

A HOSTILE HIGHLAND ENCOUNTER GRAHAM VS. CAMPBELL

The sleet-laden wind screamed and sobbed through the pine-wood where 1,500 men lay or crouched, wrapped in their plaids, asleep. When the wind abated for a moment, the noise of the waves on the near-by loch-shore, filled the night in its place. It was Candlemas Day, the 2nd of February, 1645, a month after that celebratory feasting at Inverary - and dramatic was the change in the circumstances of the royalist army.

James Graham, fifth Earl of Montrose and commander of the royalist army, himself was not asleep, nor most of his remaining leaders - for this was only half the company that had taken Inveraray, the rest having gone home with their booty after the age-old fashion of Highland armies. Remaining carefully within the shelter of the pines, they stared. Directly ahead lay the semi-ruinous quadrangular Inverlochy Castle. It was not the castle, however, which held the Graham's interest and concern. If intelligence was right, his arch-enemy, Archibald Campbell, eighth Earl of Argyll, might well be even within those crumbling walls.

Montrose knew that his army was outnumbered by three-to-one by the Campbell host, which most probably consisted not only of Lowland militia and irregular foot, but also had several cannon available. Fortunately there was no sight of the Covenant Dragoons under the command of the experienced Covenant General William Baillie of Letham, who had been chasing the royalist force for the last few days but had been diverted away from Montrose's main army by the small royalist cavalry troop led by Colonel Nathaniel Gordon.

The royalist army had to strike a surprise blow against the Campbell host and hope that the Covenant Dragoons would still be too far off to join the combat. Montrose had given strict orders to Gordon to join the main army in the precincts of Inverlochy Castle, by Candlemas Day, at the latest. But still there was no sign of him. The attack had to start without cavalry support. Montrose called his commanders, Patrick Graham - Younger of Inchbrakie named "Black Pate" - and Alastair Macdonald - Younger of Colonsay nicknamed "Colkitto" and addressed them as follows:

"At the break of day a trumpet will be sounded to signal a general attack on the Inverlochy camp. There is good reason to believe that the dastard Argyll and his Campbell lairds, these oppressors of the Highland West who have the Lowland law in their pockets, are among the camp. Our timing for a quick strike is vital as we might have to face artillery. Gordon's cavalry cannot be far and he will join us once combat has started. Friends, we have another ray of hope. As you may remember back in 1642 at the siege of Dudley I could make a getaway from the fortress through a secret tunnel. The Princess of Constantinople, daughter of Sultan Suleyman the Pale, remained my guest for a good ransom. Suleyman begged me for her release and in return promised to send me an elite company of Janissary marines along with artillery for our support. I have sent an envoy, a country man of Prince Rupert of the Rhine, who had some doubtful debts with the fat Bishop of Mainz, to arrange the bargain. I received a message yesterday that the force has landed in Scotland two weeks back and is on the march to Inverlochy. It is said that Suleyman sends along his personal wizard Khalifa Bum-in-bin, whose presence will enhance the fighting power of the Janinssaries considerably. Gentlemen to your postions and await the signal."

The Rules for the Highland Game

Layout:

The royalist army hides in the pine woods surrounding the Campbell position in the ruins of Inverlochy Castle and is ready to attack at dawn. The Campbells are among the ruins of the Castle.

Start of Game:

Will the royalists achieve a surprise attack on Inverlochy Castle?. A dice throw of 1-3 indicates that there is no surprise and the cannons may be fired. 4-6 gives Montrose a surprise effect and the cannons will not be ready to fire at the attackers.

Reinforcements:

The Royalist Army will be reinforced by:

a) Gordon's Cavalry and by b) Suleyman's Janissaries

The Campbell Army will be reinforced by.

a) General Baillie's Covenant Dragoons

How to determine when troops arrive: Sixteen playing cards (containing 4 aces) are placed face down around the table. At the beginning of move 3, each player may pick any one card per move. An ace will indicate that one reinforcement troop arrives at that position on the table. For Royalists two aces are therefore necessary (red ace = Gordons / black ace = Janissaries)

Special Rules:

Montrose's Highlanders always have +1 combat point.

All commanding officers have +2 combat points.

The Janissaries have +1 combat point as long as Khalifa Bum-in-bin is around.

Victory conditions:

Defeat and rout opposing army. Winner will receive 2 battle points for Chronology.
