

'INCOMING FIRE'! The sky erupted, from a charcoal black, to an electrifying orange! The thunders of the British cannons cracked the interior of the ear! Men around me were severed by the blasts. Limbs, blood and mucked guts flew everywhere! Gruesome, wasn't a word to describe the horror! We have been bogged down for days now, and we are trying our best to achieve our objective, to take the walls. Held by the Williamites. But thousands of Jacobite comrades lay around, motionless, as the still water in the Foyle. Even that is red with the blood of this merciless siege. Will the suffering end?

The true Siege of Derry has been trudging along since the 18th. Our Battalion is currently battling British fire coming from above us. We just HAVE to capture the walls; this would prove strategically ideal for us. It would be a crushing defeat, however, if we cannot. We have few men left, many have died from disease and morale is very low. Recent defeats have messed our men's heads up massively. I feel for them all, they are just trying to fight for their families. Most of my men are far from those aristocratic fiends in those walls. There are farmers, peasants, cobblers, blacksmiths, carpenters and patriots of a free Derry. This has been our whole idea, since the beginning. The feeling of independence makes us fight even more determinedly. This tingly sensation in your stomach makes you be entrusted with pride. We will know when we have defeated the enemy, only when we capture those walls of British tyranny! We have been bogged down by cannon fire since the 18th, but tomorrow we shall take our counteroffensive. If God is with us, we shall prevail.

Our objective shall be beyond difficult, but we are battle-hardened and ready to thorn the enemy. We may be outnumbered, outgunned, outfought for now, but we will bring an unholy revenge upon the Williamites. Our morale may be as low as the pits of hell, but our hearts and minds are lions. We are ready to sacrifice our lives for our cause. Our cause for freedom from the English. We will fight till the end and bust through the gates of the walls and we shall drive our muskets down the cobblestone pathways and cut through the scum, which is our enemy. For centuries, the English have controlled, mastered and looked down on our populations in the North, but as the leader of our regiment, I promise to my young warriors that either way we shall be in paradise by the

end. It is either victory or death; there shall be no other alternative. We shall never give up! Even in such a hell as this is.

For six days now, the English cannons, on the walls, have torched and bombarded our positions, relentlessly. There is no mercy for rebel swine like us. And we know that, all too well. In battle the English may be a sophisticated warrior, which fights like a true tiger, but WE fight with an almost uncontrollable barbaric fierceness. Of which our enemy knows all too well about. The English have respect for us, in that sense, but we are still the Catholic buffoons that they severely detest. We have been bogged down in the streets and we have to watch for scouts. They are very arrogant people, the English, they make their scouts wear red clothing and so we can deliberately see them. I always hold my musket pointing at the tunnel of sewers.....just waiting for a scout.....and then I pop lead into him. Our hatred for the Williamites is shocking. But are we to be blamed?

The conditions here are unimaginably horrible. Men fall to the ground coughing up a black substance, that immediately puts fear into me. Disease spreads here, terribly. And my poor soldiers are being affected. I worry for my own health, also. I would never put my men in this person, if I was leader of the army, but I must do this and ask this awful task of them, for the right cause. Richard Hamilton has always been one of my inspirations. But I'm sure he understands that our position here and the situation, as a whole, are near hopeless. However, our soldiers would not know that, for the best really, morale is low enough. The sickness of dysentery and typhus spreads as wildfire. It mauls our men, and doesn't just affect their physical health, but you can see the depression in their tired and heavy eyes. Their eyes bloodshot, watery and sweating. I see them with their heads down and sighing loudly. It's not a pleasant feeling to see your men down, for in battle, courage is not only one factor, but understanding one other thing. The realisation of why and who you are fighting for. A soldier cannot fight his enemy without feeling a passion in his heart. I know this from experience. As old as I am, I knew the horrors of war, once. But seriously, these conditions are non-deserving of ANY soldier. The fear of not only the hated enemy, a fear of disease and of course, the fear of death. A soldier's life expires here in this siege of the walls.....ahh.....it is both an emotional and hard-fought struggle. But it has to be done, and

tomorrow shall not only decide the fate of Derry, but of the whole North of Ireland.

We have realised that thousands have died on both sides by now, mainly from disease and cannon fire. But I keep informing and lecturing my men of the importance of taking these damned walls. Arguments and deserters in my ranks have occurred, but in war a soldier gets afraid. And I understand that, as I knew, I was once a soldier also. We have very little way of destroying the English cannons, for a hole in the walls is just enough to protect them from our musket fire. This frustrates our most talented gunners, but as I always advised them, wait and patience will give you your waited award. We can throw explosives up at the walls, some damage is caused. Limbs and bits of brick are what fall at your feet. But these is war, and believe me, war is far from pretty. Sympathy is a thing that disappears from the humans' sole in war. Compassion and all seems of civilized manners are abolished from the crazed mind. And when our men walk past dead English soldiers, they either spit in their faces or kick them. But the English would play a game of psychology with us. They would put the head of a dead comrade on a spike and put it in an area where they would know we would pass through. Not only would this intimidate us and make our blood boil, but it would infuriate my men. The hatred would burn even deeper.

Finally, our day of destiny has arrived..... I didn't sleep all night. Neither did my men fall into their slumbers. Some just sat in their quarters, wide-eyed and scared to the teeth. Staring into the abyss of darkness. All night I looked up at the stars, mesmerized and truly humbled, by the twinkly angels above me. In this charcoal black and grey ruined city, I discovered a small piece of beauty this night. And it was simply beautiful. In the pit of this gruesome war, my heart was lifted and I had a feeling of a person again. I felt like the husband of my Catherine and the father of my children, a human being. For a second, I forgot about this war, this siege of immense cruelty. This enemy we are fighting off imperialism and an unfair aristocracy, soldiers of a different religion that want us all dead. I forgot about hell, and it was a weight lifted off my tired shoulders. A soldier at 54 that can cry. I shed tears last night, but I knew that I wasn't a beast anymore. A robotic soldier who only knows one thing. Kill or be killed, in war. One can only feel this feeling, if one is truly a

soldier. A soldier who has experienced war, at its most inhumane. But I realise today is not my story to tell, but that of the younger soldier who must fight for not only his freedom, but his family. To conquer the walls of hell! This is the time of the Jacobite warrior to prove that he deserves freedom. The Battle for Derry, the Historic City, The Maiden City, shall commence!!!!

26th June 1689. The Siege of Derry. Our offensive begins. 'March'! Off our troops went up Magazine street and pump street, we wanted to encircle the enemy and destroy him, once and for all. I held my musket in front firmly and I briskly marched, with strong step. Pride was induced into every Jacobite in my regiment. Many men had steel weapons, while few had the musket. Our guns were very inaccurate, but today we felt as if God would guide them to hit the enemy head on, in battle.

As we came to our first hill of cobblestone, a British cannon was camouflaged by a bush and fired at our frontal assault force. The men flew into the air in a colossal bang! A limb hit me and the blood drizzled down my face. My anger was totally outrageous. The blood of my comrades on my face made me feel terrible. I ordered my men to fall to the ground and fire on my signal. The men were startled and frightened, but I told them to be calm and stay steadfast. They were more vigilant now, also, so that was a positive. And then the English attack came down the hill. 'For King and an English Ireland', came the cry from the Williamite forces. I shouted, 'Stand your ground men and remember your beliefs'! I pulled out my sword and waited for the enemy. We engaged into the fighting and already casualties were atrocious. The fighting was not only fierce and ferocious, but ghastly gruesome also. Blood, limbs and cannon blasts came all around. Men toppled on top of one another, like dominos. I sliced my sword at the enemy and the Williamites were trying their best to kill me. They knew I was the officer. But my gallant younger soldiers gave their lives and valiantly fought with a courage that I had never seen in them before. Their inner warrior had arisen and he was patriotic! I was struggling through the bodies of dead human beings beneath my ripped and mucky boots and I was shocked and staunch with fear, for the first time in my life, as I charged down the enemy. As the colossal battle came to an end, more and more Williamite troops came flushing down the hill, with incredibly ferocious cannon fire. Our men took horrendous casualties and I myself felt spent. I was so perplexed, that the will

to fight was running low. Williamite after Williamite came down the hill and I shot those dead, as I lay injured behind a smaller wall. I knew defeat was looming. Nearly all my men were either captured or dead. What was I to accomplish? Sit and fight until I die, or surrender. But I did not get a choice in the end. My eyes suddenly filled with blood and I amazingly blacked out, as I stared at a dead Williamite soldier's face. Of which I couldn't forget. His eyes were as wide as the Foyle and I was choking up blood. This was war.....

Two weeks later I woke up in a cabin in London. I had been captured and taken prisoner. I was a POW. The defeat was as bitter as a ripe lemon or lime. The English doctor told me that my men fell gallantly at the walls, but couldn't achieve victory. I sighed and said, "well, that's war....."

Since those days, I am now in retirement in London and I still wish someday to visit the walls of hell. And relive the moment where I truly felt fear. I shall never forget those walls, for as long as I live. But I can always say that I was a Jacobite soldier and that I fought at the great Siege of Derry. I am in gratitude to my comrades, my soldiers though, who felt like my sons. The Siege of Derry? A hell or a pathway to heaven. For some it was and for some it wasn't.

Will I remember this? Will I forget my fallen men? No, no, I shall see it all very soon. When I truly fall and see them all once more. For old men like me....I suppose...have to die anyways.

Commanding Officer J. Doherty. 1691 August. Based on true events. Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed. Thanks!

By Jackson Gallagher 10G