

## **Sgt. Molloy of the Ruthven Redoubt** by Kenny Chumbley KLChumbley@aol.com

Here's a story found in my reading that I think worth passing along.

In 1745, a Board of Inquiry convened in London to determine why the English General John Cope retreated before Bonnie Prince Charlie and his Highlanders at the Scottish pass known as the Corrieyarrick. Cope was accused of cowardice, but the truth was that he commanded raw recruits in horrendous terrain against a strong force that held the high ground. It was a no-win situation, and Cope knew it.

Tucked away in an appendix to the official findings of the Inquiry is a short letter. Before Cope abandoned the pass, he stationed at a small fort—Redoubt—at Ruthven, twelve men, commanded by a Sergeant Molloy, to guard some ammunition and food. Everyone expected them to be slaughtered by Charlie's clansmen.

On August 30, 1745, Sgt. Molloy sent the following letter to General Cope.

### **Ruthven Redoubt 30 August 1745**

Honourable General,

This goes to acquaint you that yesterday there appeared in the little town of Ruthven above 300 men of the enemy and sent proposals to me to surrender this Redoubt upon condition that I should have liberty to carry off bag and baggage. My answer was that I was too old a soldier to surrender a garrison of such strength without bloody noses. They threatened hanging me and my man for refusal. I told them I would take my chance. This morning they attacked about twelve o'clock with about 150 men. They attacked for gate and Sally-port and attempted to set the Sally-port on fire with some old barrels and other combustibles which took place immediately; . . . They drew off about half an hour after three. About two hours after, they sent for me and two of their Chiefs wanted to talk with me. I admitted and spoke to them from the parapet. They offered conditions: I refused. They desired liberty to carry off their dead men: I granted. . . . I lost one man shot through the head by foolishly holding his head too high over the parapet, contrary to orders. I prevented the Sally-port taking fire by pouring water over the parapet. I expect another visit this night, I am informed, with the pateraroes [artillery], but I shall give them the warmest reception my weak party can afford. I shall hold out as long as possible. I conclude, Honourable General, with great respect.

Your most obedient and humble Servant, Molloy, Serjeant

I don't know what became of Molloy and his command, but the next time I read Paul's words to the Corinthians that they stand fast, acquit themselves like men, and be strong, I shall think of this gallant sergeant. In an age when mediocrity is the norm and compromise and cowardice are passed off as virtue, it fires the blood to read of a badly outnumbered garrison that would die bloodying the enemy's nose before abandoning its post. I shall also think of the courageous people I know who are holding on; though attacked by disease, betrayal, bullying, death, and more; bravely, valiantly, and radiantly to the end. God help us that when the last enemy surrounds us on all sides, we will be steadfast, immovable, and busy in the work of the Lord.