

**Volume 10**

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**William Wallace, Scottish Patriot,**  
**Reality and Legend - III**

**Lead: His reputation was that of a hard-hitting guerilla fighter and anti-English rogue, but after Stirling Bridge, William Wallace became the symbol of the fight for Scottish independence.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: England had conquered Scotland, but not the national spirit. Whereas many of the Scottish nobility were prepared to bow the knee to England, resistance continued under**

**partisan leaders such as commoner William Wallace. In September 1297 he led a ragtag brigade to Stirling Castle, northwest of Edinburgh, an important English outpost. On September 11<sup>th</sup> an English army under the Earl of Surrey arrived to deal with this west-country upstart. Wallace was vastly outnumbered, but the English troops had to cross a narrow wooden bridge to get to him. When they did he and his band slaughtered them mercilessly as they poured off the bridge at the other side. As many as 5,000 English died in the day's fighting. Wallace became a national hero.**

**He followed his victory by capturing Stirling Castle and then led**

**a growing army south across the border and laid waste to the northern counties of England. Upon returning he was knighted and designated guardian of the kingdom. It was not long before Edward put him to the test. In July 1298 the English King led an army of more than 90,000 to put an end to the rebellion. Wallace retreated before the advancing English, burning the countryside and taking livestock with him. The English were weakened by these tactics and were preparing to retire when some of Edward's Scottish allies betrayed Wallace and let it be known that the Scot planned a surprise night attack. Edward advanced quickly and overcame the Scots at Falkirk. Hopelessly outnumbered anyway,**

**Wallace watched a third of his army retreat from the field led by one of his allies, Lord Badenoch. The English quickly polished off what remained of the Scottish army. William Wallace escaped, resigned his commission as guardian, and then disappeared for four years.**

**In 1303 he was betrayed in Glasgow, captured by the English, taken to London, and within a month was tried and brutally executed. He was hanged, cut down before he died, quartered, his entrails were taken out and burned on his body, his head, arms and legs were severed from his torso. The head was placed on a pike on London Bridge and the four limbs sent to four parts of the Kingdom as a**

**lesson for all traitors.**

**Wallace may have achieved more in death than in life. His treatment at the hands of the English, instead of finally subduing Scottish patriotism as Edward had hoped, actually enflamed it. His martyrdom reinvigorated the Scots' dream of Independence. Robert de Bruce revived the rebellion, defeated the English and was crowned king in 1306. Much that achievement can be attributed to the life, both in legend and reality, of William Wallace.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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