



### The role of Welsh military personnel in England

#### The importance of the Welsh contribution at the Battles of Edgehill and Newbury

Welsh contributions to the war were significant, especially in battles such as the Battle of Edgehill (1642), and the Battle of Newbury (1643).

**The Battle of Edgehill, 1642:** Wales contributed significantly to Charles I's forces. Another Welsh regiment was led by Sir Thomas Salusbury. The battle ended in a stalemate, despite both sides claiming victory.

**The Battle of Newbury, 1643:** The Royalist army at Newbury included Welsh soldiers. Welsh regions supplied food, weapons and funds to support the King's war effort. However, at Newbury, despite the efforts of the Welsh troops and others, the Royalist army failed to overcome the Parliamentary forces and suffered a strategic defeat.

Many Welshmen served as foot soldiers during the English Civil War, motivated by their loyalty to the Royalist cause. They endured harsh conditions, including basic food, strict discipline, and the labour of setting up and maintaining their own camps. Uniforms were often simple, reflecting their civilian lives. Weapons varied depending on their role, with many Welsh soldiers utilising whatever sharp tools were readily available.

### Strategic importance of Wales as a Royalist stronghold

#### The use of castles, including Harlech and Raglan, as strategic centres by Charles I

Wales played a vital role as a Royalist stronghold, supplying troops, provisions and secure locations for King Charles I's forces. Its geography, coupled with a network of medieval castles such as Harlech Castle and Raglan Castle, made Wales a vital base of operations for the Royalists.

Harlech Castle was the last Royalist stronghold to surrender during the war. It held out until March 1647, nearly two years after King Charles I's defeat at Naseby (1645).

Raglan Castle belonged to Henry Somerset, a loyal Royalist supporter. The castle's large garrison and substantial defences made it a significant stronghold, able to withstand long sieges. The castle surrendered in August 1646.

#### The use of routes through Wales as a means of securing support from Catholic Ireland

Routes through Wales played a strategic role in King Charles I's effort to secure support from Catholic Ireland. Wales' proximity to Ireland and its predominantly Royalist population made it a crucial region for communication, troop movements and the transfer of supplies.

Wales' western coastline, facing Ireland across the Irish Sea, made it an ideal location for co-ordinating with Irish forces. Ports such as Milford Haven, Pembroke and Holyhead were crucial hubs for transporting troops and supplies. Charles I sought support from Ireland to strengthen his army. Wales was a Royalist heartland, which meant troops and supplies passing through the region were relatively safe from Parliamentary interference in the early stages of the war. While the use of Welsh routes enabled some Irish reinforcements to reach the Royalists, the strategy ultimately failed. The Irish forces that arrived were too few to significantly change the war's outcome.

### The significance of fighting within Wales

#### Key Parliamentary gains in Wales, including in Pembrokeshire

The capture of key ports in Pembrokeshire, such as Milford Haven and Pembroke, disrupted Royalist attempts to bring reinforcements from Catholic Ireland. Securing South Wales and Cardiff provided Parliament with access to the Bristol Channel, enhancing their naval dominance. Parliamentary control of Welsh strongholds cut off Royalist supply routes.

#### The Battle of St Fagans, 1648

- The Battle of St Fagans in May 1648 was the largest battle ever fought in Wales. The Parliamentarians emerged victorious.
- Trouble started when soldiers weren't paid and Parliament told some generals to stand down their armies.
- Revolts broke out across Wales, with some Parliamentary generals, like Major-General Laugharne, switching sides to the Royalists.
- Sir Thomas Fairfax dispatched 3,000 troops under Colonel Horton, but Laugharne's forces were much larger.
- Horton set up camp near St Fagans, waiting for help from Oliver Cromwell.
- Laugharne tried to surprise Horton with an attack on 8 May.
- Even though the Royalists had some early success, the Parliamentarians, with better training and more cavalry, won the battle.
- The Royalist army was defeated within two hours.

