

Battle of Bannockburn 2014



Rain won this year's
Battle of
Bannockburn

The remarkable thing about the clash of military commemorations at Bannockburn and Stirling on Saturday was how non-political they turned out to be. There was very little flag-waving, either of Union Flags or the blue Saltire. It seemed both sides in the referendum battle had decided to call a truce for the day.

Alex Salmond and David Cameron shook hands briefly on the podium in Stirling as they watched the march-past of over a thousand serving soldiers and veterans. Many thousands of people lined the streets, all politically well behaved, though the "Yes" campaign had a cheeky stall in the central square.

The bid by Stirling Council to lead this year's Armed Forces Day was widely seen as a political tactic. It was to be a "spoiler" for The Scottish Government's event down the road, the celebration of Robert the Bruce's victory over the English exactly 700 years ago. In the end though, the "Yes" campaign side-stepped the move by turning down the nationalist mood music at Bannockburn. And in any case, both sides were dampened by increasingly persistent showers as the afternoon went on.



Soldiers marching through
Stirling

So Armed Forces Day turned out to be genuine "thank you" to

the men and women of the army, navy and air-force. And the crowds were treated to the usual marching bands, a fly-past by Typhoons and Tornados and a parachute display by the Red Devils.

And Bannockburn turned out to be a chance for the re-enactment societies to stage a dramatic demonstration of pike-soldiers, archers and knights on horseback.



The sell-out crowd of 10,000 people queued at the hamburger stalls, roamed around the clan tents and listened to the bands on stage. A large number of Americans were noticeable for their clean and bright kilts, and their own marching band.

In the end, neither side of the referendum debate won. The victory went to the weather. And what remained was history.