

Ireland and Scotland

Despite the defeat of Royalist forces in England, supporters of the monarchy were still active in both Ireland and Scotland. It was vital for the new Commonwealth in England that these rebels should be subdued. In August 1649, Oliver Cromwell and the New Model Army landed in Ireland.

The Royalists in Ireland were supported by the Irish Catholics. Cromwell fought a very harsh campaign in Ireland – he held the rebels responsible for the horrors of earlier massacres. The English army attacked and killed the inhabitants of Drogheda, a garrison town north of Dublin, when they failed to surrender. Cromwell reported to parliament that such actions were justified because they would ‘... tend to prevent the effusion [shedding] of blood for the future...’ A similar massacre took place at Wexford in the south of Ireland.

Next, Cromwell turned his attention to Scotland. After the execution of Charles I, his son was proclaimed Charles II of Scotland. In 1650, Charles II landed in Scotland and gathered together an army of loyal followers. Cromwell marched northwards with the New Model Army and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Scots at Dunbar in September. Nevertheless, the fighting dragged on for another year. Charles II fled south in a last desperate attempt to raise more support. His army was finally defeated at Worcester in September 1651.



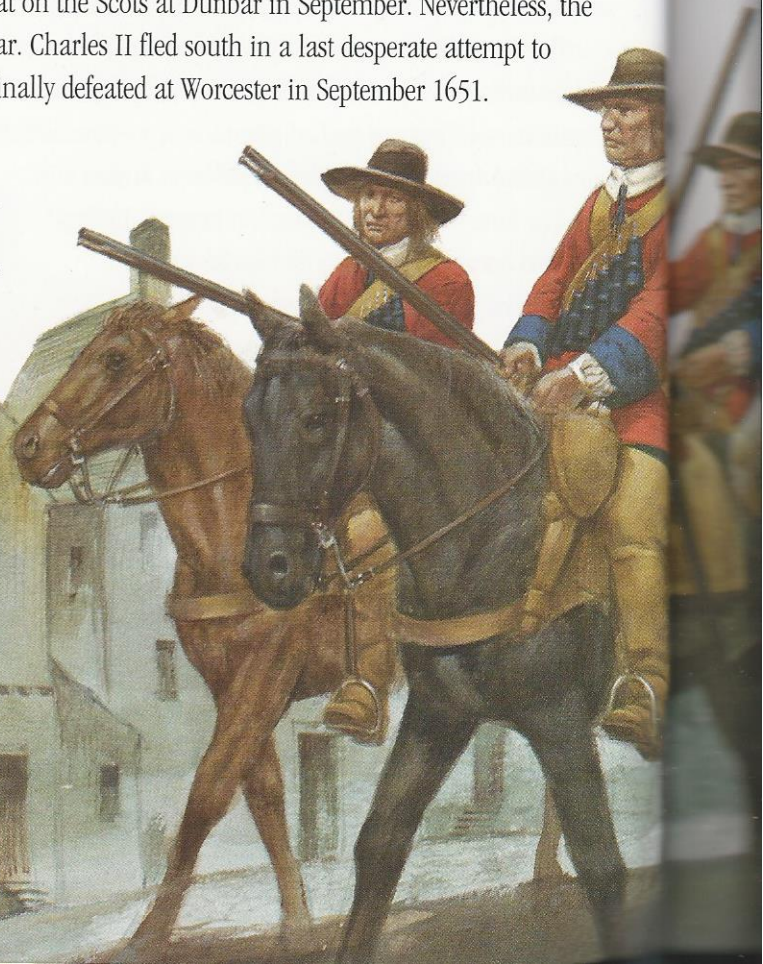
A Pikeman. Pikes were up to 5.5 metres long. Pikemen were carefully trained to handle their weapons when marching and attacking.

1649 Cromwell lands in Ireland (August) and prepares to attack combined Royalist and Catholic opposition. Massacres at Drogheda and Wexford.

1650 Charles II makes an agreement with Scots to accept Presbyterianism in return for their support to restore him to English crown. Cromwell leads an army to Scotland (July). Cromwell defeats Scottish army at Dunbar (September).

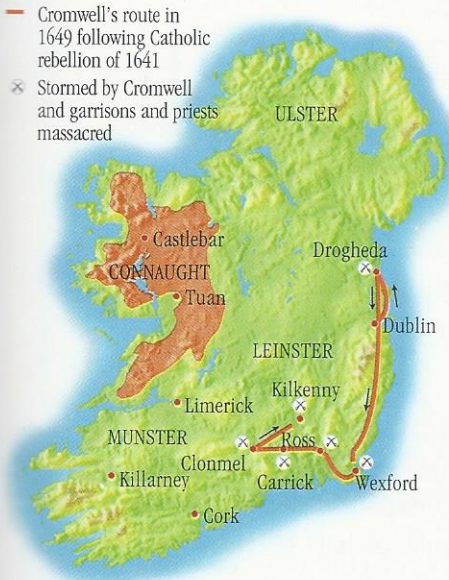
1651 Scottish armies defeated at Stirling. Charles II enters England but is defeated at Worcester (3 September).

Oliver Cromwell leads the New Model Army outside Edinburgh. In 1650, Cromwell was appointed captain-general of the army in place of Sir Thomas Fairfax who refused to invade Scotland. Even Cromwell was unwilling to fight the Scots, who were fellow Puritans. But when forced to fight he defeated the Scots at Dunbar, east of Edinburgh.



— Cromwell's route in 1649 following Catholic rebellion of 1641

× Stormed by Cromwell and garrisons and priests massacred



This map shows the main areas of conflict between Irish Catholics and the Cromwellian army, leading to the Battle of Drogheda in 1649.



DROGHEDA

On 11 September 1649, Cromwell's army attacked the garrison town of Drogheda. When the inhabitants rejected the terms of surrender offered to them the Parliamentary troops killed all the soldiers in the garrison and many of the townspeople too. The massacre at Drogheda and Cromwell's brutality soon became infamous in Ireland.

Charles barely escaped with his life and he was hunted by the Parliamentarians for 40 days before he escaped to France and safety.

The Scots were not treated as harshly as the Irish by Cromwell. Nevertheless, both Scotland and Ireland were now unwillingly part of a united Britain under Cromwell's leadership.

