

Battle of Aughrim 1691



Context:

This Workbook seeks to educate the reader about the causes, course and consequences of the Battle of Aughrim. The workbook first sets the political context, with particular reference to the rivalry between William of Orange and James II, and the military context, namely the progress of the War of the Kings' in 1689 and 1690. After the strategy, battle tactics and weapons have been explained, the sequence of events in the battle is clearly set out. The political consequences are traced and the prominence of Aughrim in folklore and popular history is considered. The workbook uses a variety of quizzes, graphics and activities to reinforce and supplement the textual learning.

All dates are in old style (Julian calendar).

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A Game of Thrones

James Stuart (James II) became king of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1685. He was a Catholic which worried many of his Protestant subjects. They knew however that James's daughter Mary, was a Protestant and would become Queen when James died.

Mary was married to James' nephew, William of Orange, a Protestant prince, and ruler of the Netherlands (the United Provinces).

William III was looking forward to his wife becoming Queen as he would get extra money, men and ships. This would help with his rivalry against his troublesome neighbour Louis XIV, the 'Sun-King' of France.



James II



William III & Mary II (Stuart)

William landed in England, supposedly to investigate if the baby was the true heir. He brought a large army with him to 'assist' in his investigation.

Many of James' Protestant subjects welcomed William. Fearing for his life, James fled to France for help from Louis XIV, who was also a Catholic.

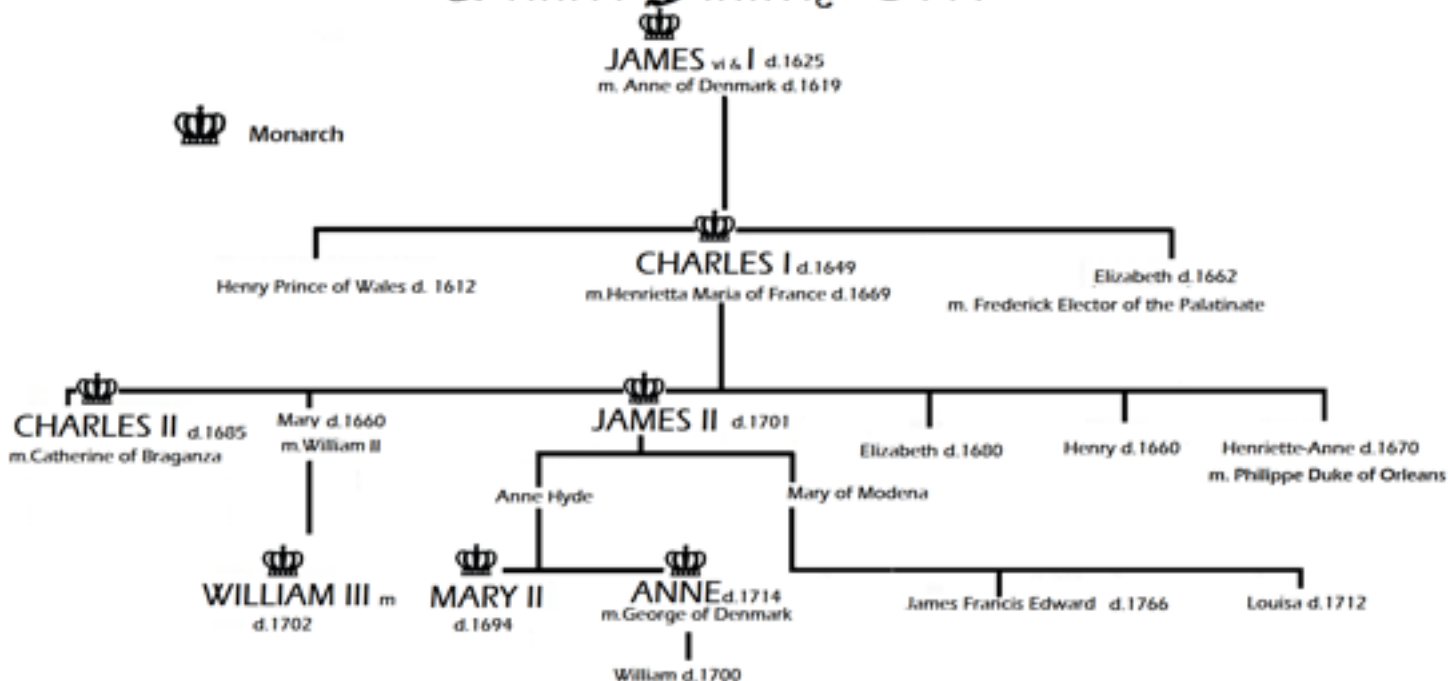
William now held two of his uncle's kingdoms, England and Scotland but Ireland was still controlled by James' fellow Catholics.

William's hopes were dashed on the 10th June 1688 when James' second wife (also called Mary) gave birth to a baby boy who would be next in line for the throne.

William's supporters spread the story that the boy was not really James' son. They said that Jesuit priests had smuggled a miller's baby into the room, hidden in a warming pan.



Stuart Family Tree



Q₁ What was the family relationship between William III and James I? _____

Q₂ What were the two family relationships between William III and James II? _____

Q₃ Name the 'warming pan baby' in the family tree. _____

Did you know ?

The Act of Settlement of 1701 decreed that anyone who 'shall profess the popish religion', or anyone who married a Catholic, could not become monarch.

The ban on royals marrying Catholics was not removed until 2013.

The ban on a British monarch being a Catholic remains.

War of the Kings

In France, Louis XIV, promised to help James who went to Ireland where an Irish Catholic army waited to fight William. 'None but the Irish will stand by me', declared James.



On the 1st of July 1690, William defeated James at the Battle of the Boyne. This was the biggest battle in Irish history, involving about 60,000 men. James fled back to France, while his Jacobite army retreated west of the Shannon river. The Jacobite army beat back an attack on Limerick. Disappointed, William now left Ireland, putting a Dutchman named Ginkel in charge of his army.



The following year, 1691, King Louis sent one of his generals, Saint Ruth, to command the Jacobite army. Ginkel pushed across the Shannon at Athlone and marched west.

On the 12th of July 1691, Ginkel found a Jacobite army waiting for him on a long ridge south of Aughrim village.

It was not the biggest battle in Irish history but it probably was the bloodiest, leaving up to 4,000 dead and dying on the battlefield.



Complete the missing words

It was said that _____ priests had smuggled a _____ baby into the room, hidden in a _____.

James II's daughter Mary, was married to _____, ruler of the _____.

Many of James's _____ subjects welcomed William, when he arrived to England with an _____.

_____ king of England, fled to France to ask help from _____.

In 1690 _____ defeated James at the Battle of the _____.

William left Ireland, putting a _____ named _____ in charge of his army.

On the ___ th of ___ 16___, _____ found a Jacobite army waiting for him near ___ village.



The Soldiers

Infantry are soldiers who fight on foot. They march into battle armed with a range of weapons:

The Musket - this was accurate to a range of less than 100 metres.

The bayonet - this was a knife with a tapered handle that could be plugged into the front ('muzzle') of the musket-barrel. If all else failed, it could be used, to fend off enemy horsemen.

Other weapons carried included a 'pike' (a long spear) and swords.



The Williamite forces used the latest 'flintlock' musket, so called from the 'lock' or firing mechanism. In contrast, the Irish infantrymen carried the older 'matchlock' musket. This was more prone to misfire.

Cavalry fought on horseback. The cavalry man usually carried two pistols and a sword. He sometimes used a musket with a short barrel called a 'carbine'. The cavalry was highly mobile. Its main tasks were scouting, destroying enemy cavalry, breaking up enemy lines and chasing a fleeing enemy.



The dragoon was a special type of infantryman who rode into battle but normally dismounted and fought on foot. Being more mobile than the ordinary foot soldier, he would be used as a skirmisher to get into action, and out again, quickly.



Artillery men operated the cannon. They worked as a team, with each man having a specific job. The gun commonly fired a solid metal shot or cannonball to an effective range of less than 1,000 metres.

For close range fire against men and horses sometimes the gun was loaded with 'case shot'. Many small metal balls were contained in a 'case', which burst when fired, scattering the shot like a large shotgun.

Artillery guns were wheeled in front of the battle lines. This meant they were usually effective only at the beginning of the battle before their own troops, or the enemy, passed over their position. As it happened, a Williamite gun would play a crucial role in the battle.

Many phrases have come from this period.

Phrases like '*flash in the pan*' or '*going off at half-cock*' testify to the unreliability of the musket mechanism. The 'cock' was a lever that was drawn back and then released by pulling a trigger to ignite the gunpowder in the 'pan'.

'Keep your powder dry'. Gunpowder is very hygroscopic i.e. it absorbs moisture easily and when wet, it becomes a useless sludge.

'Lock Stock and Barrel' - The three pieces which assembled to make the musket. The Lock, the Stock (the wooden handle) and the metal gun barrel.

'Bite the bullet' - The musket ball was wrapped in the paper cartridge and had to be bitten off to load the gun. This was not a pleasant thing to do.



Discuss how these phrases are used today.

The Army

By the closing decades of the seventeenth century, armies on campaign were bigger than ever before. They were divided into many sub-units. Two-thirds to four-fifths of most armies were foot soldiers or infantrymen. The building block of the infantry was the 'company'. Made up of 50 men led by a captain, the company formed part of a battalion of up to 500 men. One or two battalions made up a regiment commanded by a colonel.



Cavalrymen were organised into troops of 50-60 horsemen, led by a captain.

A regiment, commanded by a colonel, might be made up of six troops.

Dragoons were a hybrid and might be organised as infantry or as cavalry.

Infantry, cavalry and dragoon regiments were usually grouped into 'brigades'.

Each infantry battalion formed a block much wider than it was deep. The battalions formed lines. A fairly thin linear formation was the best way to use as much of the available musket firepower as possible. The cavalrymen, who mostly relied on the sword, maintained formations that were deeper than they were wide.



The contesting kings, James and William, issued 'commissions' to colonels and captains authorising them to recruit troops. These officers had to be influential enough to have servants, tenants, dependents, or kinsmen to recruit.

They were usually wealthy enough to pay for the upkeep of their men, when, as always happened, pay fell into arrears.

In addition, William hired an entire army of 7,000 men from the king of Denmark. Other continental troops included the Huguenots, (French Protestants fleeing persecution in their home country). They made up the best and most motivated of Ginkel's troops. Dutch troops also fought in the battle.



It was relatively easy to raise a 'field' army (the mobile part of his army). It was quite another thing to feed all the men and horses.

The soldier might eat about a kilogram of food a day, mostly bread, supplemented by vegetables or meat. But every day, a horse ate about ten times that weight of dry fodder or over twenty times that weight of green fodder.

That is why full-scale war was a seasonal affair, from about mid-May to mid-October. The campaigning season did not open again until the grass had begun to grow.

Ginkel's field army, was somewhat bigger than Saint Ruth's. Typically, the bigger army manoeuvred to seek out and destroy the main enemy army.

Smaller armies would try to avoid battle and hold territory by occupying fortified towns and cities.

They also threatened the enemy lines of communication and re-supply.

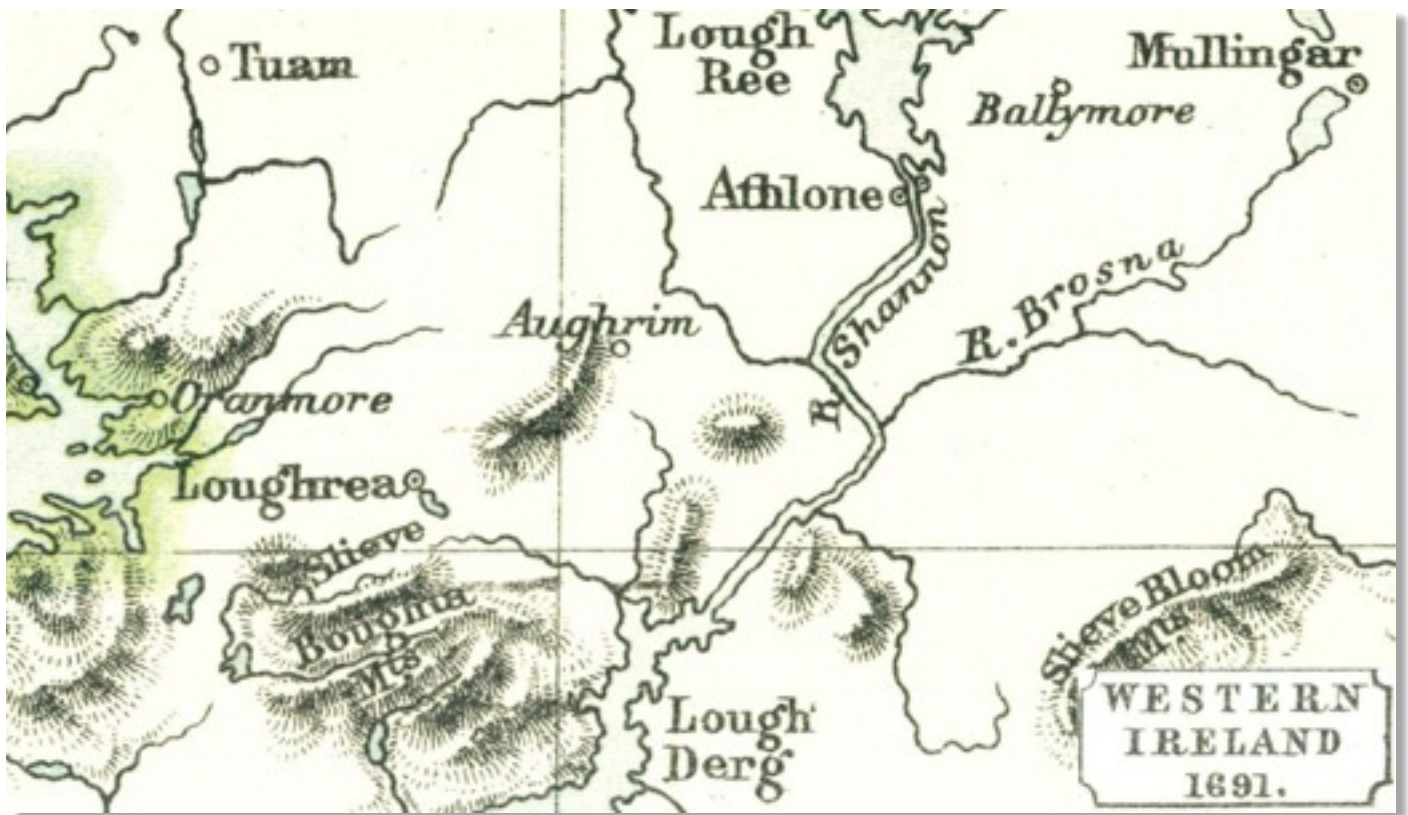


At first, Saint Ruth relied on a fortified town defence at the bridge in Athlone. After he lost Athlone he decided to give battle. This was against the advice of most of his senior officers.

He marched his army west through the town of Ballinasloe and finally chose to stop near the small village of Aughrim.



Athlone



Questions

Who commands a regiment ? _____

What were the French Protestant troops called ? _____

About how many cavalymen were in a troop ? _____

What is the knife attached to a musket called ? _____

Crossword



ACROSS

4. William's wife
5. James' Army
8. Wars were not fought in
11. Ate the most food
12. French Protestant soldiers
13. James' ally in France
16. More reliable musket
18. He lost his head
20. Foot soldiers

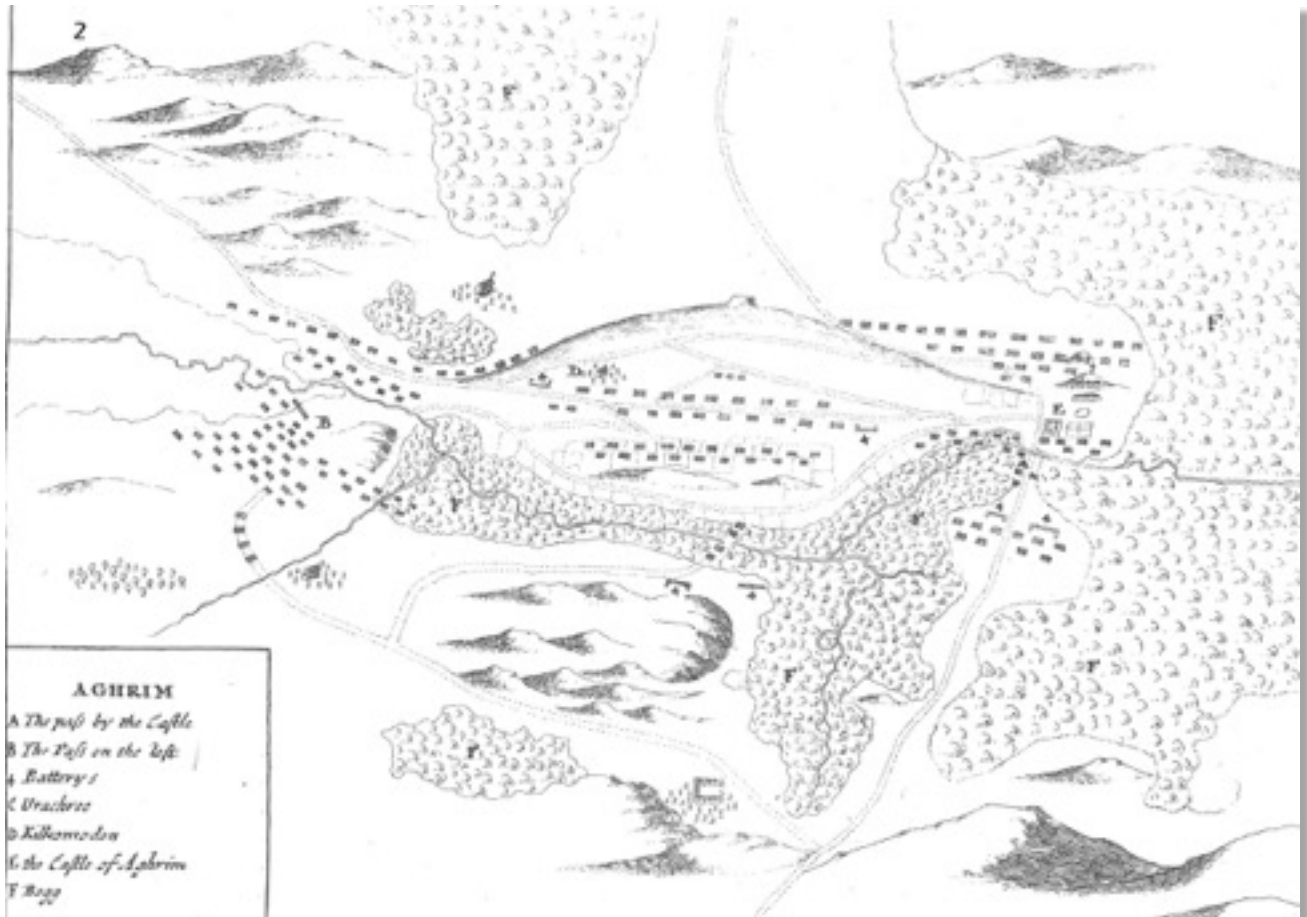
DOWN

1. Fighters on horseback
2. Knife on a musket
3. 500 men formed a
6. Commanded the winning side
7. British monarchs cannot be
9. William's religion
10. Explosive
14. Williams wife was a first
15. Commands a regiment
17. James' daughter was William's
19. Your next school tour

The Battle



Saint Ruth drew up his 16-18 thousand men in two battle lines, one behind the other. This was on a low ridge, with a bog to the front, running south of Aughrim village. Ginkel's marching column of about 18,000 men stretched back along the road as far as Ballinasloe. On seeing the enemy position, Ginkel took his regiments off the road and lined them up to face the Jacobite Army.



Ginkel also drew up his army in two lines. His regiments of foot (infantry), took the middle. His horsemen stood on both sides of the infantry main body and formed the left and right 'wings'. Finally, artillery guns were wheeled in front of the battle lines.

Around midday, Ginkel began the battle by sending his left 'wing' of cavalry to drive off the enemy opposite wing.

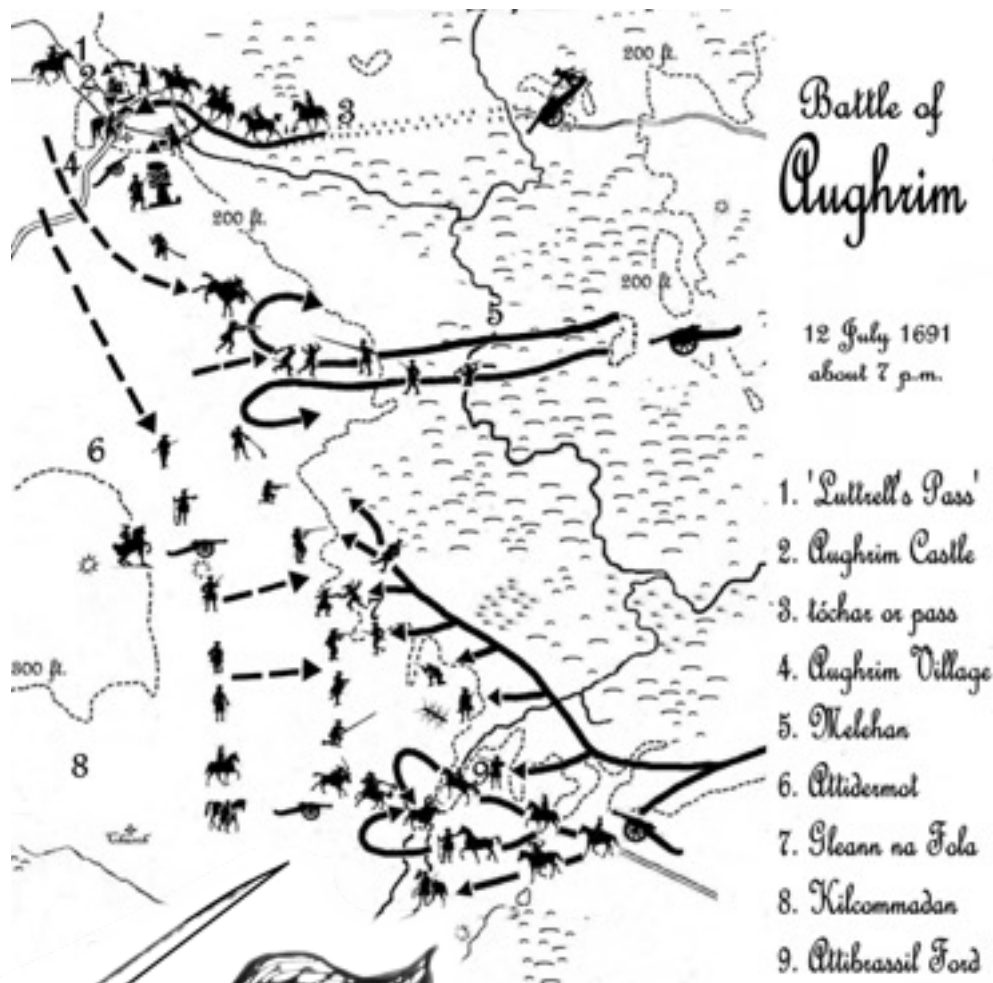
He hoped this would expose the 'flank' or side of the enemy main body. The flank was always the weakest part of the battle line. Ginkel's attack on the Irish right wing was stopped dead by Patrick Sarsfield.

Sarsfield was briefly a Member of the Irish Parliament. He gained his military experience serving with an Anglo-Irish contingent attached to the French Royal Army.



Ginkel

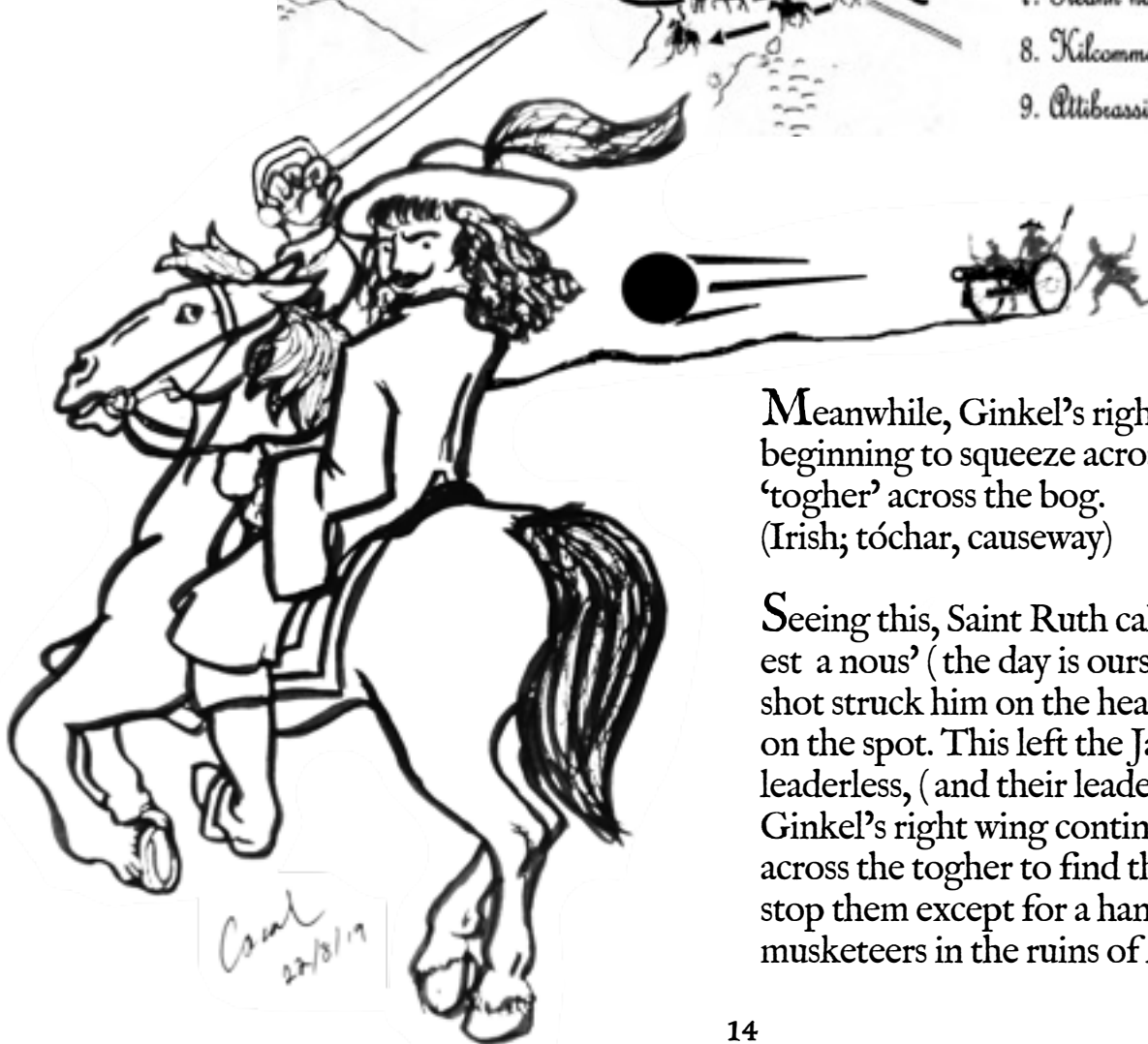
Later, at around five o'clock, Ginkel tried a 'general' attack, where the wings and body pressed forward at the same time. His left wing was stopped again. The Jacobite army enticed his main body forward by a pretend retreat, then attacked their flanks and drove them back with heavy loss.



Battle of Aughrim

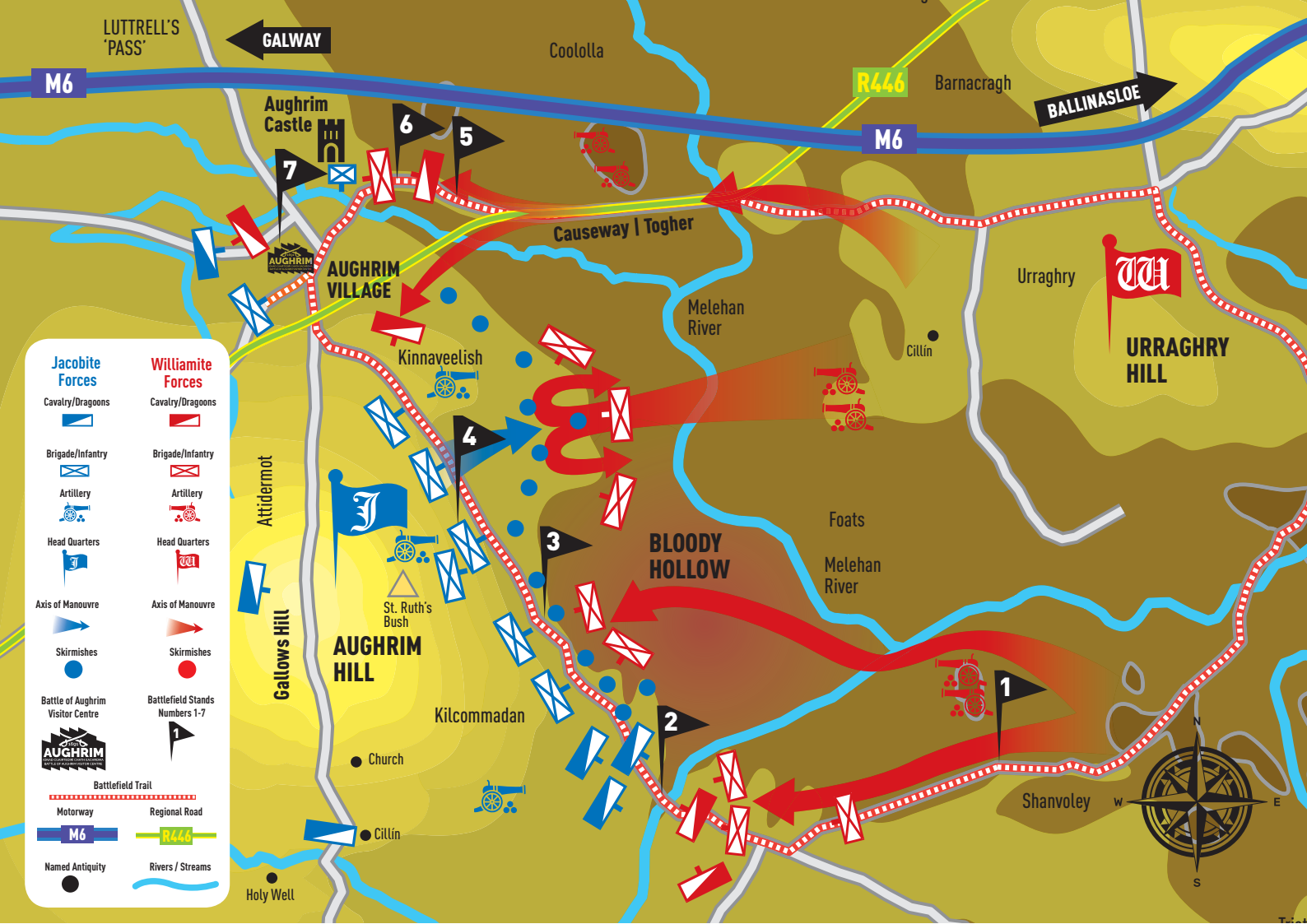
12 July 1691
about 7 p.m.

1. 'Luttrell's Pass'
2. Aughrim Castle
3. tóchar or pass
4. Aughrim Village
5. Melchan
6. Altidermot
7. Gleann na Fola
8. Kilcommadan
9. Altibeassil Ford



Meanwhile, Ginkel's right wing was beginning to squeeze across a narrow 'togher' across the bog. (Irish; tóchar, causeway)

Seeing this, Saint Ruth called out 'Le jour est a nous' (the day is ours) when a cannon shot struck him on the head and killed him on the spot. This left the Jacobite army leaderless, (and their leader headless!). Ginkel's right wing continued to press across the togher to find there was no one to stop them except for a handful of musketeers in the ruins of Aughrim Castle.



The fatal gap in the Irish lines was likely caused by the regiments of the Irish left wing which had been moved to deal with the threat to the main body. This is sometimes blamed on Henry Luttrell who was supposedly bribed to withdraw his horsemen at the crucial time.



The gap, at what became known as 'Luttrell's Pass', exposed the left flank of the Irish main body. After heavy fighting, the foot soldiers eventually broke and scrambled over hedgerows and ditches to escape. Williamite horsemen chased them, cutting and stabbing, until darkness fell about an hour later. Most of the three thousand Irish dead were killed in that twilight chase.



An Account of what Officers and Soldiers belonging to the Foot, were Killed and Wounded in each Regiment, at the Battle of *Aghrim*, July 12. 1691.

IN	Col.		L.Col.		Majors		Capt.		Lieut.		Ensigns		Soldiers	
	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.	Killed.	Wounded.
Kirk's Regim.							1						7	10
Col. Gust. Hamb.													6	9
Ld. Gen. Hamb.		1									1		9	45
Col. Herbert's	1						3			1			32	45
Sir Hen. Ballafs					1						1		2	23
Col. Brewer's					1		1			1	1			7
Brigad. Stuart					1		1				1	1	16	43
Col. Earl		1			1		2	1	1	2			37	70
Col. Tiffin													19	40
Col. Creighton							2			1		1	12	14
Col. St. John		1					1	2	2	5		4	13	54
Ld. Lisburn							1			1	2		16	64
Ld. Meath's					1		2			1		1	7	8
Col. Foulks				1	1		1		2	1		1	15	40
Lord Cmtz.		1			1		1			3		4	16	39
Count Nassau													1	5
Prince of Hesse		1					1			2		2	10	45
Et Mellioner.							1				1		8	4
Cambon.							1	4	1	4	2	4	0	35
Beicaille.		1		1			9	1	6		5	5	21	54
Groben.							2	1	3			4	10	50
The Danes	1		1						1	2			6	10
Foot in all.	2	6	1	2	4	3	13	24	9	35	9	28	337	781
Horse in all.	1					1	6	5	15	3	13	4	263	125
Horse and Foot	3	6	1	2	4	4	19	29	24	38	22	32	600	906

Here is a table of Williamite casualties from Rev. George Story's *Continuation* (London, 1691)

Questions

Which regiment suffered the heaviest casualties, that is, both dead and wounded?

How many Col. (Colonels) were wounded?

How many regiments were there where only soldiers were killed or wounded?

Aftermath

The Williamites buried their dead but left the Irish to rot: *'Fágadh iad in Eachdhroim ina sraitheanna sínte, mar a bhéadh feol capaill, ag madraí dá scraoilleadh...'*

[“They left them in Aughrim laid in rows, like horse meat being eaten by dogs”].

Months later, their skulls and bones were gathered up and built into a memorial wall at the Franciscan Abbey of Killconnell, four miles to the north of Aughrim.



Patrick Sarsfield

Aughrim did not end the war, rather it made it clear that the Irish would not win it. However, even after this loss, they could yet avoid complete and unconditional defeat. They still held Galway and Limerick as bases of re-supply from France. Galway surrendered nine days after Aughrim but Ginkel could not crack Limerick's defences. He was about to wind up campaigning for the year when Patrick Sarsfield, the leader of the Irish, offered to negotiate an end to the siege and to the war.

William III's victory over James II was secured when the Treaty of Limerick was signed on 3 October 1691. This was, on paper, a good deal for the Irish.

The Irish parliament, a Protestant body, resented what it saw as the generous terms granted by the Treaty of Limerick. It was able to exert its power over William and his successors and pass penal laws in the 1690s and early 1700s. The laws excluded Catholics from public life as much as possible.

This included government office, trade, crafts, and the control of land. A result of the war and the penal laws was a reduction in the number of Catholics who owned land from 22 to about 5 per cent.

The war finished the Catholic aristocracy and gentry forever. Many of their descendants would be found on mainland Europe as churchmen, merchants, ministers, officials and above all, as soldiers, the so-called 'Wild Geese'.

In Consideration of the Surrender of the City of Limerick, and other Agreements made between the said Lieutenant General Ginkel the Governor of the City of Limerick, and the Generals of the Irish Army, bearing Date with these Presents, for the Surrender of the said City, and Submission of the said Army: It is agreed, That

A R T. I.

THE Roman Catholics of this Kingdom shall enjoy such Privileges in the Exercise of their Religion, as are consistent with the Laws of Ireland, or as they did enjoy in the Reign of King Charles the II: And their Majesties, as soon as their Affairs will permit them to summon a Parliament in this Kingdom, will endeavour to procure the said Roman Catholics such farther Security in that Particular, as may preserve them from any Disturbance upon the Account of their said Religion.

The 'War of the Kings' was an important European war, a British royal family dispute and an Irish Catholic struggle for religious freedom. The wider European war ended in stalemate with the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697. The outcome finished James II, when Louis XIV reluctantly recognised William III as king of Great Britain.

Louis had failed to restore James but he had distracted William from the war on the continent at a low cost.

The 'Lamentation of Aughrim' by Thomas Moore provides a good example of how Catholic and nationalist Ireland remembered Aughrim in song.

'Forget not the field where they perish'd,
The truest, the last of the brave,
All gone— and the bright hope they cherish'd
Gone with them, and quench'd in their graves!



Louis XIV

The loss was made all the more bitter because it could so easily have gone the other way. Folklore blames, the shepherd O'Kelly, who it is said, pointed Saint Ruth out to the Williamite gunner and Henry Luttrell who supposedly gave up the fight and allowed the Jacobite army to be outflanked.

In 1752, Britain and Ireland switched from the Julian calendar to the more accurate Gregorian calendar. This dropped eleven days from the calendar. So in that year, Wednesday September 2 was followed by Thursday September 14.



The anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne on 1st July (Julian) is now celebrated on 12th July (Gregorian).

By the end of the century the 'twelfth' was associated with the Boyne, rather than Aughrim. The Orange Order commemorates William or 'King Billy' who was present at the Boyne.

The twelfth celebrations continue in Northern Ireland and some of the marches and other displays irritate the nationalist community there.

While Aughrim is not as vividly remembered as the Boyne, the battle had more lasting and serious consequences in Irish history.

Follow up on the story of the battle by organising your visit to the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre, Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway.

For Bookings:

Tel: 09096-73939 (summer season)

or 087 6844253 / 091-509165 (off season)

Email: battleofaughrim@galwaycoco.ie



www.twitter.com/1691aughrim



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Battle-of-Aughrim-1691/>



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Mary of Modena and James Francis Edward Stuart. Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones @LloydLlewJ, 30 March 2018 original by Jacob Gole (NPG D34722) in NATIONAL Portrait Gallery London.
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Musketeer: Maxwell Photography.
Cavalry: Lifeguards of James II re-enacted for 'Aughrim Remembered' July 2016.
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'Cavalry Men by a Sutler's Tent': Frick Digital Collections <https://digitalcollections.frick.org/>
Sébastien Leclerc, *Bataille de Cassel (1677)* Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, ark:/12148/btv1b84053457
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- Page 13: Battle of Aughrim: Rev. George Story, *Continuation of the Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland*, (London 1692), p.134.
General Ginkel: Adriaen van der Werff, 'Godard baron van Reede, 1ste graaf van Athlone' (wikipedia.org)
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Rev. George Story, 'An Account...' from *Continuation* p.139.
- Page 17: Wall of Skulls: Capela dos Ossos in Évora, Portugal <https://en.wikipedia.org>
Patrick Sarsfield: Portrait traditionally identified as Sarsfield, Franciscan Library, Killiney
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- Page 18: Louis XIV: Hyacinthe Rigaud, 'Louis XIV' (1701) <https://en.wikipedia.org/>
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