

THE JACOBITE RISING AND THE BATTLE OF GLEN SHIEL

10 JUNE, 1719

BY STEPHEN MAGGS



BACKGROUND TO THE REBELLION

In 1649, after a brutal and bloody civil war, King Charles Stuart I was put to death at the Guildhall, Whitehall in London. Nine months previously his two sons fled the country, Charles to France and James to the Netherlands, his father fearing what a vengeful Parliament might do to them.

At the Restoration in 1660, James returned to England with his brother King Charles II and was made Lord High Admiral of England. In 1673 James converted to Catholicism, upsetting many in the country, and was forced to resign from the office of High Admiral after the Parliament passed the Test Act. Shortly after this James married a known Catholic, his second wife, Mary of Modena, nee d'Este. Many saw this as a popish plot and anti-Catholic feelings began to run high, even the great fire of London had been blamed on a Catholic conspiracy.

Having suffered much abuse James was obliged to retire to the continent with Mary and her infant son (James Francis Edward Stuart - the future Old Pretender) in 1688 and during his absence Parliament plotted to exclude him from the succession. James returned to Britain in 1679, but spent much of his time in Scotland.

In 1685 Charles II died and James became King (James VII and II) and immediately made the country feel uneasy by sending a mission to Rome and hearing mass in public. Many thought it was time to be rid of this popish king. That same year James' nephew, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, led an unsuccessful rebellion against him. It was not to be the last. Three years later in November 1688 Prince William of Orange sailed from Holland, landing in Torbay, with an army and marched on London. Abandoned by his troops, supporters and even members of his own family, James was forced to flee to

France. And on the 13 February 1689 Parliament declared that the English throne was vacant. On 11 April William of Orange and Mary were crowned king and queen of England. The Jacobites (supporters of King James VII and II) began moves to restore James to the throne.

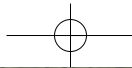
An unsuccessful rising was carried out in Ireland where James' army was soundly defeated at the battle of the Boyne in 1690. James once more returned to the continent where he died in France in 1701. It was of course not to be the end of the risings for James' son, James Stuart, (the Old Pretender) was now the legitimate king of England and his supporters flocked to him. James would prove no less zealous in his attempt to regain the throne that was after all rightfully his.

In 1708, at the tender age of 20, James mounted his first serious attempt at a landing in Scotland, but his invasion fleet was blighted by high winds and heavy seas, and the landing was called off. It was only a brief respite for England, for in 1715 Jacobite forces under the Duke of Mar began rallying the clans for the cause once more, raising their standard at Braemar. Despite a narrow victory at the battle of Sherriffmuir the rebellion failed, the Earl of Mar and James returning to the continent. The failure of the 1715 rebellion was a bitter blow indeed, but nonetheless the hardened Jacobites were committed to the cause and vowed to fight on. A fight that would come once more, just four years later.

'THE 1719 RISING'

After the death of Mary of Modena, to whom the Jacobites looked for financing their rebellion, in 1718, the rebels were forced to look elsewhere for support to finance the coming invasion of England. Cardinal Alberoni of Spain, anxious to get even after a defeat of a Spanish fleet by the English at the battle of Cape Passaro, readily agreed to help. James Butler, 2nd Duke of Ormond, a key Jacobite supporter met the cardinal, persuading him to not only provide money, but to supply much needed regular troops, arms and ammunition for the venture also.





Above: The two forces square up to each other, with the Marquis of Tullibardine and his Jacobite troops in the foreground. All figures by Reiver Castings.
 Below: The Government forces on the march to Glen Shiel. All figures by Reiver Castings.

Fortunately Spain still had an untouched fleet safely anchored in Cadiz harbour, consisting of 10 men-of-war and 21 transport vessels. Ormond, who it seems could be very influential, persuaded the cardinal to release some of the ships in order to mount an invasion of England. The plan called for two invasions, one, led by Ormonde, would land in England, whilst a second, under George Keith, 10th Earl Marischal, would land on the west coast of Scotland.

By 7 March 1719 the ships were loaded with 5,000 Spanish troops and arms,

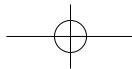
including cannons, and ammunition for some 15,000 men. They were to pick up James Francis Edward Stuart, the Pretender, at Corunna. Ormond was appointed commander of the fleet, with the title of Captain-General of his most Catholic Majesty. From a second port, San Sebastian, the Earl Marischal, with a considerably smaller force, in two ships, some 300 Spanish troops and arms for 2000 men, would make his way alone to Scotland. On board were the earl's brother, James Keith, along with the Earl of Seaforth and the Marquis of Tullibardine.

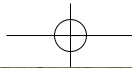
Soon after setting sail however Ormond's fleet found itself being battered by a violent storm, which lasted some twelve days. Off the Cape of Finisterre (the north western tip of Spain) the fleet broke up and scattered, some of the ship's being lost with all hands. Not knowing of the fate of Ormond's fleet the Earl Marischal set sail as planned, on the 8 March, for Scotland, reaching his destination, Loch Alsh in the Hebrides, in late April. The two ships slowly made their way through Loch Alsh and entered Loch Duich where they anchored opposite Eilean Donan Castle. From out of the holds emerged the 300 Spanish soldiers, a far cry from the 5,000 of the original invasion force. Fortunately however, for the rebels, there were still the 2,000 muskets, a large quantity of powder and supplies onboard.

Not long after the landing a body of Seaforth highlanders joined the Spaniards at the castle. Other clansmen, who had been awaiting the chance to join the rebellion, now hesitated and refused to turn out, preferring instead to await Ormonde's landing with the promised 5,000 Spanish troops before committing themselves. A second blow soon fell upon the rebels when the Earl Marischal and Tullibardine fell out as to who was in command, resulting in endless disputes and daily councils of war. But the argument did not last long for spies soon brought word that over a thousand government troops, under General Wightman were marching south from Inverness towards Fort Augustus.



HORSE & MUSKET





The rebels, under Tullibardine, put their own plans in to operation, storing their powder in Eilean Donan Castle, placing it under the guard of a small force of Spanish soldiers. Another council of war was held, in which an attack on Inverness was discussed and rejected. It was however decided that a fresh attempt to call out the clans was to be made. It was about now that Tullibardine heard that Ormonde and his invasion force would not be landing. A letter from the Duke brought in by agents told them not to lose heart and that he would be soon sending fresh arms. By 10 May government warships were seen blockading the approaches to Loch Alsh and one frigate, the *Worcester*, after entering Loch Duich proceeded to pound the castle into surrender. The small Spanish garrison, with hardly anything with which to make a reply, soon capitulated.

Tullibardine now had very few options open to him. He could not evacuate by sea (his ships having only just left the waters of Loch Alsh before the government warships arrived) and a government army would soon be offering him battle. Striking camp the Jacobites began to march inland, splitting into two bodies. One passed along the eastern flank of Loch Duich over the old military road that is now the A87 to the Isles, whilst the other came by way of Loch Long, crossing the fells north of Loch Duich before pressing on eastwards. An advanced party was also sent ahead to establish an arms dump at the Crow of Kintail.

FROM MOBILISATION TO BATTLE

Government forces, after hearing of the landing from loyalist clans of the Frasers and Munroes, swiftly acted against the Jacobites and began to mobilise all available forces against them. The Inverness garrison was reinforced by sea, providing fresh troops on the ground for any attack that might come their way. A proclamation was issued stating that a reward of £10,000 was on offer for the capture of the Duke of Ormonde. Troops in England were mobilised and ordered to muster in the north west and a strong squadron of ships, under Admiral Norris, were sent out to engage the Spanish fleet once more. A further help to the English government were some 2,000 Dutch troops. The Austrians likewise sent six battalions, 3,000 men, from the Austrian Netherlands. The Duke of Orleans ordered ships to be made ready at Brest in order to join with the English fleet if need be and a land force of some 22 battalions was also put on standby should the English have need of them. Little did the Jacobites in the north know that, even before setting foot on Scottish soil, the rebellion was doomed from the outset.



THE SPANISH TROOPS

There is much conjecture regarding the make up for the Spanish force which lined up on the battlefield at Glen Shiel, if we go back to the most contemporary of sources we discover that information is pretty sparse.

In the Historical Register vol iv. 283 (and repeated in *The Chevalier de St. George and the Jacobite Movement 1701 – 1720*) we are told “Don

Nicolas Bolano, who commanded the detachment of the regiment of Galicia” and “they numbered two hundred and seventy four men, including their leaders”.

In the letters of James Butler, second duke of Ormonde we learn that “The Spanish force ... consisted of a detachment of twelve men per company from each of the twenty-four companies of Don Pedro de Castro’s regiment of foot, under the command of a lieutenant-colonel, with six captains, six lieutenants, and six ensigns, three hundred and seven in all, including offices” (this troop total includes some troops which were station at Eilean Dolan Castle and played no part in the battle).

Their uniforms are again the subject of debate and while a white frock coat and black tricorn are generally agreed upon most other details are not known. We have gone with a guesstimate of red facings for our photos.



By 4 June the Jacobites had received reinforcements in the form of 150 clansmen under Donald Cameron of Lochiel and Seaforth's numbers had grown to around 400 men. Other clansmen now came in, many from the clan Macgregor under 'Rob Roy' Macgregor, swelling their ranks to about a thousand more, hardly what was needed to defeat an army of professional government troops swift approaching them. Further word reached Tullibardine that government troops had now been seen entering Glen Moriston, with loyal clansmen, barely 26 miles from their location. By 9 June General Wightman had reached as far as the head of Loch Cluanie, and the following day would be little more than eight miles to the east of the rebels.

On 10 June, with a battle now inevitable, Tullibardine deployed his forces in the pass of Glen Shiel, the River Shiel to his right, Loch Duich some way to the rear and the 3,370 feet *Sgurr na Ciste Duibhe* mountain to his left. Undoubtedly the Jacobites were in a very strong defensive position, with steep hills either side of them and the Shiel River. Tullibardine ordered trenches and barricades to be thrown up barring the road between the *Sgurr na Ciste* and the river. Lord

George Murray took command of the right flank, on the southern bank of the Shiel. The Earl Marischal the left flank, whilst Tullibardine was in overall command in the centre. The Spanish regulars were positioned in the centre, with Tullibardine, on the northern bank of the river behind makeshift stone barricades. Immediately north of these were Lochiel's men, the Chisholms and Camerons, with the MacGregors under 'Rob Roy' further north of them. Beside these stood the Campbells of Ormidale and Glendarue with the clan Mackintosh under Mackintosh of Borlum. And finally on the high ground stood Seaforth men, standing 200 yards up a steep incline.

Whilst the Jacobites were deploying Wightman continued his course along Loch Cluanie and by about four in the afternoon reached the rebel positions in Glen Shiel. At first Wightman was loathed to attack for he saw how strong a defensive position the Jacobites were in. He states in reports, "I came upon within a mile of the rebels camp, at a place called Glensheels, such a strong pass that is hardly to be paralleled; I took about an hour to view the situation, and without loss of a moment made my dispositions..."

Below: The two armies jockey for position on the slopes of the glen. All figures by Reiver Castings.



COEHORN MORTARS

Coehorn mortars were short, stubby, cast-bronze pots that were placed in a solid wooden block and lobbed a spherical explosive shell a good distance. They were lightweight, easily transportable, invented by Baron Menno van Coehorn, around 1673. The British army adopted them for use in 1708. They fired a 'hollow-shot', filled with explosives, or occasionally case shot. These were fired from the mortar after a correctly judged amount of fuse, protruding from the sphere, was lit. This at times was no easy matter and it was possible for a coolheaded individual to pluck out the burning fuse as the bomb lay smouldering on the ground.

But attack he knew he must. At about 5pm, with deployment completed, the Grenadiers, Montagu's, Harrison's, and Sutherland's on the right flank, Huffel's and Robertson's Dragoons, in the centre and on the southern side of the Shiel, Clayton's and Munroe's on the left flank, he placed his mortars with Munroe's and ordered the dragoons forward to drive away the Jacobite piquets on the left.

The sound of musketry echoed around the narrow pass, soon joined by the boom of government mortars as they proceeded to lob their shells into Murray's positions. The Claytons and Munroes began to

advance towards Murray and soon became embroiled in a musketry duel on the slopes of Mount Skururan. to fall back, out of harms way, taking with them a wounded Murray and leaving their right flank wide open.

Wightman now ordered his mortars to switch targets and began to bombard the Spaniards over the river at the barricades. Due to the fact that the range of the mortars was long little damage was said to have been done. However the dry heather was set alight, with thick plumes of smoke obscuring much of the Jacobites' vision. Possibly taking

advantage of this the Munroes and Claytons pressed on through the smoke towards the Spaniards. The Spaniards soon spotted them and open up a deadly fire, forcing the attackers to retire back to their lines. Apart from the continued skirmishing in the centre, possibly involving the dragoons, Lochiel's men and the Macgregors, little more was seen to be happening. That is until Wightman ordered MacKay's Highlanders, Huffel's Dutch, Harrison's detachment as support, and the grenadiers to press forward on the right, in an attempt to push thew Seaforths and the Macgregors off the slopes. Closer and closer government troops came, but it

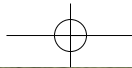


THE DUTCH TROOPS

Sent over to England to help King George I to hold onto power against Jacobite rebellions. The Dutch troops were also in England during the Jacobite rising of 1715, under the command of General William Cadogan. At Glen Shiel they were probably led by Colonel Huffel. Tunic and trousers were yellow and tricornes were black.

Numbers present at the battle, possibly no more than 250. Despite stories to the contrary there is no evidence for a Dutch commander being killed in the battle.





THE HANOVERIAN ARMY

The Hanoverian army at Glen Shiel consisted of mainly troops from the Inverness garrison, under the leadership of General Joseph Wightman. Additionally Wightman had Dutch auxiliaries, a unit of some 146 regular grenadiers, and Scottish clansmen from the clans Munro and Sutherland, loyal to the government. The mounted contingent consisted of four companies of dragoons.

As we have seen, Wightman had the foresight to bring with him artillery for support. The infantry were armed with the flintlock musket. Red tunic, red breeches, white webbing, black leather cartridge box and black tricorn hats.

was slow, hard going. They had to cover some 2,400 feet up a very steep incline. Exhausted they did not enter into a charge, but instead traded volley for volley of musketry fire. Unexpectedly however the Clan Macgregor surged forward, causing the Dutch troops to fall back, but not before almost becoming surrounded. Colonel Huffel, along with a few of his men, was cut down. But with Colonel Harrison's detachment, supported by the Sutherlands, entering the fray the Jacobites soon began to waver and were themselves obliged to fall back.

The grenadiers now closed to within throwing range, lobbing their grenades at the shaken rebels. Understandably the Jacobites began to get the worst of it, the Earl Marischal taking a musket ball in the arm, and began to retreat, relinquishing hold of the high ground. Government troops were gaining the upper-hand. Both Jacobite flanks had now gone and the centre, coming under increasing pressure, began to buckle and waver. Although wounded the Earl Marischal, along with Campbell of Ormidale, still attempted to hold the line. At this stage,

after almost three hours of fighting, Wightman saw an opportunity to win the battle and sent some of his forces forward once more. He stated in reports,

“Towards the end of the action I observed some Spaniards left in the pass to defend it, which obstructed our finishing the affair, and obliged me to dismount 30 dragoons, which with about 40 foot, was all we had as a reserve; with which numbers I attackt them, and carried it in 10 minutes. They were better at climbing the rocks than we at their retreat, so that we have very few or any prisoners except a Spanish captain and their physican.

The dragoons and Clayton's had finally pressed home their attack, the Spaniards retreated to the rear and the whole of the Jacobite line simply melted away, streaming westwards toward Loch Duich, and over the hills to safety.

As it was by now around 6-7pm the failing light meant little or no pursuit was possible and many of the rebels escaped, Tullibardine, Seaforth and Keith amongst them, eventually fleeing abroad. The following day the Spanish troops, with no place to go, surrendered and were marched to Edinburgh as prisoners of war, eventually to be repatriated. Losses on the Jacobite side are not confirmed but a contemporary letter records shockingly small loss of “less than ten men killed or wounded”. Wightman acknowledged the loss of 21 killed and 121 men wounded.

The rising, lasting some 59 days, (from the landing at Eilean Donan till the battle at Glen Shiel) was effectively over. James Frances Edward Stuart, the Pretender, remained on the continent and in September married Clementina Sobieska, a descendant of the Kings of Poland. The following year in 1720 Clementina gave birth to a son, whom they named Charles Edward Louis Philip Sylvester Casimir Maria. He would come to be better known to history as 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', and would lead his own bid to regain the Stuart throne in an invasion of Scotland and England in 1745, culminating in his defeat at Culloden in 1746, putting an end once and for all to the Stuart risings.



Left: The Scottish Jacobites and Spanish allies (far left) where no match for the government forces in 1719 - your re-fight might prove to be different however! All figures by Reiver Castings.



ORDER OF BATTLE THE BATTLE OF GLEN SHIEL

JACOBITE FORCES

The Jacobite highlanders were mainly equipped with the basket-hilted broadsword, dirk and targe, with which they were very skilled. The majority would have been issued with a flintlock musket, of either Spanish or French origin.

We read that during the engagement, when the clan Mackay pressed forward on the rebels' left wing, in an attempt to push the Seaforth Highlanders off the high ground, they did not engage in a hand-to-hand struggle, as is normal with a clan to clan fight, but instead stood trading volley for volley musket fire. Again, in the centre long drawn out skirmishing took place, no hand-to-hand being recorded. On the rebels right wing the clan Monroe attempted to press forward, but were repulsed before making contact, they too being forced back to their lines. The Jacobites only seemed to lack cavalry, but this was normally the case, for few Jacobite armies could boast a good contingent of horse. Artillery too was lacking, and again this was normal, no doubt any attack on an isolated government post would have yielded up guns for the cause. I have not as yet read any account which mentions that the Jacobites had artillery at Glen Shiel, the cannon supplied by the Spanish was lost when Ormonde's ships were scattered off Finisterre. The morale of the Jacobites can be said to be good. The Marquis of Tullibardine, a veteran of the Battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715, can be classed as a competent commander, as was his second-in-command, George Keith the Earl Marischal, also a veteran of Sheriffmuir.

C in- C: William Murray, Marquis of Tullibardine

UNIT	MEN	COMMANDER
Clan Mackenzie	500	William Mackenzie, Earl of Seaforth
Clan Mackintosh	100	Mackintosh of Borlum
Clan Campbell	100	Campbell of Ormidale & Glendaruel
Clan Macgregor & MacRaes	300	Rob Roy Macgregor
Clan Chisholm & Cameron	150	Donald Cameron of Lochiel
Spanish Regulars	274	Don Nicolas Bolan
Total Jacobite forces 1,424 men		



AVAILABLE FIGURES

Your first port of call for figures from the '19 rebellion should be Reiver Castings specifically designed 28mm range, as featured in our accompanying pictures. <http://reivercasting.wordpress.com>

There is a myriad of other figure manufacturers who make miniatures which cross over into the 1719 period.

GOVERNMENT FORCES

Massive cutbacks in the army prior to 1702 meant that when hostilities erupted the government were forced to raise and train new regiments, such as was the case during the Spanish War of Succession (1701-1714). After the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 the British army was once more reduced in numbers and when trouble broke out with the Jacobites in 1715 there was a lack of trained soldiers to deal with the threat. However those infantry battalions that fought at Glen Shiel, the 11th, 15th and the Dutch regulars, were fortunately suitably trained professional soldiers. Though their numbers were small they were of course supported by highland clans in the pay of the government, such as the MacKays and Monroes, who had a long standing support for the government.

As in all British armies there was a mounted presence, at Glen Shiel in the form of two troops of dragoons. As for the artillery, General Wightman had fortunately brought with him some Coehorn mortars. Though the mortars did not cause too many casualties in the battle, they did effect a drop in morale amongst the Jacobites, especially amongst George Murray's highlanders on the right flank. All government troops at Glen Shiel are in a high state of morale, their commander-in-chief, like his counterpart, was a veteran of Sheriffmuir.

C in- C: General Joseph Wightman

UNIT	MEN	COMMANDER
Grenadiers	140	Major Milburn
11th Foot	250	Colonel Laurence
14th Foot	250	Colonel Reading
15th Foot	250	Colonel Harrison
Dutch Infantry	250	Colonel Huffel
Dragoons (2 troops)	80	Captain Robertson
Clan Munroe	60	George Munro of Culcairn
Clan Mackay	50	Lt. Mackay, Lord Strathnaver
Artillery	4	Coehorn mortars + crew.
Total Government forces 1,330 men		



Illustration from 'The Jacobite Rebellions 1689 - 1745' Men-at-Arms 118. © Osprey Publishing www.ospreypublishing.com