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Miniature Figurines, Warrior and Hinton Hunt figures depicting the centre and left flank of an English regiment of the mid-16th Century, with billmen, pikemen, bowmen and arquebusiers, showing the formation adopted in action. Flag is as 'D' in drawings.

(Sir Henry Cromwell's Company of Horse) straw colour, trimmed with his colours; 1590 — Canterbury: red; 1596 — London: red; 1599 — Essex: russet coat and hose.

Contingents raised by noblemen might be clad in family or other colours (for example the Earl of Surrey brought 500 men in white and green to Flodden) and it seems that larger groups were sometimes uniformed — at the siege of Boulogne, Henry VIII's Main Battle and Rear Guard were dressed in red with yellow trim, the other forces in blue with red trim — and in 1558, 8,000 English sent to aid Spain in the Netherlands all wore blue.

In the early 16th Century, white was a favourite colour for English troops (the Tudor colours were green and white); in the later part of the century red became most widely used. Blue, however, was also widely worn, and, for Irish service, cassocks (loose long or short coats, sometimes hooded or sleeveless, and worn over equipment) were

usually to be of russet, green, or 'sad' colours. Cavalry in Elizabeth's reign seem to have favoured red, tawny or orange colours; Border horse usually wore white, and could wear 'blue bonnets' like the Scots. English archers, too, often wore 'Scots caps' in red or blue, over their helmets, and cavalry helmets were likewise sometimes covered with red or parti-coloured caps.

The sign of the English soldier, worn on breast and back in the first half of the 16th Century, and found on shields and pennons later, was the red cross of St George. Toward the end of the century sashes, worn about the waist or over the right shoulder by officers, and some pikemen and cavalry, became the usual national distinction. Red, or red and white, seems to have been worn by the English.

Officers were distinguished from their men, just as in other armies of this period, by armament (sword and buckler, half-pike, or partisan being favourite officers'

weapons), and by rich clothing with silk and lace, gold or silver trim, decorated armour, and jewellery.

Flags

A number of English flags are shown. The St George's cross on a white ground was evidently most common, sometimes combined with Tudor green-and-white, or the Tudor rose, but striped flags are often shown in paintings from Elizabeth's reign, possibly influenced by the Dutch.

Noblemen's units would be likely to display family crests or badges in case of cavalry, as with one guidon shown. At the battle of the Yellow Ford in Ireland, Percy's Regiment had a standard with silver crescents (a badge of the Percys) which could indicate something like the later Civil War system for company flags (see Chapter 22).

English jacks of 1580 (Tower of London).



From: Renaissance Armies 1480 - 1650.

by George Gush

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355 (lending copy)

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The Irish

Until the rebellion of Shane O'Neill in the 1560s, the Irish indulged in constant raiding and ambushing, frequently of each other, occasionally fought a single battle, but did not really fight wars. From 1561 to 1603, however, there were a series of campaigns against the English, culminating in that of Tyrone, which was on a really large scale.

In the early part of the 16th Century the warriors of Ireland were very traditional in armament and tactics, but as the wars continued more 'up-to-date' weapons made their appearance and some full scale battles were fought, though the traditional 'guerrilla-type' tactics were more successful, as in the Irish victory of the Yellow Ford, 1598.

The Irish made good use of difficult country and of field fortifications, digging trenches and 'plashing' trees into impenetrable barriers, often in connection with an ambush.

An Irish chief, probably in a type of brigantine, prepares to mount for a raid (British Library).



The Irish

Traditional types The Gallowglass

These were originally Scots mercenaries, but by the 16th Century their clans or 'septs' had often been settled in Ireland for two or three centuries (the most famous were the Mac-Donalds and the McSweeneyes); they were still mercenaries, but often owed loyalty to a particular noble (in fact in 1568 there were three septs of the 'Queen Majesty's Gallowglasses'). They usually wore an iron bascinet, and either a mail shirt or a short cape of mail over a padded quilted coat called a 'cotun' and their characteristic weapon was a heavy two-handed axe, up to six feet long, which could chop the enemy's head off with a single blow (it was still used in 1588 when McLaghlin M'Cabb killed 80 Spaniards from the Armada with one).

Gallowglasses were organised in 'Battles' of 80 or 87 men, but each gallowglass was accompanied by two boys, who carried his

supplies, armour, and his secondary weapons, three light Irish javelins or 'darts'.

The Kern

The ordinary Irish foot soldiers, made up partly of 'bonnachts', or Irish mercenaries maintained by the various nobles, and partly of free peasantry called out to fight. The bonnachts might sometimes be dressed like the gallowglasses, or else like the 'rising-out', as the peasants were called; that is, no armour, simply the traditional Irish dress of a linen tunic with very wide sleeves, often dyed yellow with saffron, usually worn over tight trows of a plain colour, and sometimes covered with a very short coat of goat's hair or a large mantle or 'shag-rug', patterned, and with a long fringe of 'an agreeable mixture of colours'.

Bonnachts might have been armed with the 'sparth-axe', but the usual weapons were javelins or 'darts' of which each kern had a handful; even the English admitted

that the Irish were extraordinarily skilled with this weapon, but said it was 'More Noisesome, especially to the Horse, than deady'.

A few of the kern also used the bow, and a sword or spear and shield might be carried; the shields were oval and convex, of wood or basket-work. Each man would also carry a 'skean' or long dagger. They were often clean-shaven but wore flowing moustaches and a mop of shaggy hair or 'glibb' falling over the forehead (banned by the English as making it difficult to recognise their 'thievish countenances').

Their tactics were normally those of skirmishers, especially in difficult country where, often, no other troops could move, but they could also charge fiercely in the right circumstances, clashing their weapons together with a loud cry of 'Phar-roh!' (probably really 'Faire' — 'Watch out!'; anyone who didn't join in was popularly supposed to be wafted off to a mysterious valley in Kerry and Never Seen Again!). What they couldn't do was to stand up against cavalry in the open.

The cavalry

A small proportion of the average Irish force, the cavalry would normally be made

up of gentry. They were equipped with a helmet with a strange turned-up nasal, mail shirt, sword and shield, but their chief weapon was a longish light spear held in the middle and used overarm either for stabbing or throwing, not couched as a lance. One reason for this was that the Irish, like their ancient forebears, still used neither stirrups nor a proper saddle (though their checked, pillow-like saddles may have had a wooden tree); another was that their light cobs could not stand up to the heavier English horses in a full charge.

They were thus mainly useful for scouting, skirmishing, or pursuit. In the earlier 16th Century the Irish seem to have had the unusual habit of drawing up the cavalry on the left of their battle line.

Irish flags

The cross of St Patrick was not apparently considered as a symbol of Ireland at the time. Two 'national' flags which may have been used in the 16th Century are a blue flag with three gold crowns, and the traditional Irish harp in gold, probably then on a blue ground.

In the 'Desmond Rebellion' (1579-83) the rebels had the Pope's banner, presumably red with the crossed keys of St Peter in

silver and gold beneath the triple crown of the Papacy.

Tyrone had recognised Philip II of Spain as King of Ireland, and had the support of Spanish troops, and it appears that some of his units carried 'Spanish Flags' of white bearing the red diagonal cross raguly of Burgundy, but they had other flags too.

The 17th Century Confederates seem to have been the first to use a green flag with a golden harp but also employed flags with the 'Irish Cross' shown.

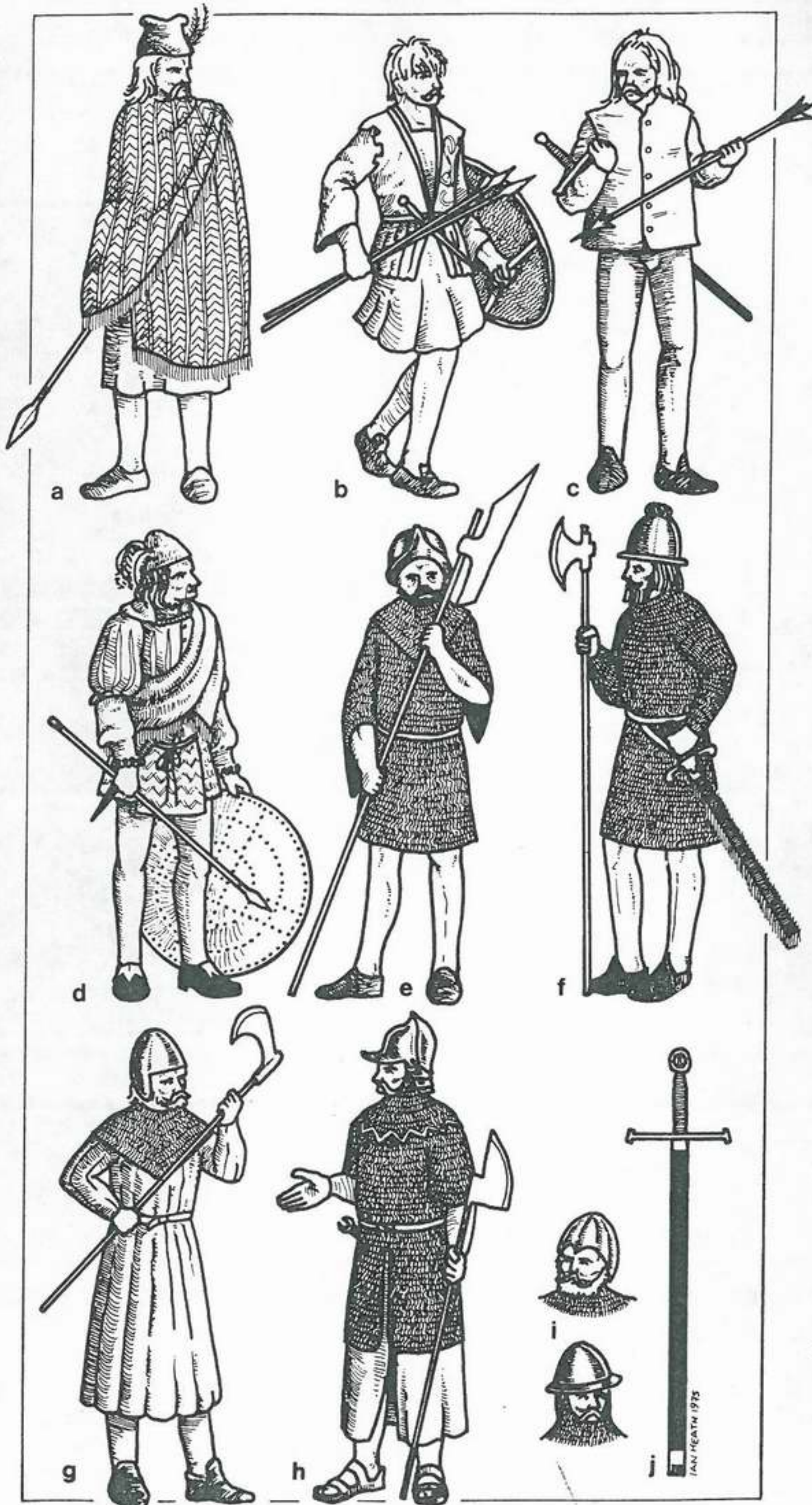
Later changes

These started in the 1560s, when Shane O'Neill began to equip his men with arquebuses, impress large numbers of unfree peasants, and hire extra Scots mercenaries from overseas. By 1569 musketeers and mailed pikemen had appeared in Irish armies.

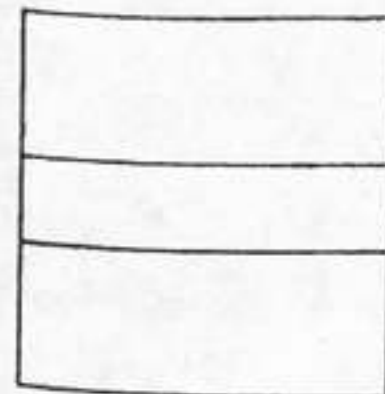
The 'New Scots'

These were a new wave of Scots mercenaries, mainly recruited from the Western Isles. They were probably bare-legged (hence their nickname of 'Redshanks') and generally dressed like other Highlanders of the period. Organised in companies with a paper strength of 100, they included some

a Irishman in mantle. Cap is of a type worn by Irish irregulars in Europe. b Kern with 'Skean', shield and darts. Tunic is simpler than the Ulster version shown in Derrick's prints. Note type of surcoat. c Kern, early 17th Century. He wears a very short, loose coat of blue and tight hose (pinkish-red seems to be the usual colour). He holds his sword under his right arm (the Irish are often shown holding sheathed swords, rather than having them slung from belts). In his left hand is a javelin, in this case having actual flights, like a modern dart. He wears dark leather brogues. d Irish chieftain, 17th Century. He holds a black, gold mounted javelin in his right hand, and a shield (a large oval affair, covered in red leather and decorated with studs) in his left. His conical cap is of tooled leather. He wears a slashed doublet with half sleeves, the traditional fringed cloak and red hose, and a decorated 'Erse apron'. e and f A pair of Gallowglasses, both from sketches by G. A. Hayes McCoy. 'f' has a somewhat Scandinavian look and not surprisingly comes from a charter granted to Dublin in 1583. He has a typical sword and scabbard, tall helmet with small crest (?), and long-handled axe. 'e' comes from a map of 1567. Note baggy sleeves, mail cape, typically 15th Century bascinet, and seven-foot Lochaber axe. Both are barelegged, and could have been barefooted too. g Gallowglass in 'cotun', mail cape and helmet. h Gallowglass in mail cape and skirt and cavalry-style helmet. Note different shape of axe (based on a Dürer drawing). i Two alternative Gallowglass helmets. The upper drawing depicts a 15th Century padded type. j Typical Irish 16th Century sword. Note ring at base of hilt with tang passing through it, and square-ended scabbard. Irish swords of this period were usually straight, and large. The accompanying Derrick prints show alternative scabbard types, especially those with a dagger strapped to the outside of the scabbard.



Flags shown in a print of the Irish force at the battle of Erne Fords in 1593. Infantry flag on left, cavalry on right. Colours not known. The cavalry flag may be an 'Irish Cross'. Something similar in red on white was carried by the 17th Century Catholic Confederates.



This print from John Derrick's *The Image of Ireland* (1581) shows Ulster Kern indulging in their usual raiding. The particular type of jacket worn, with pleated 'frill', is probably an Ulster variation. At lower left the men with long axes are probably *bonnachts*. Note the bagpiper (British Library).



The Scots

cavalry and 'shot' with firearms, pikemen, and halberdiers, as well as men with the more traditional Highland weapons, long-bows and two-handed claymores. They were found in most Irish armies in the second half of the 16th Century, though they had most of the usual faults of mercenaries and came quite expensive (each man got one bullock per quarter for pay and two for food!).

Tyrone's army

Hugh O'Neil, Earl of Tyrone, created the first really effective Irish army of the period, using as a nucleus Irish infantry he had kindly offered to train for Queen Elizabeth, and senior officers who had served in the English or Spanish armies. He raised 6,000 disciplined Irish foot, organised in companies of 100 and regiments probably 500 strong, with drums, bagpipes and colours, and armed with matchlock muskets and pikes (the musket bullets were made out of lead imported from England, ostensibly to re-roof O'Neil's castle of Dungannon). There were at least two musketeers to every pikeman, probably more.

Tyrone also reorganised the cavalry, equipping at least 300 'in the English fashion' with light lances and (presumably) stir-

rups; however, his cavalry, though good at harassing tactics, still could not stand up to the English in the open.

Generally, gallowglasses had become pikemen, kern musketeers, and dress and armour was probably little changed, though one of O'Neil's regiments wore red coats (probably his original troops for English service), and his men were said to have plenty of 'graven murrions' (morions).

On the flanks of his 'regular' forces, numbers of skirmishers with the older types of weapon operated, and there were also 'New Scots', including Tyrone's own bodyguard of 200 musketeers.

Tyrone normally used harassing tactics in difficult country, but at the disastrous battle of Kinsale his forces drew up in the open in three large tercio-style blocks.

The Catholic Confederates

After the defeat of O'Neil and the crushing of his followers there was no war in Ireland until the 1640s, when Catholic uprising became confusingly involved with the Civil War situation in England. In the 1640s, Owen Roe O'Neill, the ex-commander of an Irish regiment in Spanish service, led the army of a Catholic Confederation (claiming loyalty to King Charles) to considerable

success against Scots and Parliamentary armies. The 'rebels' this time included both 'Old Irish' and Anglo-Irish, and were armed largely by Spain and organised on Spanish lines. The Anglo-Irish would probably wear English-style coat, breeches and hose (just like any English Civil War troops; while many of the 'Old Irish' might still be in traditional dress.

At the Irish victory of Benburb (1646) Owen Roe had seven infantry regiments; his own and that of Alexander Mac-Donnell were of 15 companies (1,500 men) and the rest of ten companies (1,000 men). They were made up about half and half of pikemen and musketeers, and drew up in the usual fashion with pike in the centre and shot on their flanks. The pikes were longer and smaller-pointed than British ones.

There were also nine troops of horse, some at least of them being lancers after the Spanish fashion.

Later, at Dungan's Hill, the Catholic army included four ox-drawn demi-culverins and 800 Scottish 'Redshanks', armed chiefly with sword and targe. The Earl of Ormonde, who subsequently led all Royalist forces in Ireland, had among his Lifeguard a regiment of fusiliers with flintlock muskets.

Like the Swiss, the Scots provided a steady flow of mercenaries to richer nations, serving with distinction, most notably in French, Dutch and Swedish armies, where they provided both complete regiments (including part of the French Royal Household) and many distinguished commanders. However, we are here concerned with actual Scottish armies of the period, and their service was confined to the British Isles.

In the 16th Century there was a continuous conflict of raid, counter-raid and minor battle on the Border, punctuated by the great clashes of Flodden (1514) and Pinkie (1547), both Scots defeats, plus internal conflict in the later part of the century, involving the expulsion of French forces with English aid. In the 17th Century the Scots played a notable part in the Civil Wars, raising both the grimly efficient armies of the Covenant, which fought in all three Kingdoms, and the dashing Royalist army of Montrose (in whom Scotland produced arguably the greatest general of the period).

The Lowland pikemen

The spear was the traditional weapon of the Scots, suited to a poor land with little cash or metal to spare and dependent on an armed peasantry for defence; the solid blocks of spearmen or 'schiltrons', which met the English on many a medieval battlefield, had a long history behind them, back possibly to the ancient Picts, who had also formed tight clumps of spearmen in battle.

For the Flodden campaign, James IV replaced spears with imported 'Swiss Pikes', 15 feet long, accompanied by 40 French captains to instruct the levies in Continental tactics. Scots pikemen formed shoulder to shoulder in columns at least as deep, and often deeper, than they were wide. In defence the front rank crouched so low that they almost knelt, with the pike-points of the rear ranks crossing those of the front, as easy to encounter as an 'angry Hedgehog'. In attack they came on, at Flodden, 'Almayne (German) fashion, very orderly and with no shouting', but it is reasonable to suppose that their levies, though very brave, were less well-drilled and disciplined than Swiss or German professionals.

Earlier they had been formed into units of about 500, and these may have remained, but the tactical columns were much larger: at Pinkie basically three huge 'battles'

which must have been at least 7,000 strong; at Flodden these were, perhaps with French advice, divided into about eight smaller columns, mostly around 5,000 strong.

Scots forces were based on a militia system not unlike that of England, Scots being obliged to equip themselves for war according to rank, and gentry to maintain feudal contingents, appearing for the Sheriff's inspection at biannual 'Wappinshaws' (perhaps lured by the free drinks sometimes provided!). The weapons listed as acceptable at Wappinshaws of the 16th Century included spears and pikes, longbows, crossbows, two-handed swords, halberds, Leith axes and Jedwart Staves (the latter two were long, broad-bladed two-handed axes, similar to a halberd without its spike). Hand guns were also to be provided, and by 1535 landed men were ordered to equip themselves with an arquebus-a-croc, but at Pinkie the Scots had few firearms — in fact lack of missile power was a major weakness in their 16th Century armies.

Mid-century Scots pikemen mostly wore a simple iron helmet, a jack, and white doublet and hose, the sleeves and thighs of the latter being guarded against sword-cuts by four or five rows of brass chain. A large kerchief was wound three or four times round the neck, 'Not for cold, but for cutting', and further protection was provided by a round buckler held in the left hand, even when grasping the pike; secondary weapons were broadsword and dagger. Lowlanders of the 16th Century commonly wore the 'blue bonnet', and other usual clothing colours were grey and light blue.

Pikemen formed 70 per cent or more of Scottish armies at the larger battles of the period.

Highlanders

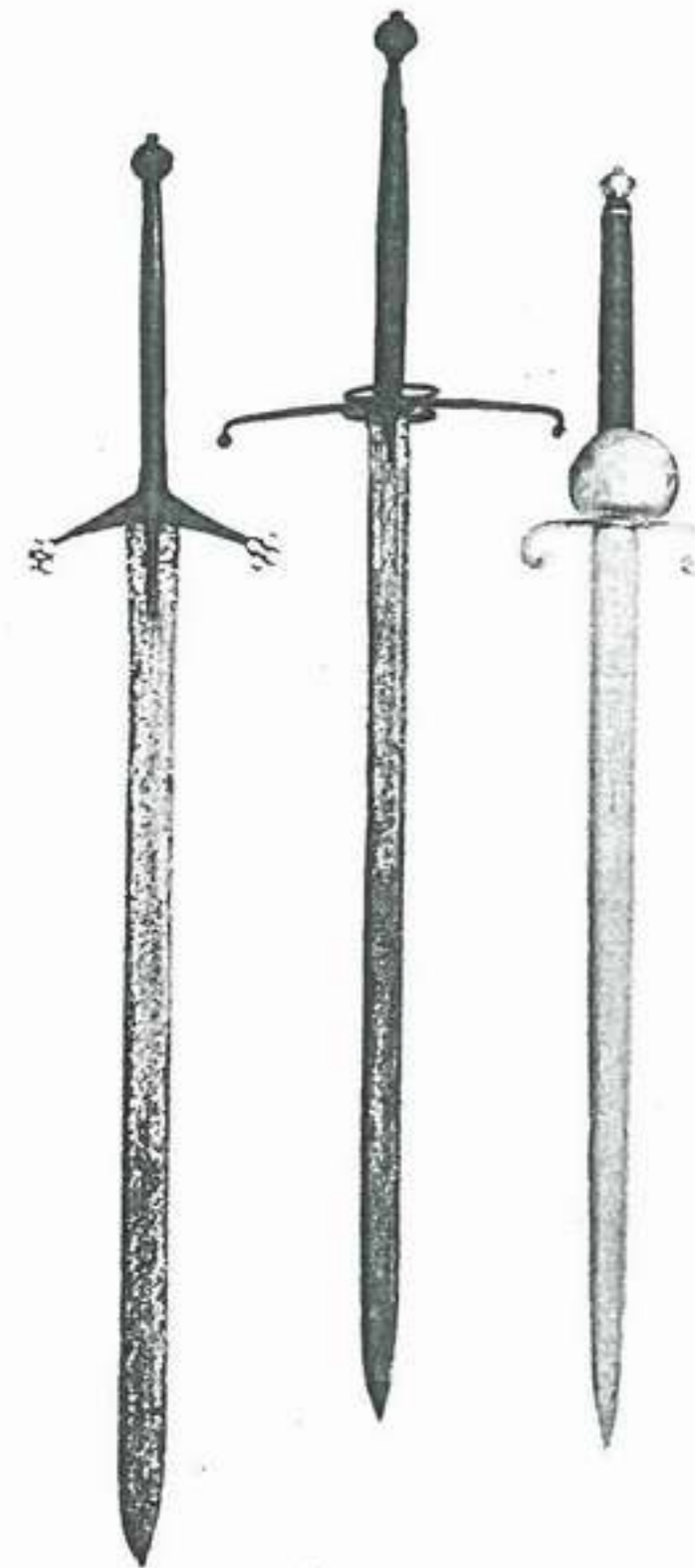
All Highlanders were warriors, following their chiefs to battle, and in the 16th Century still roused by the sending round of the 'fiery cross' summoning them to the traditional mustering-place. They were found in all Scottish armies of the period; usually 15 per cent of the larger ones.

Their arms, even in the 17th Century, were, firstly, the bow: Highland archers in Leslie's army in 1644 were said to be able 'To kill a Deere in his Speed' and there is no reason to believe English strictures on Scottish shooting; secondly the claymore, which throughout our period was a two-handed sword. Dirk, and a flat round 'targe', usually leather-

covered and decorated with embossing and metal nails and boss, sometimes spiked, would also be carried.

In the 17th Century, basket-hilted broadswords began to replace the original claymores, and firearms began to spread among the Highlanders. A roll of Athollmen in three parishes in 1638 shows the proportions of weapons available: 523 men had 110 'guns' and two 'hagbuts' to 149 bows. There were also 11 pistols (probably the characteristic Scottish all-steel pistol with fishtail butt), 11 long axes and halberds. There were 448 'swords' to only three two-handed swords.

16th Century Scottish claymore swords (Department of the Environment).



Another Derrick print from the same source showing the English (on left) defeating the Irish. In the foreground 'Northern Horse' in mail charge the typical Irish cavalry who are very well depicted (including their method of using spears). In the background a 'pyper' lies dead, while axe-armed Gallowglasses run away from English arquebusiers (British Library).