

Letter from Patrick Fea to Sir James Stewart of Burray—30th March 1746

Patrick Fea II of Airy, factor for Burray & S. Ronaldsay estates, having gone over to Thurso in the last week of March 1746 reported back to Sir James Stewart of Burray with the latest news on the Jacobites and warning him of the need to safeguard the weapons and ammunition of the Providence, which was at Tongue, should it sail to Orkney.

Honble Sir

In regard that there is just now a man of war in Strathnaver, that's thought will be in Orkney, it is thought necessary that Capt. Sinclairs ship should be out of her way or at least what arms, powder & ^m is on board should be secur'd for the Prince's behoof, all of it being much needed in the Army for w^{ch} purpose the bearer Mr Francis Sinclair wⁱ two or three of his sailors are sent in order to Carrie the Ship to this place if there can be no o^r method fallen upon to preserve her. At the same time he is to walk according to the advice you give him in y^r affair, as there is no time to lose its hoped y^r will be no delay made.

The Lord M'kleod commands 300 men that are in this Country, 150 of w^{ch} are to be in this town tomorrow. I have not as yet had the opportunity of waiting upon him, but I expect once this day to know his resolutions wⁱ respect to Orkney. Its certain that there will be such a number in Orkney that they will be straitned for boats to cross for w^{ch} I wish you wold send over Burwiks big boat, & o^r belonging to your Tennants & the Swanay boats & they, wⁱ these can have, will carrie over what men they are to send, the number I me, as yet, uncertain of but by what I can learn their will be above 100 men sent.

All the Gentlemen in this Country are to meet tomorrow in order to concert anent raising the Country. As there will be severall of their leading men absent its thought o^rs will be deficulted how to proceed. Could your affairs admit I could be glad to see you here, not doubting that you might have Influence upon some to espouse the Cause more heartaly yⁿ o^r ways I me afraid they le doe.

I doubt not but what forces are to come your way will be ready to cross a Tuesday so that the boats wold need be ready att Duncansby Munday's night, as for writing you any news I need only refer to Mr Sinclair, who came back last week from Murray, only this I can assure you of—That by a letter from y^r E. of Cromartie there is to be 6,000 French Landed either in Orkney or Caithness, some of the Transports are

already on the coast, the same likeways informs That the Duke¹ was Imbarqued w^t
14,000 men moe to be landed in England. I have no further att present only that I
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Honble Sir
Your most obed Hum^l Serv^t
Patrick Fea Thurso 30th March 1746

P.S. Since writing Mr Sinclair it seems has declin'd goeing to Orkney for wth reason
I have forwarded this by your boatsman that came here w^t A. Finley. The news here y^t
you may rely upon is that Lord George Murray w^t 4,000 of y^e Clans have taken in
Atholl 800 of y^e Dukes men² y^t were sent to that Country in order to destroy these
Gentleman's Estate y^t were w^t y^e Prince. All y^e Prisoners were sent to Inverness and
Fort Augustus Munday last; Fort William is now in Possession of Lockhail, on Col
Glasgoe, a French Offr, w^t 200 of y^e Princes men went to Heith y^e 20th Instant and
their surpris'd 120 of y^e reed coats y^t were sent in order to discover y^e Disposition of
Princes Army, 30 of y^m were killed upon the place & 90 taken Prisoners, one half
whereof were horsemen. Not one man made their eschape, and by this time its thought
Lord George will be up w^t y^e Hessians who are still att Perth. The Duke³ still lyes
att Aberdain. Teusday last the Hazard sloop was put onshoar in Strathnaver by a
man of war. Its said that there was onboard of her 120 men, 20 Officers included,
14,000£ in money w^t a good quantity of arms and amunition & all Seiz'd by the
Lord Reays men, 7 of the Officers killed & w^t many wounded. But at Barraasdeal⁴
is sent to that Country w^t 600 men its expected he will even w^t his Lordship ere this
time. I beg youll send an express w^t y^e inclose to Claistran.

¹ Henry Stuart, the Jacobite Duke of York.

² The Duke of Cumberland's men.

³ William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland.

⁴ Coll Macdonald of Barisdale.