

Farewell, Inverawe

This ghost story is different. It is well known on both sides of the Atlantic, and the events that took place in Canada were seen as they happened thousand of miles away in Scotland. The story behind the ghostly visions was known to the officers of the 42nd Regiment who took the matter seriously. There are many who believe the story to be true - and it is the only authenticated ghost story in the three hundred year history of the British Army. The facts are not disputed

It began on a summer's evening in 1755 when Duncan Campbell, a Major in the Black Watch Highland Regiment, walked on the slopes of Ben Cruachan, above his ancient home of Inverawe.

A stranger staggered up to him and begged for help. The stranger was both terrified and exhausted and told Campbell he had accidentally killed a man. The dead man's friends pursued him, seeking his life for that of their friend. Major Campbell took pity on the stranger and said he would offer him help. It was a generous offer to an unknown killer but the stranger demanded Campbell swear on his dirk. Campbell swore by the word of an Inverawe, and the man was satisfied. He allowed the Major to lead him to a cave, a cave tradition has was the hiding place of both Wallace and Bruce.

Down from his mountain came Campbell of Inverawe to find armed men waiting for him, with the news that his foster-brother Donald had been slain. These men had been hunting his killer in the hills. The Major now knew who the terrified stranger was, but his oath prevented him from speaking of his meeting with his friends.

That night, as Campbell later related to his brother officers, the ghost of his foster-brother Donald appeared before him. The blood covered spirit cried out to him "*Inverawe, shield not the murderer. Blood must flow for blood*".

Next morning he climbed to the cave and told the stranger that he could no longer shelter him, and that he must move on. But the killer reminded him of his oath, and the Major left, obliged to let the stranger stay in the cave.. That night the spirit returned and gave the Major the same message - "*Blood must flow for blood*".

The following morning Duncan Campbell again climbed to that cave, but this time it was empty. Relieved he returned to his home, but the spirit came again that night. This time it seemed sorrowful and gave a different message "*Farewell, Inverawe. Farewell, till we meet at Ticonderoga.*"

The Major had never heard of Ticonderoga and was disturbed at the message. But soon his mind turned to more practical things. War had broken out with the French and the Black Watch, the 42nd Regiment, was marching. In 1756 the regiment left Greenock and in June

landed in New York. Here, the British were planning a campaign to defeat the French in New France, the country we know as Canada. With the Major went his son, John, commissioned as a Captain the Black Watch.

One evening in 1757 the Officers of the Black Watch dined together and Major Campbell told them the story of his foster-brother's death, and how they were to meet again at Ticonderoga. He asked his fellow Scots if they would tell him if they ever heard of such a place.

Whatever the Scottish officers might have thought of the story they were disconcerted when they received orders to march. They were to take the French Fort Carillon. The fort was built between the waters of Lake George and Lake Champlain and the native Indian name meant "noisy place" - Cheonderoga, which the White Man corrupted to *Ticonderoga*. Lieutenant-Colonel Francis Grant, the officer commanding the regiment persuaded his officers to use only the French name Carrillon, but the ghost of Donald Campbell was not to be cheated.

On the morning that the Black Watch was to attack the French Fort Major Campbell spoke angrily to his fellow officers for trying to hide the true name of the place. He told them that the previous evening his foster brother's spirit appeared before him and told him that this was Ticonderoga - here Major Duncan Campbell of Inverawe would die.

The attack on Ticonderoga is well known. The French had fortified their fort by cutting down trees and stacking them in front of the walls. The branches were left on the trees as French engineers thought it would impede any attackers. The British were impatient to get take the fort and declined to bombard the defences with artillery. The Black Watch was ordered to charge and the Highlanders surged forward to take the French position.

But the men got caught up in the trees, branches and barricades and became easy targets for the French and their Indian allies. Reports say that the Scots screamed cries of frustration that they could not get to their enemies. It was a disaster and casualties were high for the Scots. Amongst them was Major Campbell, wounded in the arm. Today, it would not be a serious wound, but infection set in and Major Duncan Campbell, Laird of Inverawe, died in Canada.

THE BATTLE IN THE SKY

Across the Atlantic, back in Scotland two Campbells became involved in the battle. Two sisters from Ederin were crossing the bridge over the Aray when one looked upwards. She pointed and both sisters saw what looked like a siege in the clouds. They saw the Colours of the different regiments and they saw friends in the Highland Regiment. As well as other Scots they knew they saw Major Campbell and his son John shot down.

They continued on their journey and when they reached Inverary they told others what they had seen in the clouds above the bridge. They also wrote down the time and details of the events they had seen.

They were not the only people to see the Battle in the Sky. The noted Danish physician Sir William Hart and his English companion also saw the figures as they strolled together around

Inverary Castle. With them was a servant, making five people who had seen the same vision. Weeks later details of the battle arrived in Scotland and The Gazette published them, which confirmed the statements given by those who claimed to have seen those ghostly soldiers.

So did Duncan Campbell of Inverawe die at the hand of a ghost? Did his foster-brother claim his revenge for aiding his murderer? Did two separate groups thousands of miles away see a vision of a battle as it took place? The *facts* regarding this story are true - as to the rest, it has intrigued minds for the last two hundred and fifty years and will no doubt continue to do so. When I contacted the Black Watch museum in Perth about this story they were very reticent to speak about it. They refuse to give sources or discuss ghosts.