

POWELL, RICE (fl. 1641-1665), colonel in the Parliamentary army

Name: Rice Powell
Parent: Lewis Powell
Gender: Male
Occupation: colonel in the Parliamentary army
Area of activity: Military
Author: James Frederick Rees

A native of south Pembrokeshire. He served as an officer in the army sent to Ireland to suppress the insurrection of 1641. On the outbreak of the Civil War in August 1642, he returned to Pembrokeshire. From a reference to the arrears of pay due to him for the Irish service it appears that he was the son of Lewis Powell and that his sister Lucy was the wife of Richard Cuney of Welston, near Pembroke. Powell joined **John Poyer** and **Rowland Laugharne** and took part with them in the defence of Pembroke and the offensive actions in the county and beyond. **Laugharne** appointed him governor of Cardigan castle when it was captured on 29 December 1644 and he successfully defended it in the following month against a Royalist assault directed by Sir Charles Gerard. In April 1646 he became governor of Tenby. Early in 1648, during **Laugharne's** absence in London, he was in command of the forces in west Wales when Parliament gave the order for the disbanding of supernumeraries. Some companies obeyed, but the resistance of **John Poyer** at Pembroke encouraged others to refuse. After some initial hesitation, Powell decided to support **Poyer's** action and on 10 April they jointly issued a declaration in favour of the king. They had been in touch with prince Charles at S. Germain's and had been promised Royalist assistance. Powell gathered his forces at Carmarthen where colonel Fleming, the commissioner for disbanding, and colonel Thomas Horton attempted to bring him to action in the last week of April 1648. Fleming won an advantage in a skirmish, but in pressing home his attack found himself outnumbered. He retreated to a church, probably Llangathen, and was there shot. Horton withdrew to Brecon for fresh supplies and ammunition. There he learnt that Powell had seized Swansea and Neath and had entered the Vale of Glamorgan, where the Royalists were rising to support him. To prevent an advance on Cardiff, Horton made a forced march down the Taff valley to intercept him. In the subsequent fight at St. Fagans (11 May 1648), where **Laugharne** arrived to take over the command, Horton won a decisive victory. Escaping to Pembrokeshire, Powell held out against Horton at Tenby until 31 May, when he surrendered unconditionally. He was tried by court martial and condemned to death. On 7 May 1649 he was pardoned. After the Restoration he appealed, in 1665, to Charles II for help to meet debts he had contracted in the Royalist cause, with what success is not recorded.

Author

Sir **James Frederick Rees**, (1883 - 1967)

Sources

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A. L. Leach, *History of the Civil War (1642-49) in Pembrokeshire and on its borders* (London 1937), 1937

J. F. Rees, *Studies in Welsh History collected papers, lectures and reviews* (Cardiff 1947), 1947.

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Rice Powell](#)

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Published date: 1959

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