21 October 1650. Worryingly for the Kirk party nearly half of Browne's men then changed sides and joined the Royalists. For a few days it looked as if the episode would escalate into an all-out war, in which Cromwell would no doubt have been invited to intervene on the side of the Godly exactly as he had done in 1648. Perhaps anticipating this Middleton withdrew northwards to the Marquis of Huntly's castle at Strathbogie in Aberdeenshire, and when Leslie was ordered north to deal with the rebels, they agreed to disband their forces on 4 November. A month later however the balance of power changed dramatically and decisively with Gibby Carr's defeat at Hamilton and Archibald Strachan's subsequent defection to the English. David Leslie thereupon made haste to re-align himself with the



Scots pikemen by Shaun Hart. Other than helmets there is no real evidence that any armour was worn by the pikemen on either side during the Dunbar campaign. Note the bunches of ribbons in these soldiers' bonnets, corresponding to their regimental colours. (Partizan Press)

Royalists and on 1 January 1651 Charles II was at last formally crowned at Scone, outside Perth.

This news roused Cromwell to lead another push against Stirling in early February, but although Leslie was forced to evacuate his outpost at Callendar House, the English army again halted and then fell back to Edinburgh in appalling weather. Sick and exhausted, Cromwell was himself effectively incapacitated until June and in the meantime the Scots recovery continued as a new and increasingly confident field army came together at Stirling. To make matters worse for the English, the Scots regulars were assisted by a frightening new development – the rise of the Moss Trooper.



Moss Troopers are often confused with the Anglo-Scots border reivers of the 16th century, but there was an important difference in that the majority of those reivers were otherwise respectable farmers, who took up cattle rustling on the side, either as a straightforward business venture or through a feud with their neighbours. Moss Troopers on the other hand were landless bandits, gangs of common criminals, who lurked in the mosses and maintained themselves by highway robbery and petty thievery. To start with, the Moss Troopers who preyed on Cromwell's stragglers and dispatch riders were just such bandits, but after a time they began to organise under the command of proper officers such as Captain Augustine and developed into very effective irregular light cavalry.<sup>1</sup>

Augustine, described as a 'heigh Germane', and almost certainly therefore the Augustine Hoffman who had once been a captain in David Leslie's Horse, was the best of them. He first came to prominence on the night of 13 December when he crossed the Forth at Blackness with 120 riders and made his way to Edinburgh; getting in through the Canongate Port by the tried and trusted method of placing an English trooper at the head of the column. Once inside the Mossers then simply galloped straight up the High Street, deposited a quantity of ammunition in the castle, then burst out again half an hour later and got clean away. This was embarrassing enough but worse was to follow. Linlithgow had already been raided once in January and on 14 April a large party of horse and dragoons, almost certainly led by Augustine, mounted another much more successful raid and: '... taking advantage of an exceeding misty and foggy morning, fell with their horse into Lithgow; they killd only one man, hastned out again: but the major [John Sydenham] with about 30 horse went forth of the town, giving order for the rest to follow. As soon as he was drawn forth, the enemy charged him, and he brake in among them; but his men forsaking him, the enemy pursued both him and them to the town, cutting and hacking them. A fresh party of ours being recollected, the enemy forthwith retreated, and were pursued; in the pursuit our men took 2 or 3 of theirs prisoners, and about 2 or 3 of ours were slain.'

Once again the English version of events was more optimistic than accurate, for they were rather more badly beaten than they first admitted. Not only was Major Sydenham fatally wounded, but a Captain Dowson and eight of his men were also captured and allegedly murdered by the Mossers.

Buoyed up by this and other successes, Leslie essayed a push southwards at the end of June. Cromwell duly came up from Edinburgh to meet him, only for the Scots to take up a strong position behind the river Carron. In a vain attempt to lure Leslie out of this position Cromwell first laid siege to Callendar House and then stormed it, killing many of its garrison. Despite this deliberate provocation Leslie refused to budge and eventually retired again into the defences of Stirling. Baffled, Cromwell cast about for a means of outflanking him.

Back in January Colonel George Monck hopefully, but quite unsuccessfully, attempted a landing at Burntisland on the north shore of the Firth of Forth. Now, after an abortive attempt to locate a suitable ford above Stirling, Cromwell decided to try a landing there again, with a much larger force, early on the morning of 17 July 1651. The move was not

unexpected by Leslie. For some time the Scots had been building up the garrison of nearby Burntisland with fresh levies under a veteran officer, Colonel Harie Barclay. Consequently not only were the English shot up as they landed at North Queensferry, but substantial reinforcements were quickly summoned from Dunfermline and Stirling.

At first neither side was inclined to fight. Both were more concerned with digging in and reinforcing and on the Scots side there may have been some uncertainty as to exactly who was in command. It all grew quite tense as Lambert reported: 'Upon Saturday, very early, we came to the water-side, and though I made all possible speed to boat over it, I could not get over more than the foot and my own regiment of horse all that day and the next night: about four in the afternoon on Saturday I discovered the enemy's body advanced as far as Dumfermling, within five miles of us, being, to my judgement, about four thousand.

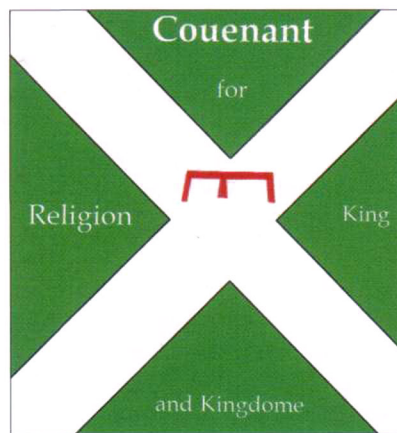
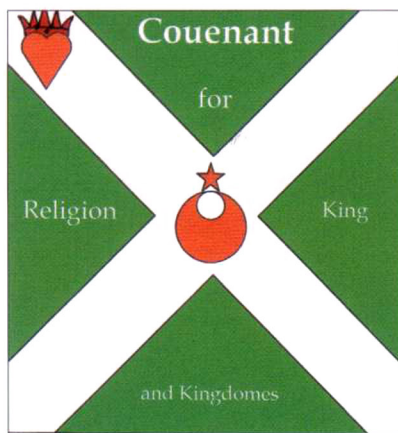
'And that night they encamped there, and, it seems, hearing more forces were come over, got a recruit of five hundred men the next day. All Saturday night we laboured to get over our horse, and before the last came to shore on the Lord's day, the enemy was advanced very near us.'

By Sunday morning Lambert had four regiments of foot and three regiments of horse drawn up on the Ferry Hills, still at the very tip of the peninsula, with their backs to the water. The infantry consisted of his own and Colonel William Daniel's regiments, reinforced by four companies of Colonel George Fenwick's; Colonel Francis West's Foot and Colonel Edmund Syler's Foot; while the cavalry were drawn from his own regiment of horse; Colonel John Okey's former dragoons, and Colonel Leonard Lytcott's Horse. Lambert reckoned he outnumbered the Scots by about 500 men, but the quality of some of his regiments was questionable. His own regiment of foot was certainly a good one, but Daniel's was a newly raised one and had been left in reserve at Dunbar. Nothing is known of West's Regiment other than it was disbanded a year or two later, while Syler's may actually have been a militia regiment from Lincolnshire. As for the cavalry, both Lambert's and Okey's regiments were good veteran units, but Lytcott's men were newly raised and would perform badly in the coming fight. All in all it is hard to escape the impression that Lambert's army was very much a scratch force and he was taking a big risk in going ashore with so many raw troops.

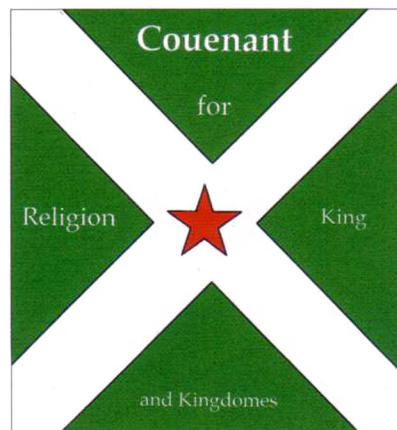
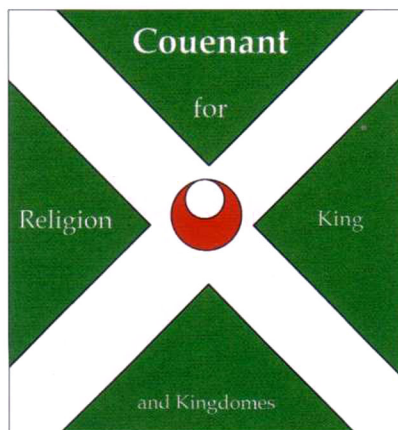
Facing him, the Scots were by this time deployed on the lower slopes of Castland Hill, with their right anchored on Whinney Hill and their left on the Hill of Selvege, or Muckle Hill, a little to the south and west of Inverkeithing. At least some of them must have been dug in, for Lambert afterwards reported burying some of the Scots dead in their own trenches.

Most of the Scots cavalry belonged to Sir John Browne's Brigade, comprising his own, Colonel Charles Arnott's, the Earl of Balcarres' and Sir Walter Scott's regiments. In addition Lord Brechin's Horse had been part of the small force that opposed the initial English landing, and subsequently took part in the battle as did some 200 Moss Troopers under Augustine, who was now a colonel. Most of the infantry belonged to Major-General James Holburne's Brigade. Both his own and the Laird of Buchannan's regiments were still quite large, mustering 646 and 896 men respectively on 18 July, which argues for their having escaped more or less intact from the debacle at Dunbar. On the other hand the

**TOP LEFT** At first sight the white saltire on green would suggest this colour belonged to Sir David Home of Wedderburn's Regiment (BM Harl.1460/82), but there were at least seven colours in this set taken, which is far too many for a unit that only mustered four companies and little more than 100 men in 1649. However, this may be a new set commissioned when Wedderburn's, Greenhead's and Mouswall's regiments were consolidated, which might explain the red heart of Douglas in the canton of this particular colour. The significance of the red crescent in the centre is ambiguous. Ordinarily it would designate the second captain but is complicated by the addition of a star.

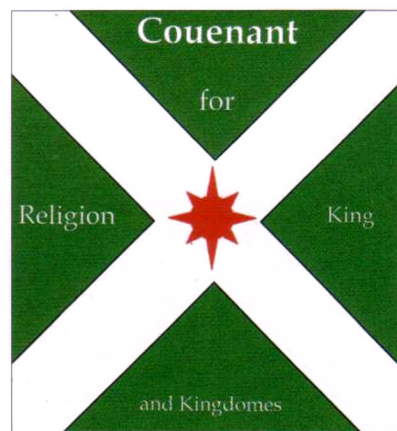
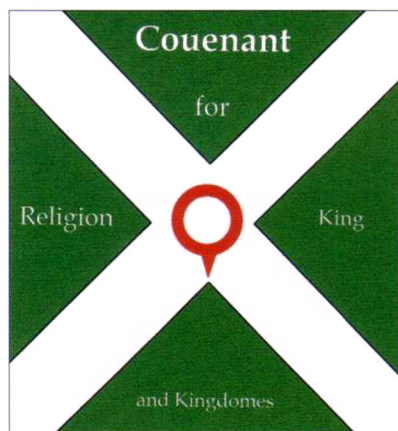


**TOP RIGHT** Again this white saltire on green (BM Harl.1460/82) appears to belong to Sir David Home of Wedderburn's Regiment. The red label in the centre of the white on green colour identifies it as the first captain's.



**MIDDLE LEFT** The red crescent in the centre of this white and green colour (BM Harl.1460/76) clearly identifies it as the second captain's.

**MIDDLE RIGHT** The red star in the centre of this white and green colour (BM Harl.1460/87) identifies it as the third captain's.

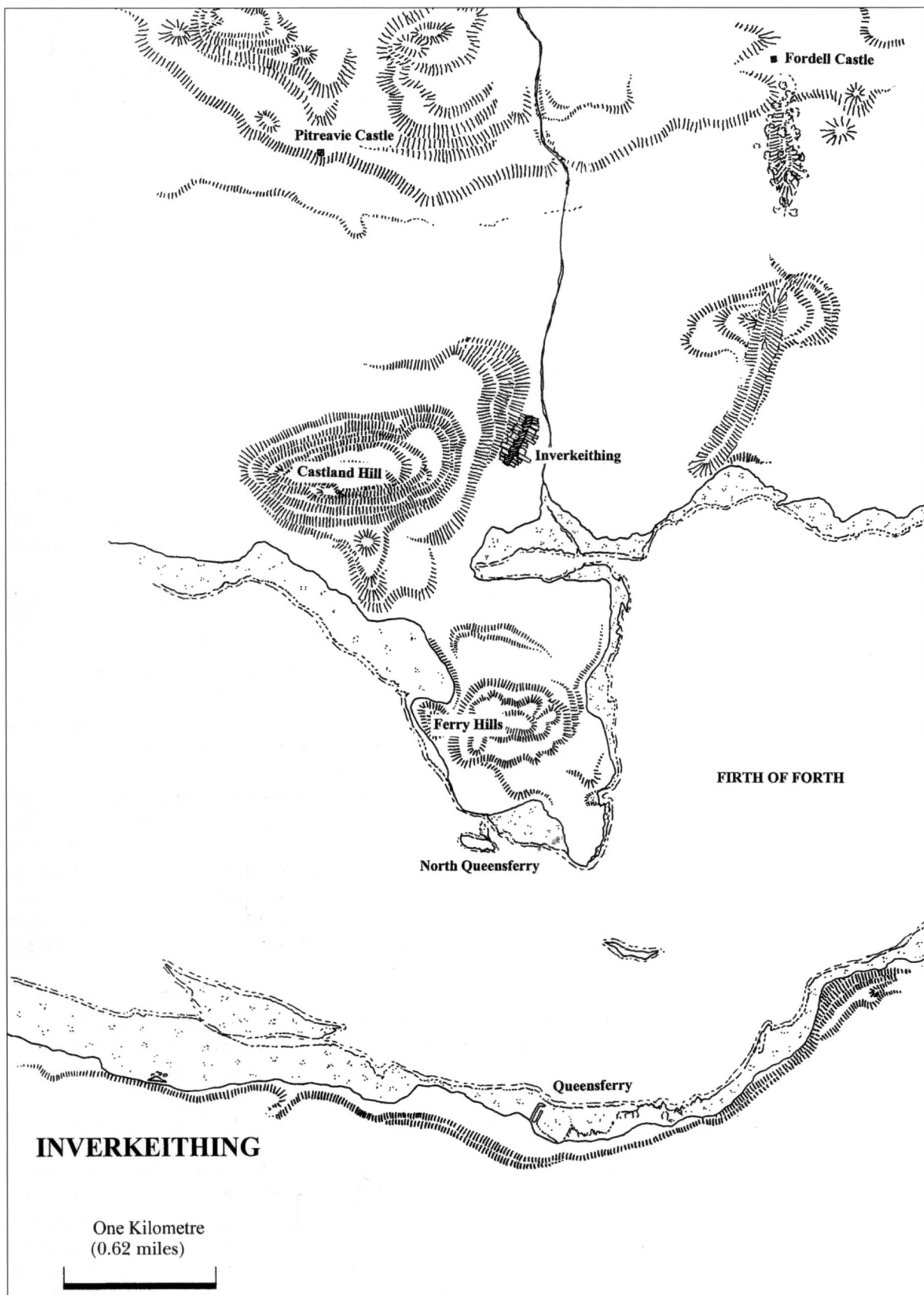


**BOTTOM LEFT** Another white saltire on green; the red ring in the centre of the colour (BM Harl.1460/86) identifies it as the fourth captain's.

**BOTTOM RIGHT** The red sunburst in the centre of this green and white colour (BM Harl.1460/85) probably denotes the seventh captain, who in theory ought to have been identified by a rose.

third regiment in the brigade at that time, Colonel Alexander Stewart's, had of course had been destroyed there, and since been replaced by the 610-strong Master of Grey's Regiment. This should have given Holburne a total of 2,152 regular infantry in his brigade, exclusive of officers. In addition a 'recruit of 500 men', which Lambert reported arriving on the Sunday morning, was a regiment of Highland clansmen led by Sir Hector MacLean of Duart, and there must also have been a sizeable detachment of Barclay's men from Burntisland, although there is no real indication as to their number.





The arrival of the last of Okey's Horse that morning was the signal for Holburne, who by now reckoned he was outnumbered, to order a withdrawal. Lambert subsequently described how Holburne 'began to wheel, as if he meant either to march away, or take the advantage of a steep mountain' – obviously Castland Hill. Sensing he might be able to hustle the Scots, Lambert immediately sent forward Okey's Regiment to engage their rearguard, whereupon Holburne halted again and drew up his men in order of battle.

Duart's Highland Regiment was apparently posted on the right, and probably Buchannan's Regiment as well, while both Holburne's and Gray's regiments were on the left. Where the detachment of Barclay's men were posted is unclear. They too may have been on the left, but Lambert also says that a 'pass', in front of Holburne's right, was 'lined by the enemy's musketeers', and this is perhaps a more likely location. From subsequent events it would appear that Sir John Browne's cavalry brigade was on the right, and that the ad hoc brigade of Brechin's Horse and Augustine's 'Mossers' were on the left.

As for the English, Lambert similarly put his greatest strength in his right wing, comprising his own regiment of horse together with two troops apiece of Lytcott's and Okey's regiments. The centre was made up of his four infantry regiments; Lambert's and Daniel's regulars in the front line and West's and Syler's in reserve. The left wing only consisted of four troops of Okey's and two of Lytcott's regiment.

Nothing more happened for another hour and a half, but at length the stalemate was broken when Lambert received word from Cromwell that reinforcements were marching from Stirling to Holburne's assistance. Rather disappointingly, having described his initial movements and deployment in some detail, Lambert merely states that it was therefore 'resolved we should climb the hill to them, which accordingly we did, and through the Lord's strength, put them to an absolute rout.'

Browne, leading the Scots cavalry on the right, charged forward and broke some of the English cavalry opposite, but he may have had to put in everything he had to achieve this, and had no reserves to exploit his initial success. The result was that Lytcott counterattacked with his own reserves and routed all the Scots cavalry facing him, capturing Browne in the process. Similarly, on the left Augustine and Brechin were initially successful, but once again were routed by the reserve – probably led in by Lambert himself, who collected two pistol balls lodged between his armour and his coat.

As for the infantry, there is no real evidence of a serious fight at this stage of the battle. Indeed Lambert states that it was all over in a very short time, which taken with a contemporary complaint in the Fraser Chronicles that 'Hellish Hoburn came not up, which if he had the Scotch had carried it but doubt' suggests that the Scots cavalry either charged to cover the retreat of the infantry, or that Holburne failed to support their initial success.

Just as at Dunbar, the retreat of the infantry must have been prolonged and nightmarish experience. Holburne's own veterans and Gray's Regiment both seem to have escaped more or less intact, but Buchannan's and Duart's regiments, fleeing across the open valley to the west of the Pinkerton Burn were effectively destroyed after a four-hour running battle. Afterwards Lambert, claiming to have taken 1,400

Oliver Cromwell, after a mezzotint rather startlingly attributed to Prince Rupert!



prisoners including Browne and Buchannan, commented that more were killed than taken because 'divers of them were Highlanders, and had very ill quarter; and indeed I am persuaded few of them escaped without a knock'. Be that as it may, their long retreat ended on the hill-slopes around Pitreavie Castle, some two kilometres due north of their original position on Castland Hill.

With Lambert's men closing in fast, Duart and his men turned at bay. Duart himself was killed, but not before seven of his clansmen had interposed themselves one by one, crying *Fear eile airson Eachainn!* ('Another for Hector!') – which afterwards became the slogan of the clan. Legend has it that all but 35 out of 800 [sic] of the Highlanders were killed, though more realistically, Sir James Balfour records that the



Scots lost about 800 men *in total*, of whom no more than 100 were Duart's clansmen.

It was by any reckoning a quick and decisive victory won by Lambert at the cost of 'not above eight men, but divers wounded'. More importantly it secured the bridgehead and by 26 July Cromwell reported that 13,000–14,000 men had been shipped over and he was ready to resume the offensive. On 31 July he marched on Perth, which surrendered to him just two days later. Shy of fighting in the open ever since Dunbar, David Leslie had made no attempt to engage Cromwell. Instead, with his lines of communication now very firmly cut, he fell in with the King's desperate notion of marching into England in a vain attempt to rally the English Royalists for one last time. With the main army gone, and soon to be destroyed at Worcester on the first anniversary of Dunbar, Scotland was therefore all but powerless to resist the last English invasion. Stirling Castle surrendered on 15 August 1651, Dundee was stormed and sacked on 1 September and Aberdeen was occupied without a fight a week later. The last of the field armies, commanded by the Marquis of Huntly and the Earl of Balcarres capitulated on 3 December, and with the surrender of Dunottar Castle on 24 May 1652 it was all over.

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<sup>1</sup> See Men-at-Arms 331 *Scots Armies of the English Civil Wars*, Plate H.

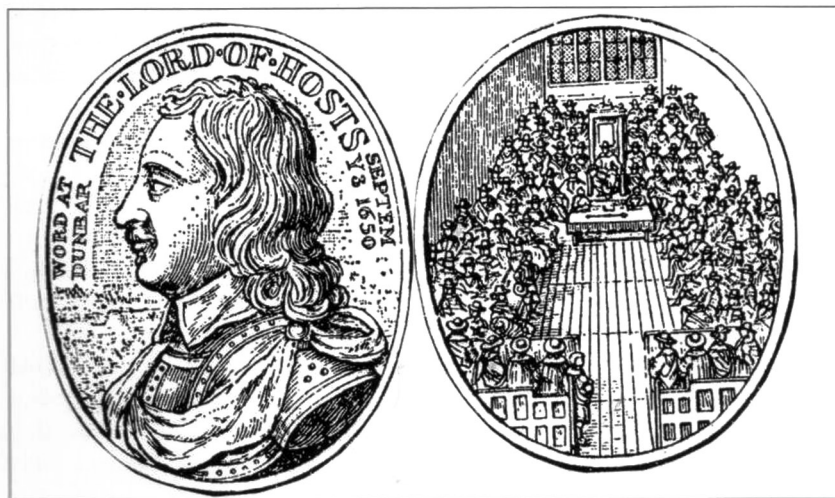
# THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY

**T**he battlefield of Dunbar lies astride the main A1 trunk road, about halfway between Berwick upon Tweed and Edinburgh, and is worth approaching from that direction in order to appreciate the obstacle presented by the Cockburnspath defile.

Making due allowance for road improvements since 1650, the route is pretty much the same one followed by Cromwell and his army, but there are some significant diversions on the battlefield – none of them unfortunately aimed at assisting visitors. Despite its importance the battlefield is in fact very poorly presented and indeed thanks to new road construction the only monument to it – a small roadside cairn – stands on what is now a pointless leftover of the old road. The new road alignment also completely bypasses the town of Dunbar and the minor road that branches off the A1 just to the west of the Broxburn represents the original alignment.

The real problem with the battlefield is the adjacent cement works. Although not actually constructed upon the battlefield itself, most of the ground on which the cavalry battles took place has been quarried out to feed it. The A1 probably crosses the Broxburn at the same point as in 1650, although the scene would have been very different then, and the smaller crossing point at Brand's Mill is hemmed in on one side by the modern road embankment and on the other by a railway embankment carrying the East Coast Main Line.

Nevertheless southwest of the railway, the Broxburn must be pretty much unchanged since the battle, as is the scene of Lawers' fight and the last stand of Gleneagles' Regiment beside Little Pinkerton Farm. None of the farm buildings there, at Meikle Pinkerton (where the Scots



The famous Dunbar medal, bearing the English field-word THE LORD OF HOSTS.

baggage train was laagered), or at Brand's Mill date back to 1650 but they do still provide useful reference points.

It should be emphasised that all of the surviving parts of the battlefield, including Broxmouth House, are still in private hands and extensively farmed. There are no public footpaths as such and visitors should behave accordingly.

By way of compensation there is a public viewpoint on top of Doon Hill itself. Clearly signposted (DOON HILL) from the A1, a succession of narrow tracks leads eventually to a small car park very near to the summit. The road surfaces vary from acceptable to non-existent and the gradients are sufficient to provoke a junior visitor to wail that 'we'll never get down', but while a four-wheel drive vehicle might be useful, it can easily be tackled by an ordinary family car and the end result is a magnificent view of the whole battlefield. There are no explanatory boards at the time of writing, but a map and knowledge of the various reference points such as Little Pinkerton farm are sufficient to trace the course of the battle.

Beyond the battlefield itself, the 16th-century ramparts of Berwick upon Tweed are well worth visiting en route to it. Dunbar itself has of course changed beyond all recognition since Cromwell's day, but the old harbour can still give a good idea of the logistical difficulties presented by using it as a base. As an added bonus for the eclectic, the harbour is defended by a very charming little 18th-century battery, constructed in response to the depredations of John Paul Jones.

Unfortunately Inverkeithing is difficult to visit properly for apart from the inevitable expansion of the town, the battlefield has been cut across by the railway and motorway approaches to the Forth Bridges. Much of both Holburn's and Lambert's positions have been quarried away by massive rock cuttings, and the narrow neck of land between filled with equally massive bridges and embankments.

Nevertheless, driving on to it from the Forth road bridge gives a good sense of the ground. Castland Hill is on the left, identified by two prominent microwave transmitter masts on top. The road then carries on through Muckle Hill, but a complex of slip roads and roundabouts between the Ferry Hills and Castland Hill overlies the scene of the fighting during the first phase of the battle. North of Rosyth is Pitreavie Castle and a small memorial cairn to Duart and his men – just north of the crossed swords on the Ordnance Survey map, which are very misleading in that they do not mark the site of the main engagement.



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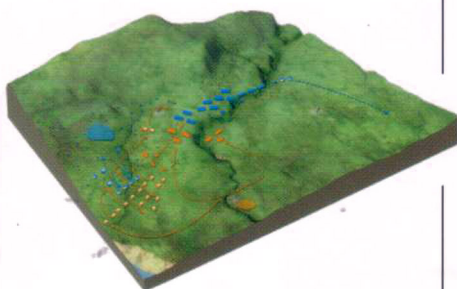
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ISBN 1-84176-774-3



9 781841 767741