

The Glengarry

Glengarry (also **Glengarry bonnet** or **Glengarry cap**) is a type of cap which Alasdair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry invented and wears in the portrait to the right: a boat-shaped cap without a peak made of thick-milled woollen material with a *toorie* or bobble on top and ribbons hanging down behind.

Colonel **Alasdair Ranaldson MacDonell of Glengarry** (1771-1828) was a personality well known to Walter Scott, a haughty and flamboyant man whose character and behaviour gave Scott the model for the wild Highland clan chieftain Fergus Mac-Ivor in the pioneering historical novel *Waverley* of 1810. As was customary for the chieftain of a clan, he was often called simply "Glengarry".

He was born in 1771 and became the 15th chief of Clan MacDonell of Glengarry in 1788, shortly afterwards raising troops for a regiment of Fencibles. As part of their uniform he invented the *Glengarry*, a type of cap which he wears in his portrait. Glengarry considered himself the last genuine specimen of a Highland chief, always wore the Highland dress (kilt or trews) and in the style of his ancestors seldom traveled without being followed by his "tail", servants in full Highland dress with weaponry who had traditional duties like carrying his sword and shield, standing sentinel, acting as bard and carrying him dry across streams.



In January 1828 Alasdair Ranaldson perished trying to escape from a steamer which had gone aground. As his estate was very much mortgaged and encumbered his son was forced to sell it and move to Australia with his family. The estate was purchased by the Marquis of Huntly, and in 1840 it was sold to Lord Ward, Earl of Dudley, then in 1860 his lordship sold it to Edward Ellice. After a lifetime of betrayals, Alasdair Ranaldson's death was not mourned by the people of Glengarry.

The Glengarry continued to be worn in dark blue or rifle green by all regiments of the Scottish Division up to the amalgamation of all Scottish units into the Royal Regiment of Scotland, as an alternative to the tam o'shanter, particularly in parade dress (when it is always worn, except by the Black Watch, who wore the Balmoral bonnet) and by some regiments' musicians (who wear feather bonnets in full dress). The current type of blue Glengarry worn by the Royal Regiment of Scotland is with a red 'tourie', red, black and white dicing, black silk cockade and the regimental cap badge surmounted by cockfeathers, a tradition taken from the Royal Scots and King's Own Scottish Borderers. Other Commonwealth military forces, who also have Scottish and Highland regiments, also make use of the Glengarry. The Irish Defense Forces also employ the Glengarry and it has been issued since 1922 to all units of the Cavalry Corps and Reserve Army officers. The Irish Glengarry differs somewhat to its Scottish forbearer in that the Irish is more akin to a Caubeen with tails. The Glengarry is also commonly worn by civilians, notably civilian

pipe bands, but can be considered an appropriate hat worn by any males with Highland casual or evening dress.

The correct method of wearing the Glengarry has changed since the end of the Second World War. Prior to 1945, Glengarries were generally worn steeply angled, with the right side of the cap worn low, often touching the ear, and the side with the cap badge higher on the head. The trend since the end of the war has been to wear the Glengarry level on the head.