

# The Battle of Naseby

Location	Naseby in <a href="#">Northamptonshire</a> , England	
	Nearest settlements: the villages of Naseby, Clipston and Sibbertoft Grid Reference: SP684799 (468490,279990)	
Battlefield Character	Weather conditions - Good, dry.	
	Visibility - Poor at first due to light fog, but then good.	
	Ground conditions - Firm, good for cavalry.	
	Natural obstacles - The field of view was restricted by Naseby ridge, 'Durst Hill' and 'Sulby Hedges'.	
Leaders	Parliament	Royalist
	Thomas Fairfax Oliver Cromwell	King Charles I Prince Rupert of the Rhine
Deployment	Parliament	Royalist
	Estimates <sup>3</sup> range from 13,500 to 15,000 Horse - 6,000 Regular Cavalry Foot - 7,000 Pike and <a href="#">Musket</a> <sup>4</sup> . Ordinance <sup>5</sup> - 7 Other forces - 550 Okey's Company of Dragoons <sup>6</sup>	Estimates range from 9,000 to 12,000 Horse - 4,500 Regular Cavalry Foot - 4,000 Pike and Musket Ordinance - 6 Other forces - None recorded
Casualties	Parliament	Royalist
	460	1,000

The Battle of Naseby began around 9am on 14 June, 1645 and was to last until just after noon. The tactical advantage was on the Parliament side. They had a numerical advantage in troops and these troops were all men of Cromwell's New Model Army of professional officers and soldiers who were well paid and trained. The daily rate of pay was 8 [pence](#) for infantry and 2 shillings for cavalry. The Royalist troops were smaller in number, and this was partly because King Charles had been forced to send over 3,000 troops, under the command of Lord Goring, to relieve the siege of [Taunton](#). In spite of a summons from the King to join the battle, Lord Goring refused to return.

## Battle Positions

The Royalist lines were approximately 1.5 miles wide. On the right, drawn up against the Sulby Hedges, were Prince Rupert's cavalry with an estimated strength of 2,000 to 3,000. In the centre were three divisions of foot soldiers, and on the left was Sir Marmaduke Langdale and 1,500 'Northern Horse', with the Clipston to Naseby road to their left.

The Parliamentary lines were almost 2 miles wide. Their forces were drawn up on Naseby ridge. Sergeant-Major General Sir Philip Skippon took the centre and left positions. His command

consisted of eight foot regiments, five of which were placed in the front line and three held in reserve, along with two companies of Colonel Harley's regiment of foot commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Pride. The cavalry under the command of Ireton formed up facing Prince Rupert's cavalry. Cromwell's horse troops took a position facing the Royalist horses.

## The Battle Begins

Initially the battle went well for the Royalist army - at one point they managed to push the Parliamentary forces back. This was short lived as the Parliamentary dragoons, using Sulby Hedges for cover, opened fire on Prince Rupert's cavalry and caused some havoc on the Royalist right.

After a brief exchange of musket fire the foot forces in the front lines clashed and soon dissolved into hand to hand fighting with swords and club musket<sup>7</sup>. The impact of the Royalist charge caused the Parliamentary foot forces to slowly fall back. Ireton's horse charged to meet Rupert's advance and the Royalist charge was turned. Ireton then split his force leading part of his cavalry to the aid of the hard pressed Parliamentary foot forces. This was unsuccessful and Ireton was wounded<sup>8</sup> and taken prisoner. The remainder of his troop were driven from the field by Rupert's cavalry, which effectively took most of Rupert's horse troops out of the battle, weakening the Royalist army as a result.

## Cromwell's Attack

Cromwell waited as Langdale's regiment of horse held position in front of woodland. Finally Langdale advanced uphill to engage Cromwell. Cromwell ordered half his command to attack Langdale, sweeping the Royalist horses from the field. Cromwell dispatched a force in pursuit of Langdale and turned his attention to the Royalist southern flank. At the same time Oakey's dragoons and the survivors of Ireton's cavalry attacked the Royalist western flank.

## The Royalist Collapse

The Royalist foot force had been held by the larger force of General Sir Philip Skippon and it was soon under attack on three sides. Some were commanded to lay down their arms. The rest attempted to fall back to Dust Hill. Prince Rupert's regiment, the Bluecoats, bravely covered the retreat but they were overwhelmed on the third assault by Skippon's forces. Prince Rupert finally managed to rally his cavalry but it was too late as the Royalist army was by then in full retreat.

## Result

As a result of the battle, Parliament losses were 460, but Royalist losses were 1,000. Of the remaining Royalist forces, 4,500 surrendered and 3,000 fled the field. Most of those who escaped had horses - that meant most of the senior officers and the cavalry brigades. All field ordinance was lost to the Parliamentary forces.

A potential atrocity was recorded here. Around 500 Royalist camp followers, mostly women, were trapped in a nearby churchyard. They were put to the sword by the pursuing Parliamentary cavalry. The reason given for this was that the troops had assumed they were Irish. The cavalry involved received no punishment for this 'error'.