**Battle of Ballinamuck**

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| **Battle of Ballinamuck** | | |
| Part of the [United Irishmen Rebellion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Rebellion_of_1798) | | |
| [Battle of Ballinamuck, 1798 (9675655157).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_Ballinamuck,_1798_(9675655157).jpg) Contemporary plan of the Ballinamuck battle-ground, marking the positions of the opposing forces | | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Date** | 8 September 1798 | | **Location** | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/55/WMA_button2b.png/17px-WMA_button2b.png[53°52′00″N7°43′00″W﻿ / ﻿53.8667°N 7.7167°W﻿ / 53.8667; -7.7167](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Battle_of_Ballinamuck&params=53.8667_N_7.7167_W_source:wikidata) [Ballinamuck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballinamuck), [County Longford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Longford) | | **Result** | Decisive British victory | | | |
| **Belligerents** | | |
| https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/08/Green_harp_flag_of_Ireland.svg/23px-Green_harp_flag_of_Ireland.svg.png[United Irishmen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_of_United_Irishmen) https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/3a/Flag_of_France_%281794%E2%80%931815%2C_1830%E2%80%931958%29.svg/23px-Flag_of_France_%281794%E2%80%931815%2C_1830%E2%80%931958%29.svg.png[France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_First_Republic) | [Kingdom of Great BritainGreat Britain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Great_Britain) | |
| **Commanders and leaders** | | |
| [Jean Humbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Joseph_Amable_Humbert) [Surrendered](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrender_(military)) [Bartholomew Teeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartholomew_Teeling) [Executed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_punishment) | [Charles Cornwallis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Cornwallis,_1st_Marquess_Cornwallis) [Gerard Lake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerard_Lake,_1st_Viscount_Lake) | |
| **Strength** | | |
| ~2,350 | ~26,000 | |
| **Casualties and losses** | | |
| ~500 dead 1,144 captured ~200 prisoners executed | ~12 dead 16 wounded | |
| * [Ballymore-Eustace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballymore-Eustace) * [Naas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Naas) * [Rathangan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Rathangan) * [Prosperous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Prosperous) * [Kilcullen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Kilcullen) * [Carnew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnew_massacre) * [Dunlavin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunlavin_Green_executions) * [Carlow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Carlow) * [Harrow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_the_Harrow) * [Tara Hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tara_Hill) * [Oulart Hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Oulart_Hill) * [Enniscorthy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Enniscorthy) * [Gibbet Rath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gibbet_Rath_massacre) * [Newtownmountkennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Newtownmountkennedy) * [Three Rocks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Three_Rocks) * [Bunclody](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Bunclody) * [Tubberneering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tubberneering) * [New Ross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_New_Ross_(1798))/[Scullabogue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scullabogue_Barn_massacre" \o "Scullabogue Barn massacre) * [Antrim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Antrim) * [Arklow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Arklow) * [Saintfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Saintfield) * [Ballynahinch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballynahinch) * [Ovidstown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ovidstown) * [Foulksmills](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Foulksmills) * [Vinegar Hill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Vinegar_Hill) * [Ballyellis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballyellis) * [Castlebar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Castlebar) * [Collooney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Collooney) * Ballinamuck * [Killala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Killala) * [Tory Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Tory_Island) | | |

The **Battle of Ballinamuck** (8 September 1798) marked the defeat of the main force of the French incursion during the [1798 Rebellion in Ireland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Rebellion_of_1798).

**Background**

The victory of [General Humbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Joseph_Amable_Humbert) at the [Battle of Castlebar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Castlebar), despite gaining him around 5,000 extra Irish recruits, had not led to a renewed outbreak of the rebellion in other areas as hoped; the defeat of the earlier revolt had devastated the Irish republican movement to the extent that few were willing to renew the struggle. A massive British army of some 26,000 men was assembled under the new [Viceroy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viceroy) [Lord Cornwallis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Cornwallis,_1st_Marquess_Cornwallis) and was steadily moving west. Abandoning Castlebar, Humbert moved towards [Ulster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulster) with the apparent intention of igniting a rising there but after defeating a blocking force of British troops at [Collooney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collooney) in [Sligo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Sligo), he altered course following reports that rebellions had broken out in [Westmeath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westmeath) and [Longford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longford).

**British pursuit**

Humbert crossed the [Shannon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Shannon) at Ballintra on 7 September and stopping at Cloone that evening, was halfway between his landing-point and [Dublin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dublin). News reached him of the defeat of the [Westmeath](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westmeath) and [Longford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longford) rebels at [Wilson's Hospital School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilson%27s_Hospital_School) and [Granard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Granard) from the trickle of rebels who had survived the slaughter and reached his camp. With [Cornwallis'](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Cornwallis,_1st_Marquess_Cornwallis) huge force blocking the road to Dublin, facing constant harassment of his rearguard and the pending arrival of General Lake's command, [Humbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Joseph_Amable_Humbert) decided to make a stand the next day at the townland of Ballinamuck on the [Longford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Longford)/[Leitrim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Leitrim" \o "County Leitrim) border.

**Battle**

Humbert faced overwhelming numbers. [General Lake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerard_Lake) was close behind with 14,000 men; the new Viceroy, [Lord Cornwallis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Cornwallis,_1st_Marquess_Cornwallis), on his right at [Carrick-on-Shannon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrick-on-Shannon) with 15,000. The battle began with a short artillery duel followed by a [dragoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragoon) charge on exposed Irish rebels. There was a brief struggle when French lines were reached which only ceased when [Humbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Joseph_Amable_Humbert) signalled his intention to surrender and his officers ordered their men to lay down their [muskets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muskets). This conventional battle lasted little more than an hour.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-:0-1)

While the French surrender was being taken the 1,000 or so Irish allies of the French under [Colonel Teeling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartholomew_Teeling), an Irish officer in the French army, held onto their arms without signalling the intention to surrender or being offered terms. An attack by infantry followed by a dragoon charge broke and scattered the Irish who were ruthlessly pursued into a bog where they were bayoneted or drowned.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-:0-1)

**Aftermath**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ballinamuckmemorial.jpg)

Memorial of rebel pikeman, erected in Ballinamuck in 1928

96 French officers and 746 men were taken prisoner.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-2) British losses were initially reported as 3 killed and 16 wounded or missing,[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-3) but the number of killed alone was later reported as 12.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-4) Approximately 500 Irish lay dead on the field, and 200 prisoners were taken in the mopping up operations, almost all of whom were later hanged, including Matthew Tone, brother of [Wolfe Tone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfe_Tone). The prisoners were moved to [Carrick-on-Shannon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrick-on-Shannon), St Johnstown, today's [Ballinalee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ballinalee), where most were executed in what is known locally as [Bully's Acre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bully%27s_Acre).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-5)

[Humbert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Joseph_Amable_Humbert) and his men were taken by canal to Dublin and traded for English prisoners-of-war.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-:0-1) The British army then slowly spread out into the rebel held "[Republic of Connacht](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Connacht)" in a brutal campaign of killing and house burning which reached its climax on 23 September when [Killala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killala) was stormed and retaken with much slaughter. Members of the French-inspired Republic of Connacht such as [George Blake](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George_Blake_(18th_Century)&action=edit&redlink=1) were hunted down and hanged with many other suspected insurgents including Fr Andrew Conroy who led French and Irish forces to Castlebar through the Windy Gap, a passage through the Mountains.

The catastrophe at Ballinamuck left a strong imprint on social memory and featured strongly in local folklore. Numerous oral traditions were later collected about this episode, principally in the 1930s by the historian Richard Hayes and by the Irish Folklore Commission.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_note-6)

**References**

* 1. ^ [Jump up to: ***a***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_ref-:0_1-0) [***b***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_ref-:0_1-1) [***c***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Ballinamuck#cite_ref-:0_1-2) [*"The 1798 Battle of Ballinamuck – The Clare Champion"*](http://clarechampion.ie/the-1798-battle-of-ballinamuck/)*. clarechampion.ie. Retrieved 2017-08-30.*
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**Further reading**

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* [*Ballinamuck -Things to Do & See: Battlefield Centre - 1798 Hall*](https://web.archive.org/web/20071118222359/http:/www.longford.ie/community/townsection.asp?action=3&town=6&contenttype=3)*, archived from* [*the original*](http://www.longford.ie/community/townsection.asp?action=3&town=6&contenttype=3) *on 18 November 2007*