

## Sketch: The Princess Anne Regiment of Foot 1685 – 1692

Primarily drawn from: Historical Record of the Eighth, Or the King's Regiment of Foot: Containing an Account of the Formation of the Regiment in 1685, and of Its Subsequent Services to 1844; Parker, 1844.

note – The Princess Anne Regiment of Foot was also known as “The Eighth”, or “The King’s Regiment of Foot”.

*In my search for ancestors for my 8x-great-grandfather, Peter Mathews, I have closely followed his likely relative, Benjamin Fletcher. In 1691 the two men are noted together in the Princess Anne Regiment of Foot, serving in Ireland – Benjamin Fletcher as Captain, and Peter Mathews as Quartermaster.*

*Benjamin Fletcher, the older of the two men, served in the regiment at least as early as 1688, but the 1691 record is probably Peter Mathews’ introduction to military service. Below I have drawn significantly from an account of the regiment, written in 1844 by Parker. I have added some parenthetical notes [ ] giving further detail on Fletcher and Mathews’ connection to the regiment.*

*Pam Garrett, December 2015*

### HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE EIGHTH, OR THE KING'S REGIMENT OF FOOT.



Musketeer, Princess Anne of Denmark Regiment, 1685.

1685 - James Duke Of Monmouth, natural son of King Charles II, erected the ensigns of rebellion in the west of England, in June 1685, and summoned the people to aid him in an attempt to dethrone his uncle, King James II, whose predilection to papacy occasioned the adventurous Monmouth to believe, that a Protestant people would not submit to the government of that prince. The din of warlike preparation instantly spread throughout the land; corps of cavalry and infantry were speedily embodied for the support of the crown; and Robert Lord Ferrars, of Chartly, whose father, Sir Robert Shirley, Baronet, was one of the sufferers in the royal cause in the time of King Charles I, was appointed to the command of one of the corps raised on that occasion; which, having been continued in the service to the present time, now bears the distinguished title of The Eighth, Or The King's Regiment Of Foot.

The first company was raised by Lord Ferrars, in Hertfordshire; the second by John Beaumont, Esq, in Derbyshire; the third by John Innis, Esq, near London; and the other seven by Rowland Okeover, Charles Chudd, Thomas Paston, William Cook, Simon Packe, Walter Burdet, and Thomas Orme, in Derbyshire: the general rendezvous of the regiment being at Derby. Each company was directed to consist of three officers, three serjeants, three corporals, two drummers, and one hundred private soldiers. Men flocked to the royal standard on this emergency; and such was the success which attended the appeal made to the loyalty of the

people, that, although the warrants for raising the regiment were not issued until the 20th of June [1685], on the 26th one company (Innis's) was complete in numbers, and ordered to march to Islington and Holloway; and on the 4th of July Lord Ferrars' company was directed to march to St. Albans.

Lord Ferrars had held an appointment in the establishment of Queen Catherine in the preceding reign; he was highly esteemed at court, and his regiment was distinguished with the title of The Princess Anne Of Denmark's Regiment Of Foot, in honour of the King's second daughter (afterwards Queen Anne), who was married to Prince George of Denmark. The lieutenant-colonelcy was conferred on John Beaumont, Esq, and the majority on John Innis, Esq. The captains were armed with pikes; the lieutenants with partisans; the ensigns with half-pikes; the serjeants with halberds; thirty rank and file of each company were pikemen, and seventy-three musketeers; the whole carried swords. The uniform was scarlet, lined and turned up with yellow; yellow waistcoats and breeches, white stockings, and white cravats, with broad-brimmed hats, having the brim turned up on one side, and ornamented with yellow ribands.

[Skipping the activities of the regiment between summer 1685 and summer 1688. In the late 1670's several records identify Benjamin Fletcher as Captain of troops in Ireland. Two records dated in 1685 place Benjamin Fletcher as Captain of troops at the garrison in Jamestown, Leitrim county Ireland, and in adjoining Roscommon County. Exactly when and where he joined the Princess Anne Regiment has not been determined.]

1688 - King James having resolved on the introduction of papacy and arbitrary government, determined, as a preliminary step, on the repeal of the penal laws; and the Earl of Oxford refusing to use his influence, as lord-lieutenant of the county of Essex, in procuring petitions in favour of this measure, was deprived of the colonelcy of the royal regiment of Horse Guards, which he had commanded twenty-seven years; and was succeeded by the Duke of Berwick, who continued to hold, also, the colonelcy of the Princess Anne's (now Eighth) Regiment of Foot.

Thus the command of the eldest regiment of cavalry in the service, one of the most efficient corps of infantry, and the important fortress of Portsmouth, was given to one of the king's natural sons, who was a stanch papist (though a gallant soldier, and a discreet and trustworthy man), and consequently disqualified for these appointments by law; but the king claimed authority to use a dispensing power, by which he could enable his subjects to violate the law with impunity.

During the summer the army was again encamped on Hounslow Heath; and King James having discovered that his soldiers had as much aversion to papacy as his other subjects, dismissed the regiments to their quarters, determining on a more general introduction of Roman Catholics into the army.

Commencing with the garrison at Portsmouth, the Duke of Berwick gave orders for a number of Roman Catholics, who had arrived from Ireland as recruits for Colonel Roger Mc Eligott's Regiment, but who were not required for that corps, to be incorporated in the Princess Anne's Regiment (now Eighth), of which his Grace was colonel. This proved a most trying occurrence to the officers, who prided themselves in keeping their companies complete, all English, and of staunch Protestant principles; and several of them determined not to contribute to the overthrow of the constitution and laws of their country by tacitly permitting the character of the corps to be thus changed. The Lieutenant-Colonel, John Beaumont, and Captains Simon Packe, Thomas Obme, John Poet, William Cook, and Thomas Paston, — gentlemen of a patriotic spirit, resolved to adhere firmly to what appeared to be their duty to their country on this occasion, although it might prove detrimental to their private interests, or even fatal to their lives, and they sent a memorial to the Duke of Berwick, in which they remonstrated against receiving Irishmen into their companies, alleging that their numbers were complete and they had no allowance for supernumeraries; adding, that if an augmentation was ordered, they had sufficient credit in the country to obtain Englishmen; and concluding with a declaration of their determination to resign their commissions rather than receive Roman Catholic recruits into their companies. The Duke of Berwick forwarded information of this occurrence to the King, and His Majesty was so incensed at their open resistance to his authority, that he commanded a cornet, quarter-master, and twenty cuirassiers of the Queen Dowager's Regiment, now Sixth Dragoon Guards, to proceed immediately to Portsmouth . . .

[skipping further details of the story of “The Six Portsmouth Captains” in the Fall of 1688; immediately following this incident . . . ]

. . . the regiment became more tranquil; **Colonel Ramsay was appointed to the lieut.colonelcy; and Lieutenants Barnes, Fielding, Southern, Mackarty, and Fletcher, were promoted captains.**

[1689, April 26; for **Major Fletcher**, Captain Townley, Captain Coote, Captain Nevill, Lieut Rookesby, Lieut Colombier, Ensign More, and eight servants, in Col Beaumont's regiment, to go to Carlisle. - Calendar of State Papers: 13th Feb. 1689-April 1690; H.M. Stationery Office, 1895.

[note – Was Benjamin Fletcher in England or Ireland in 1688-89? This record of April 1689, probably reflects that the Princess Anne forces were heading toward Scotland, via Carlisle in England. But, there is also a Fort Carlisle, now Fort Davis, that guards the harbor at the town of Cork in Ireland.]

The appearance of the Prince of Orange with a powerful land force to support the Protestant interest, put an end to all further usurpations; the King discovered that his soldiers would not fight in the cause of papacy, and fled to France, accompanied by the Duke of Berwick. The Prince of Orange, having assumed the powers of the government, promoted the patriotic **Lieutenant-Colonel Beaumont** to the colonelcy of the regiment, by commission dated the 31st of December, 1688.

A convention having conferred the crown on William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, some resistance to their Majesties' authority was experienced in Scotland, and the Princess Anne's Regiment was ordered from its quarters at Southampton, where it was stationed after the flight of King James to France, to the north. It halted at **Carlisle**, and was there inspected on the 13th of June, 1689, by the commissioners appointed to re-model the army.

Edinburgh Castle having surrendered to the forces of King William, the regiment did not continue its march to Scotland; but nearly all Ireland having been preserved in the Roman Catholic interest by the lord-lieutenant, the Earl Tyrconnel, this was **one of the corps selected to proceed thither with the army commanded by the Duke Schomberg [to Ireland]**.

After encamping a short time near Chester, the several regiments embarked at Highlake, and anchoring in the Bay of Carrickfergus in the afternoon of the 13th of August [1689], landed immediately and pitched their tents in the fields, near the shore. The siege of Carrickfergus was afterwards commenced; the Princess Anne's Regiment was one of the corps employed in this service, and, before the end of the month, the garrison surrendered.



Carrickfergus, 1690

Advancing from Carrickfergus to Dundalk, the army formed an entrenched camp at that place, on low wet ground; and the weather proving particularly rainy, the health of the soldiers suffered considerably. On the morning of the 21st of September [1689], the camp was suddenly alarmed at the approach of the French and Irish forces, under King James, displaying their royal standard. The British troops stood to their arms, and this regiment was ordered to the trenches beyond the town; but the enemy withdrew without venturing an attack. After losing a number of men at the unhealthy camp at Dundalk, the regiment marched into winter quarters, and was stationed at the frontier garrisons of Green Castle and Rostrever.

[1689; from a List of the Infantry Reviewed at Dundalk Camp Oct. 1689 - Princess Anne of Denmark's Regiment of Foot; Captains - 1. Tho. Clent, Grenrds, 2. Jno. Beaumont, Col, 3. Simon Pack, Lt.-Col, 4. **Ben. Fletcher Major**, 5. Wm. Herbert, 6. Jno. Knyvett, 7. Jno. Jodrell, 8. Hy. Holmes, 9. Wm. Campion, 10. Ant. Townley, 11. Sigismond Erlach, 12. Ralph Nedby, 13. Jno. Pinkney; - English Army Lists and Commission Registers, 1661-1714.]

1690 - In the spring of 1690, the Princess Anne's Regiment was stationed at Londonderry; in June [1690], King William arrived in Ireland to command the troops in person, and the officers and soldiers rejoiced at the prospect of having an opportunity of evincing their innate bravery and zeal for the Protestant interest under the eye of their sovereign. At the forcing of the passage of the Boyne, on the 1st of July [1690], the regiment was brought in contact with the troops of King James, whose army was overpowered and driven from the field with loss. The Irish forces fled in dismay; but the French and Swiss retired in good order. The British pursued several miles, and afterwards encamped near the field of battle.

The immediate result of this victory was the capture of Dublin[6 July 1690], and the flight of King James to France. The Princess Anne's Regiment was one of the corps reviewed by King William, at Finglass, on the 7th of July [1690], on which occasion it mustered five hundred and twenty-six rank and file, exclusive of officers and noncommissioned officers.

From Dublin the regiment proceeded to Limerick, and was engaged in the siege of this important fortress [Fall 1690]. Several unfortunate occurrences prevented the capture of the city of Limerick on this occasion; and when the siege was raised, the regiment went into quarters.

Towards the end of September [1690], the Earl of Marlborough arrived with several additional corps from England, and besieged Cork . The Princess Anne's Regiment was called from its quarters to take part in this enterprise, and the city was taken before the end of the month. The siege of Kinsale was afterward resolved upon, and the attack on the forts was immediately commenced. The old fort was speedily taken, but the new fort held out until the middle of October [1690], when everything being ready for an attack by storm, the garrison surrendered.

After the surrender of Kinsale, the Princess Anne's Regiment was placed in garrison at that town. About the beginning of November, a French ship, of thirty tons, laden with brandy and salt, sailed into the harbour, and anchored under the old fort, supposing the place to be in the

hands of King James's adherents; but she was soon boarded and taken. The garrison of Kinsale was well supplied with provision; but the soldiers having been in the field in severe weather in September and October [1690], their health suffered severely. On this regiment being removed to Cork, it left two hundred sick men behind; and soon after its arrival at Cork, nearly one hundred men were unfit for service; it, however, received recruits from England, and had above five hundred men fit for garrison duty throughout the winter [1690-91].

[1691, 24 March; Whitehall; Commissions for . . . Francis Napper, gent, to be lieutenant of that company whereof **Lieutenant-Colonel Benjamin Fletcher** is captain in the regiment of foot commanded by Colonel John Beaumont; for John Fairbrother, gent, to be ensign in the same regiment ; for **Peter Mathews**, gent, to be quarter-master in the same regiment ; and for Leonard Lloyd gent, to be adjutant in the same regiment. - H .0. Military Entry Book 3, p. 55; - Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of William and Mary, ... Preserved in the Public Record Office, Volume 2; H.M. Stationery Office, 1898.]

In the spring of 1691, when the army took the field under General De Ginkell (afterwards Earl of Athlone), the Princess Anne's Regiment was left in quarters in the county of Cork, to hold the enemy in check on that side, and to secure several small garrisons from the attacks of the enemy; it was, consequently, prevented sharing in the capture of Ballymore and Athlone [see note below], in the victory at Aghrim [July-August 1691], and in the reduction of Galway and other places of less note. The wreck of King James's army having rallied at Limerick, where it was resolved to make a final effort to preserve Ireland in his interest, in the hopes of receiving succours from France, the regiments left in quarters in the county of Cork were ordered to join the army. The victorious English army directed its march towards Limerick; the siege of this very important fortress was commenced, and before the end of September the garrison was forced to surrender. The reduction of Limerick terminated the contest in Ireland, and in February, 1692, the Princess Anne's Regiment embarked for England.

[March 1692, Benjamin Fletcher was appointed as Governor of New York. He arrived there 29 August 1692, along with Peter Mathews.]

*[A note on Athlone – During this period, two Sieges occurred at the town of Athlone – the first in July 1690 and the second in July 1691. The first siege has been of particular interest to my research, as it may have been the event which caused BenFletcher Mathews to flee from Athlone to Dublin. To learn more see the sketch in this database titled – Athlone Ireland 1690-91. Pam Garrett, Dec 2015]*

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Peter Mathews in database](#)

[Link to Benjamin Fletcher in database](#)

[Sketch: Athlone Ireland 1690-1691](#)

About the photos:

Musketeer, Princess Anne of Denmark's Regiment, 1685. This photo comes from the website of the [King's Regiment Association Knowsley](#). You can find further information there.

Carrickfergus, 1690. Williamite forces breach the town wall between the North Gate and north-east bastion. Photo belongs to the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency, and was located at [Archive Carrickfergus](#).