

Volume 15

Number 062

Battle of Flodden Field II

Lead: When King James IV of Scotland invaded England in 1513, the campaign became one of the great military disasters in Scottish history. James lost more than his Kingdom.

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

Content: In 1512 English King Henry VIII, took up an alliance with Spain and launched a military campaign against France's Louis XII. Scotland had an ancient alliance with France and Louis called it in. Scotland's James IV, although married to Henry VIII's sister,

Margaret Tudor, agreed to invade northern England, thereby hopefully drawing English forces away from the main arena of conflict in the south near France.

On August 22, 1513, with artillery and an army estimated to be between 35,000 and 60,000, James crossed the River Tweed at Coldstream, on the border between Scotland and England. At first it went well for the Scots. They captured four castles near the border and camped on the edge of the mountains on a hill called Flodden. With no organized supply operation, James' soldiers had to forage for food and booty in the countryside. Unfortunately, many deserted, acting as if the whole

operation was a mere border raid. According to folklore, James lost precious days while he grew infatuated with Lady Heron at Ford Castle, one of those he had captured and made his headquarters.

As the Scottish army was dwindling, Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, the English commander was gathering his forces. The two armies met on September 9th, but by this time the Scots were outnumbered. The English had their backs to the Tweed so there was little room to maneuver, just four hours of frantic hand to hand combat with spears, pikes, ax blades and English longbows. In the end, the Scots were crushed. English casualties were about 4,000; Scots

over 10,000, the dead including James IV and most of the Scottish nobility. Sir Walter Scott immortalized the battle in his epic poem, *Marmion*. Henry VIII, who wanted to be counted along with his ancestor Henry V as a warrior king, could only look from afar since he was not present to take credit for the victory.

Research by Ann Johnson, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

Barrell, A. D. M. *Medieval Scotland*. Cambridge: University Press, 2000.

Eaves, Richard Glen. *Henry VIII's Scottish Diplomacy 1513-1524*. New York: Exposition Press, 1971.

Fry, Peter and Fiona Somerset Fry. *The History of Scotland*. New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1995.

Mackie, J. D. *A History of Scotland*. New York: Dorset Press, 1985.

Magnusson, Magnus. *Scotland: The Story of a Nation*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000.

“The Battle of Flodden Field 9th September 1513.” *The North East England History Pages*.

10 May 2009

<[http://www.northeastengland.talktalk.net/Battle of Flodden Field.htm](http://www.northeastengland.talktalk.net/Battle%20of%20Flodden%20Field.htm)>.

Copyright by Dan Roberts Enterprises, Inc.