The Siege of Calais During The Hundred Years War: An English Perspective, 1344-1347

Jordan J. Bruso

University of Maine, jordan.bruso@maine.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd

Part of the Diplomatic History Commons, European History Commons, Medieval History Commons, Medieval Studies Commons, Military History Commons, and the Political History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/etd/3554

This Open-Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.
THE SIEGE OF CALAIS DURING THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR:
AN ENGLISH PERSPECTIVE, 1344-1347

By

Jordan Bruso

B.A. Keene State College, 2018

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
(in History)

The Graduate School
The University of Maine
May 2022

Advisory Committee:
Stephen Miller, Professor of History, Advisor
Joel Anderson, Assistant Professor of History
Mark McLaughlin, Assistant Professor of History
This thesis explores the siege and capture of the port city of Calais in 1347 by King Edward III of England (1312-1377) during the Hundred Years War (1337-1453). The capture of Calais was the culminating event of King Edward III’s 1346-7 military campaign in Normandy and France. This victory provided the English military with a strategically strong foothold on the European continent to conduct future military and economic operations. This thesis blends the methodological approach of “old military history” from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries with “new military history” beginning in the latter half of the twentieth century in an attempt to provide a more nuanced approach to understanding warfare. Therefore, this thesis is an attempt at understanding not only battle narratives and the effects of engagements from a purely military nature, but also the wide-ranging effects the campaign had on English society as a whole. This paper relies heavily on the usage of both chancery records maintained by England and various contemporary chronicler accounts of the period. The goal of this thesis is to prove King Edward III was a tactically and strategically brilliant commander who through the massing of armies and the mobilization of the English economy secured significant wartime victories. He was able to capture the port city of Calais despite fighting against a kingdom that was far wealthier and larger than his own. King Edward’s creative and adaptive strategic and tactical
approaches to siege warfare demonstrated in this paper show the strength of the English military during this period.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my dog Pancakes whose constant presence was always a welcome distraction.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The last time I felt comfortable writing history was when I was 27 and finishing my undergraduate schooling. I was confident in what I knew. It has essentially been all downhill since. The old adage of “the more you learn, the more you realize how much you do not know” is very much alive and well. However, despite this profound truth, graduate school has taught me that no project is a solitary endeavor.

I would like to acknowledge and give thanks to my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Stephen Miller and my other committee members, Dr. Joel Anderson, and Dr. Mark McLaughlin. Dr. Miller’s steadfast dedication to not only my education but to this project gave me purpose and inspiration. He constantly challenged me and provided me with an excellent foundation for the analyzation of warfare. Dr. Joel Anderson inspired me to study the Middle Ages and fueled my academic growth with his support and knowledge. Lastly, Dr. Mark McLaughlin’s HTY 577, environmental history seminar, sparked my interest in the relationship between environmental history and warfare. His classes taught me that human history cannot be studied in a vacuum but rather as part of a larger biome. All three of these gentlemen have not only inspired my work but they have greatly assisted me during this long arduous process.

I owe a debt gratitude to the staff of the Mason Library at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire, and the Sawyer Library at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The staff at both libraries helped me secure access to primary source materials during the research process. Without these folks, this project would have been an even greater challenge during this ongoing pandemic.
Lastly, I would like to thank Erin Best, my family and my friends for their continuous support and enduring love. Each and every one of them made this process more enjoyable and I am thankful.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ................................................................................................................................. iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ................................................................................................................ iv

LIST OF FIGURES ......................................................................................................................... viii

ABBREVIATED REFERENCES AND DEFINED TERMS ............................................................... ix

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY................................................................. 1

CHAPTER 2: ENGLISH LAND POWER 1346-7 ........................................................................ 16

The March to Calais 1346 ........................................................................................................ 20

The Siege of Calais 1346-7 ........................................................................................................ 31

CHAPTER 3: ENGLISH SEA POWER 1346-7 ......................................................................... 48

Naval Aggregation and Logistics ............................................................................................. 50

Naval Force Support .................................................................................................................. 61

CHAPTER 4: ENGLISH SUPPORT FROM 1344 TO 1347 ..................................................... 64

Parliamentary Support ............................................................................................................. 65

Money for War and Recruitment ............................................................................................ 68

Feeding and Equipping the Army ............................................................................................ 74

The Dissemination of Wartime Information .......................................................................... 80

CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................................ 87

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................................................................ 94
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1- The Normandy Campaign of 1346.............................................................. 26
Figure 2- Calais 1346................................................................................................31
Figure 3- Agricultural Systems in northwestern Europe, C. 1300.........................32
Figure 4- Table 1. Compensation owed to the priories and abbeys of England........69
Figure 5- Table 2. Resource contribution.................................................................75-76
Figure 6- Table 3. A few requests for military supplies............................................77
ABBREVIATED REFERENCES AND DEFINED TERMS

CCR – Calendar of Close Rolls

CFR – Calendar of Fine Rolls

C. Inq. Misc. – Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous

CPR – Calendar of Patent Rolls

COLB of the City of London – Calendar of the Letter Books of the City of London

Chevauchée – Armed raids into enemy territories designed to destroy, pillage, and demoralize enemy forces, their populations, and the local ecosystem.

Lines of Communication (LOCs) – A route, either by land or water, that connects an operating force with a base of operations, and along which supplies, and military forces move along. In regard to this thesis, England is the base of operations and Calais represents an area of operations within the military theater.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: HISTORIOGRAPHY

‘It may sound strange, but for all who know war in this respect it is a fact beyond doubt, that much more strength of will is required to make an important decision in strategy than in tactics.’ ‘Boldness becomes of rarer occurrence the higher we ascend the scale of rank.’ – Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Bk III, Ch 1, Ch VI.

The siege of Calais, September 1346 to August 1347, was one of the last critical events to take place during the first phase of the Hundred Years War. Godfrey d’Harcourt, traitor of France and liege to King Edward III, advised the English monarch that controlling Calais was to “wear the keys to the kingdom of France at belt.” This bastion on the North Coast of France sits a mere 32 miles, southeast of the English coastline and another 38 miles west of the modern French-Belgian border. A port city, it is situated across the Strait of Dover and, today, is home to the underwater Channel Tunnel. Long before engineers, miners, and divers were able to drill a corridor through the Earth’s crust, Roman, French, and English alike utilized this Gibraltar of the North as a ‘highway’ for expeditionary purposes. The proximity of Calais to England and important trading partners in Flanders coupled with its powerful human and non-human defenses made the seaport a key strategic objective for the English during the first phase of the Hundred Years War. This critical seaport provided the English with a powerful conduit to the European continent that was used for the defense of the channel, commerce, and for troop transportation back and forth to the theater of war. Despite the importance of this base to the English, Calais did not fall quickly. It took King Edward III nearly eleven months to successfully lay siege to the

---

1 The Hundred Years War and its interpretations, definitions and periodization will be discussed from page four on.
bastion. The French and their Genoese and Scottish partners were not the only enemies to the English Crown. Time, money, morale, and environmental factors all played a role in hindering the English advance. In order to overcome these obstacles, the English monarch contrived a simple plan to take on the French. King Edward’s campaign of 1346-7 brought overwhelming force to Calais and wreaked havoc on both the physical and moral economy of the French garrison as well as the surrounding countryside in order to secure a foothold on the European continent.

Once a small coastal village, Calais was home to fishermen. Archaeologists have uncovered primeval tombs and tools demonstrating human occupancy since prehistoric times. As time progressed, this small coastal village evolved into a prominent fishing hub where the fishmonger’s slab proudly displayed mackerel, codling, whiting, sole and squid. The town, referred to as Caletum by the Romans, also played a pivotal role in Roman expansion. In 55 B.C., Julius Caesar utilized it as his primary transportation hub from which he led five legions of men and thousands of horses into Britain as annotated in his *Conquest of Gaul*. The importance of this town grew over time. Eventually, Caletum became Calais, and the town underwent a series of infrastructure developments on the orders of the Count of Flanders in 997 A.D. Engineers and masons constructed large defensive walls and towers to protect the harbor. Deep ditches were also dug parallel to the walls in order to add additional impediments to attackers. In the early twelfth century, Calais was given a charter, establishing the city as a municipality and, it was at this time, the town became famous for housing pirates who raided the English

---

3 Julius Caesar, *The Conquest of Gaul*, trans. F. P. Long (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 2005), 92-94. Caesar wrote that “with all his available forces he then moved northwards towards the district of the Morini, from whose shores lay the shortest passage over to Britain.” The Morini district consisted of the northern coast of Belgium and France and these people were referred to as the Morini (sailors and sea folk) by Caesar, Pliny, and Tacitus.
coastline. In the late twelfth century, the port was the point debarkation for King Richard I the Lion Heart’s forces heading on crusade. The city continued to grow well into early-thirteenth century when the Count of Boulogne added additional fortifications to the harbor and town, erecting more walls and towers. By the fourteenth century, Calais was a strongly fortified coastal town. The strength of this town laid not only in the man-made fortifications of stone and brick but also in the surrounding environment. The town, as will be analyzed in chapter two, sits within a large marshland ecosystem. This marshy environment, compounded with the changing of the tides, aided the defense by preventing overland crossings except at various man-made causeways.

This desirable fortification laid at the heart of King Edward III’s 1346-7 campaign, and after its conquest, remained under English control until 1558. In order to gain the city, Edward required a large force and substantial amounts of money. English military production efforts were carried out by administrative officers of the Crown, such as the county sheriffs, and with the approval of Parliament. These negotiations defined the complex relationship between the English Crown and Parliament and offer insight into the rising prominence of the House of Commons, especially during times of war. The enacted executive orders were successfully carried out because there was little active resistance by English subject towards Edward’s policies. Despite the churning of Edward’s war machine back in England, support functions alone did not secure victory; they were only one critical piece to the puzzle. Edward’s seizure of Calais was predicated on the skill of English soldiers and sailors and his own inherit

---

6 Please see chapter two page 31 for a look at the agricultural systems of Europe.
stubbornness. The victory at Calais also demonstrates King Edward’s strategic and tactical adaptability and prowess during the Hundred Years War.

This conflict between the English and the French from 1337 to 1453 received the title of the Hundred Years War as a result of the work done by French historians. They referred to this historical period as the “Guerre de Cent Ans”.

Although the conflict spanned for about 116 years, it was more of a series of intermittent battles and campaigns rather than one continuous war. Its sporadic nature provided key moments that serve as boundaries for historical analysis. These boundaries have been typically marked by truces. The first phase of the Hundred Years War is referred to as the Edwardian War which took place from 1337-60 and ended in the Treaty of Brétigny (1360). The second phase is referred to as the Caroline War which took place from 1369-89 and ended in the Truce of Leulinghem (1389). The third phase is referred to as the Lancastrian War which took place from 1415-29. The final phase of the war was consumed with a French civil war and English expulsion from France and took place from 1428-53.

This thesis is concerned with the campaign of 1346-7 during the first phase of the Hundred Years War. Although, generally speaking, historians agree with this periodization, it does not tell the whole story of the Anglo-French relationship. Therefore, it is important to identify this relationship when ascertaining the beginnings of this conflict.

The war can be seen as the unintentional result of the Norman conquest of Anglo-Saxon England. According to historians Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, “the childless death of Edward the Confessor in January 1066 was at least a beginning.” Three men claimed the

---

English throne after Edward the Confessor’s death. The first was Earl Harold Godwinson of England who was named successor at the time of Edward’s death. The second was William, the Duke of Normandy, who argued that he was promised the throne by Edward. While the third was the King of Norway, Harald Hardrada, who was looking to expand his kingdom. Harold Godwinson, shortly after learning of these challenges to “his” throne, prepared his army to secure his political position. In late September 1066, Harold Godwinson routed Harald Hardrada and his forces at Stamford bridge in northeastern England. After securing this great victory, Harold Godwinson, in early October, marched his forces south towards Hastings to meet William, the Duke of Normandy, and his expeditionary forces. Despite his earlier success at Stamford, Harold Godwinson and his fatigued Anglo-Saxon forces fell to William at the town of Battle near Hastings. This defeat ushered in a new Anglo-Norman period for England.

The new English King and his heirs still maintained the Duchy of Normandy thereby creating a complex relationship between England and France. William and his heirs were expected to provide fealty and homage to the King of France due to claims over these lands in France. Although William attempted to mitigate hereditary and allegiance issues upon his death by separating the kingdom of England from the Duchy of Normandy, a series of civil wars broke out which once again brought England under the umbrella of France. Eventually, in 1153, the English throne passed to Henry II, therefore establishing Plantagenet rule over England. Henry II’s wife, Elanor of Aquitaine, the former queen of France, brought vast swaths of French lands under English rule, most notably Gascony. A series of *quid pro quo* treaties brought some amicability between the two realms from 1204 to 1294. However, war between King Edward I of England and King Philippe IV of France in 1294 destabilized this balance. After only a few years

---

10 Ibid., 2.
of war, Edward I was able to hold his lands in Gascony on the condition of paying homage to the French Crown as previously directed in the Treaty of Paris (1259). King Philippe IV secured this act through the marriage of his eldest daughter, Isabella, to Edward, the Prince of Wales, later to be called King Edward II.

Although the act of marriage was made to ensure peace between the two realms, it unfortunately led to a furthering in Anglo-French hostilities. When Charles IV died in 1328, the Capetian line ended, thus provoking a scramble for the French throne. Edward III, the son of King Edward II and Queen Isabella, was the next closest male heir to the Capetian line and believed he deserved the French crown. France, citing the realm’s tradition of Salic Law, discounted Edward III’s matrilineal inheritance. Therefore, in 1328, “the barons of France, affirmed by the university of Paris, instead gave the throne to Philippe, the count of Valois, who was crowned King Philippe VI.” The royal appointment irrevocably fractured Anglo-French relationships during the late Middle Ages. This powder keg metastasized over the next decade when King Edward III of England sheltered the exiled French traitor, Robert III of Artois, within the English court. In one last moment of *alea iacta est*, King Edward III in 1337 refused to pay homage to Philippe VI thus igniting the Hundred Years War.

---


14 Ibid.

15 Medieval historian David Green believes that the periodization of the Hundred Years War is rather faulty. Many historians, including Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, argue the conflict started in 1066. Green furthers this periodization issue by arguing that conflict between the English and French did not cease until the *Entente Cordiale* of 1904. This idea can be seen in, David Green, *The Hundred Years War: A People’s History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 3.
Historians have long debated the significance of the first phase of the Hundred Years War and Edward’s military endeavors. Early scholarly studies of medieval warfare were predominately concerned with battles rather than sieges. Therefore, historians like Sir Charles Oman and Hans Delbrück focused their studies on battle narratives in order to analyze tactical developments over time and space. They read and interpreted the stories of medieval chroniclers whose interpretations of battles provided the early foundations for their medieval military histories. Their historical interpretations were greatly influenced by the Napoleonic warfare of the nineteenth century, and this unfortunately clouded their analysis of medieval strategic concepts. Their judgements and interpretations bled into the discourse surrounding King Edward III’s campaign and seizure of Calais.

Sir Charles Oman, writing in the 1890s, quipped that Edward III “resolved to make the capture of this highly important seaport [Calais] the reward of his recent victory” at the Battle of Crécy (1346). However, he failed to mention the significance of “this highly important seaport” or King Edward’s strategic thinking. Throughout his nearly 500-page treatise on the conduct of warfare in the Middle Ages, Oman, only mentioned Calais once more in his book in order to discuss cannons.17

Hans Delbrück, writing just a few decades later, furthered Oman’s argument by inferring that the victory of English forces at Calais was only possible because of the English victory over the French at Crécy.18 After Crécy, the French army was unable to effectively challenge

---

17 There is some evidence that rudimentary cannons were at the siege of Calais. They were positioned just outside of the harbor to prevent French shipping from accessing the port.
Edward’s position at Calais. Despite Delbrück’s argument, he only mentioned Calais once in his 700-page tome.

Edward, with his mighty force, still contemplated nothing further than the capture of Calais. For even if he had succeeded, with the most extreme straining of the resources of his widespread kingdom, in assembling such an unprecedented force as 32,000 men formed in the Middle Ages, it was still beyond his capabilities to maintain such a force for a considerable time and to carry on operations with it. Even after the capture of Calais, the English continued the usual activity of nothing more than wasting expeditions…

Following Oman and Delbrück, historian J.F. Verbruggen, writing in the 1950s, never mentioned the siege of Calais nor its significance in his almost 400-page book, The Art of Warfare in the Middle Ages. A few years later, historian R. C. Smail, who, in his Art of War, focused on medieval England, wrote that “So great a success [as Crécy] gained for Edward only Calais.” His argument downplayed the significance of Calais despite the port being held by the English for over 200 years. Although Smail devalued the capture of Calais, he unintentionally promoted further reinterpretations of the event. The reemergence of this siege in historical writing was championed by the retired Lieutenant-Colonel and historian, A.H. Burne. Burne combined Victorian era battle narrative methodology with concepts derived from the Annales school and documentary based evidence and argued that the significance behind Calais was not that this was just another port for Edward to conduct operations from but that it provided “warlike stories” for generations of English people and it enhanced English military prestige. His reinterpretation, however, was still centered around the Battle of Crécy. The siege of Calais was merely a byproduct of the battle.

---

19 Ibid. 462-3.
21 A. H. Burne often referred to himself as a biographer who did history rather than a historian.
In the 1960s, historians, further borrowing concepts from the Annales school, created the “new military history.” These scholars focused on the relationship between warfare and society. H.J. Hewitt championed these newfound efforts in his work, *The Organization of War under Edward III*, by examining countless chancery records, receipts, and correspondence in an effort to understand the complex relationship between the English war effort and English society. His work examines the experiences of the English people and how the government was able to coordinate, organize and victual Edward’s forces in an effort to fight the French. Hewitt also argued that the English chevauchées of the fourteenth century served two purposes: to undermine the political support of the Valois monarchy by showing French military weakness compared to English strength. Additionally, they were utilized as part of a war of attrition, destroying and plundering French resources. According to Hewitt, Edward utilized quality military strategy, namely the acts of piracy and plunder, to achieve his political aims. He also argued that the aim of the chevauchée “was not, as might have been supposed, to seek out the enemy and bring him to decisive combat.” This is an important reflection because this goes against the grain of many of the “battle-seeking” historians and it allows for a reexamination of Edward’s true strategic goals during this campaign. Hewitt’s interpretation of Calais was that “the capture of Calais was indispensable” but that “the capture itself was an exercise in starvation by blockade rather than military exploit.” It is true that Calais was starved out, but

---

23 New military history was less concerned with battles, tactics and commanders and more involved with the cultural, social and economic implications that wars had on societies.
25 Chevauchées were armed raids into enemy territories designed to destroy, pillage, and demoralize enemy forces, their populations, and the local ecosystem.
27 Ibid., 59.
this was only accomplished in the last months of the siege. The blockade, however, was the result of the ongoing military exploits by Edward’s army.

Ultimately, all of these military historians laid the groundwork for new interpretations to be carried out by later historians. More recently, historians such as Jonathan Sumption, Clifford Rogers, Susan Rose, Andrew Ayton, Kelly DeVries, Mark Ormrod and Michael Livingston have provided a more balanced approach to analyzing the Hundred Years War. These authors blend traditional tactical battle narratives with socio-economic and socio-cultural interpretations providing more nuanced historical analyses. Despite their tremendous scholarship, however, certain lingering Victorian-era notions still prevail. Most notable among these prevailing notions was the historical disregard for the analysis of siege warfare and its strategic maxims. However, one historian’s trash is another’s treasure.

Jim Bradbury was one of the first and one of the few historians to provide a complete treatise on the exercise of siege warfare during the Middle Ages. His work, *The Medieval Siege*, published in 1992, explored medieval siege warfare both in the west and the east, arguing that the tactics surrounding sieges, despite changes in technology, rarely changed.28 Also writing in the 1990s, Jonathan Sumption, produced a four-volume exploration of the Hundred Years War in its entirety. However, like his Victorian predecessors, Sumption argued that Calais was “a minor town … with an awkward sand-clogged harbor” and “not a great commercial port.”29 He argued that Calais was a consolation prize after the Battle of Crécy,30 and more of an economic burden for the English in later years.31 His argument fits neatly within his larger conjecture across the

---

30 Ibid., 535-86.
four volumes. Sumption believed that battles and sieges are unimportant and rarely achieve “anything of long-term significance.”\(^{32}\) A few years later in 2000, the historian, Clifford Rogers, provided a new interpretation on the siege of Calais in his work, *War Cruel and Sharp*. Rogers argued that there was an ulterior motive to taking Calais, namely that King Edward III was looking for a single decisive battle to end the war and was using the siege as a means to draw Philip out. Rogers stated that “the siege of Calais has often been misinterpreted” and that it should be seen as Edward attempting to acquire “a second battlefield defeat” that might well “cause the Valois government to collapse entirely.”\(^{33}\) This is a logical proposal but how many decisive battles was Edward going to conduct for this purpose? He already won two particularly decisive engagements against the French at both the naval Battle of Sluys (1340) and the land Battle of Crécy (1346). Was Edward really battle-seeking or was Calais his primary goal during this campaign?

A secondary goal, albeit small, was to acknowledge the relationship between a warring English society and the natural world. Since the 1980s, environmental historians have argued that human history cannot be viewed within a vacuum but rather as part of the larger environment. Historians like Richard P. Tucker and Edmund Russell, writing in the 2000s, have provided a blueprint for the analyzation of warfare and the environment. Their work, *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally: Toward An Environmental History of War*, recommended military historians to “consider how warfare, central to relations between societies and between states, has changed the natural world.”\(^{34}\) It further stated that “although military historians have long

---


\(^{33}\) Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 274-5. The first battlefield defeat was the Battle of Crécy 1346.

portrayed nature as a set of strategic or tactical obstacles – especially in the form of terrain and weather – they rarely discuss the impact of warfare on that same terrain.”

Therefore, it is important to understand how war is a distinctive force on environmental change and how the environment is another distinctive force that shapes warfare.36 However, despite the advances of environmental history within scholarly institutions, there remains a lack of literature surrounding environmental history within the Middle Ages.

In order to bridge this gap in historical writing, Richard C. Hoffman published An Environmental History of Medieval Europe in 2014. This work deftly demonstrated the intimate relationship medieval peoples had with their own environments and ecosystems. He also showed that there was a dialectical relationship between nature and culture. But in order to analyze this relationship, historians have to understand how medieval subjects understood their world in nonscientific ways. Similar to past environmental historians, Hoffmann championed the idea that historians need to place “the natural world in the story as an agent and object of history.”37

“Every organism lives by exchanging energy and materials with its environment, a process call metabolism,” he wrote. “The ecological principle recognizes the interconnectedness of living and non-living things through various relationships, processes, and cycles.”38 Despite Hoffmann’s contributions to environmental historiography, his book does not analyze the relationship between warfare and the environment in any significant way despite covering a 1000-year period across all of Europe. Therefore, this thesis tries to acknowledge the relationship between warfare and the environment as seen through the siege of Calais.

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 2.
38 Ibid., 6.
This paper also explores the often-overlooked role that the siege of Calais played within King Edward III’s larger strategic picture. By utilizing chronicler accounts, both contemporary and secondary, a historical narrative of King Edward’s campaign can be examined and interpreted. This interpretation can be challenged and supported through the analysis of documentary evidence within the chancery records of England during this campaign. This paper relies heavily on the English perspective and therefore utilizes mostly English source material.

This thesis primarily relies upon the chronicler accounts of Geoffrey le Baker, Jean le Bel, Henry Knighton, Jean Froissart, and Raphael Holinshed. Geoffrey le Baker was a contemporary chronicler and secular clerk. His chronicle is considered to be rather reliable amongst historians as it is one of the most detailed chronicles of the period. Jean le Bel was a religious canon and contemporary chronicler whose work is also deemed trustworthy by historians despite his pro-English tones. His biases are based on the fact that he was a friend of King Edward’s court. Henry Knighton was another canon and contemporary chronicler. His work as a chronicler has provided modern historians with accounts ranging from 1066 up till his death in 1366 as a contemporary writer of Edward’s campaigns. Jean Froissart was arguably the most widely read and used chronicler for modern historians. His work is interesting in that he comes from the low countries and is placed into service under Queen Philippa of Hainault, King Edward’s wife. Therefore, he maintains a pro-English bias until the death of the Queen in 1369. After the death of the Queen, Froissart went to work for the French government and his French biases can be seen from 1370 on. The majority of his work was replicated from Jean le Bel’s accounts and his need for embellishment makes the modern reader skeptical of certain details. The last chronicler utilized in this thesis is Raphael Holinshed. Holinshed wrote during the sixteenth century. He is both useful and unique in that he bridges medieval chronicler accounts
with early modern writers and historians. His works greatly influenced Renaissance writers like William Shakespeare. His work is a conglomeration of earlier chronicler accounts and sources.

The chancery records referenced within this thesis are the Calendars of the Patent, Close, Fine, and Inquisition Miscellaneous Rolls. Additionally, the Parliamentary Rolls of Medieval England and the Calendar of the Letter Books of the City of London are used as well. All of these chancery records were compiled and translated by Victorian era writers within England. The Patent and Close rolls work in conjunction with one another. The Patent rolls record the various public communications between the English government and its people. The Close Rolls are similar, but they deal predominately with private letters and communique rather than public ones. The Fine Rolls are an extensive collection of England’s financial records. The Inquisition Miscellaneous Rolls are account of instances and communications between people, estates, and English officials. The Calendar of the Letter Books of London contain accounts for the various matters in which the City of London was involved in governmental affairs. Lastly, the Parliament Rolls of medieval England contain all the meetings, minutes, and notes between the English Crown, the Clergy and Parliament. These sources are instrumental in analyzing King Edward’s 1346 Calais campaign.

This thesis is broken down into four chapters. Chapter 2 deals with the land campaign. Chapter 3 delves into the naval campaign. Chapter 4 examines the roles that non-military functions played back in England which provided the necessary support to capture Calais. Lastly, Chapter 5 contains conclusionary remarks and thoughts on further studies.

Chapter 2 provides the battle narrative of the land forces during the campaign and the siege of Calais 1346-7. This chapter predominately uses chronicler-based accounts to build the
narrative surrounding the siege of Calais. Although chancery records are used to support these accounts, the primary investigation of Chapter 2 is to see how the King prepared, fought, and captured Calais.

Chapter 3 continues this methodological approach to analyze King Edward’s naval forces during this campaign and siege. However, more chancery record evidence is included to provide an understanding of naval acquisitions and usage. Additionally, this chapter examines the various roles the navy played in capturing Calais.

Chapter 4 examines the roles that non-militant actors played in supporting Edward’s war machine. This analysis is predominately concerned with looking at documented chancery records, letters, poems, and Parliamentary proceedings. Similar to Chapter 3, this chapter examines the various roles that Parliament, the clergy, and administrative officials, played in order to support King Edward’s seizure of Calais.
CHAPTER 2

ENGLISH LAND POWER 1346-7

‘It is better to trample another country than to allow one’s own to be trampled under foot’. Christine de Pizan, The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry, Ch. xviii.

King Edward III’s Normandy Campaign would inevitably be referred to as his Crécy campaign. Historians consider this one of the last campaigns of the first phase of the Hundred Years War as the Black Death would consume most of Europe, Asia, and North Africa in the subsequent years, thus halting military advances by both the French and the English. The culminating event of this campaign was the successful siege of the port city of Calais in northern France by Edward’s forces. This chapter will analyze how King Edward was able to muster, manage and utilize his land-based forces for both the expedition to and capture of Calais. A secondary goal of this chapter is to acknowledge the complex relationship between Edward’s land army and the localized environments of both England and France. Edward’s campaign was recorded by a series of fourteenth-century chroniclers, namely, Geoffrey Le Baker, Jean Le Bel, Jean Froissart, and Henry Knighton. Additionally, the 16th century chronicler Raphael Holinshed provided a retelling of these events with more gathered evidence. These accounts along with selected chancery rolls, such as the Close Rolls, Parliament Rolls, Fine Rolls, Patent Rolls, and the Letter Books of London, demonstrate how Edward was able to maximize his military power for the seizure of Calais. The capture of Calais provided future English forces with a convenient port of entry to both France and Flanders for both wartime and economic operations and its capture was only possible with the mobilization of an extensive expeditionary force.

Beginning in 1345, Edward began assembling his forces for his 1346 campaign along the coast of northern France, issuing a variety of orders to ensure effective mobilization. One such
order to the sheriffs of his counties stated that “all barons, bannerets, knights, and esquires between the ages of sixteen and sixty furnish themselves with horses and arms according to their estate, to proceed with the King abroad, in order to put an end to the war.” Additionally, “men between the ages of sixteen and sixty capable of bearing arms” needed to be brought to Portsmouth for embarkation.¹ Soldiers were not the only men being mustered for war; this call extended to craftsmen, engineers, and laborers. Edward ordered his sheriffs to help his clerk, Sir Guy de Brian, in the “choosing and taking [of] forty miners … four of whom should be master miners … to be brought to Portsmouth by the Sheriff of Gloucester for the next passage.”² Edward’s order for mining assistance is unique in that he must have planned to conduct siege warfare alongside his chevauchées. Armies marching through the countryside can easily dig ditches and dykes around their encampments for defense on the open field. However, acquiring skilled and experienced miners, demonstrated a need for undermining operations on walls and castles.

This is an early clue that demonstrates Edward was not simply conducting chevauchées in order to obtain a decisive victory as championed by historians such as Clifford Rogers. The English monarch needed a large contingent of both fighting men and support personnel to bear his lengthy campaign and it was the responsibilities of the King’s clerks to acquire such personnel.

The sheriffs and arrayers of the local counties were responsible for surveying and ordering the allocation of resources and manpower from local lords and county officials. If a

---

¹ Calendar of the Library Books (COLB) of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cviii & cvii b, https://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-letter-books/volf. Edward continually mentions ending the war because he promised Parliament in 1344 and 1346 that he would. This will be discussed in chapter four.
² George Wrottesley, Crecy and Calais, passim, as seen in the sources section of Clifford J. Rogers, ed., The Wars of Edward III: Sources and Interpretations, item 72 (Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2010), 121.
local lord was unable to allocate men for the cause, King Edward fined him. The fine was dependent upon the size, wealth, and notoriety of the estate or county. If the local lord proved to an assessor that their lands were insufficient to support the King with money or manpower, they were no longer be required to provide support. If, however, the lord lied, then he could find himself imprisoned and/or fined. The chronicler, Geoffrey le Baker, recorded that the king charged “the sheriff of Suffolk to warn the men of that county named in a roll lately sent to him, on pain of forfeiture of life and limb, lands and goods, to find the men at arms, hobelers and archers assessed upon them for their lands and have them duly furnished with horses and arms at Portsmouth…”

There were, of course, exceptions to military service and to resource allotment. Baker noted that “Nicholas de Dagworth, brother of the said Nicholas, is staying on his service in Brittany and that a son of the same Nicholas is now in those parts in the company of Thomas, also that Nicholas is so infirm that he cannot labour, as has been fully testified before him, discharges Nicholas of finding the man at arms, provided that he find the hobeler and archer.”

Therefore, lords that were already in service to the King in foreign lands were exempt from such additional military requests. And, as was noted, if a lord was disabled, his required resource allocation was often altered.

This constant communication between the King, his clerks, the arrayers, and the local lords was necessary in order to generate the required forces. Regardless of the local lords’ situations, Edward was sure to have his men and his money. This, however, did not mean that all men went willingly to the call of war. Some lords and sheriffs were even assaulted by the men they were attempting to gather.

---

3 CPR, 1345-8, [Link](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015031079307&view=1up&seq=7&skin=2021), 59.
4 Ibid. Additional requests for conscription of men can be seen in the COLB of the City of London, 1337-52; CPR 1345-8; CCR 1343-6.
5 CPR, 1345-8, 183-4.
By mid-summer 1346, Edward gathered his naval fleet for embarkation and transport. The chronicler, Henry Knighton, claimed that Edward sailed to Normandy on the wooden backs of “1,100 great ships and 500 smaller ships.” His landing force for the campaign consisted of 13 Earls, 44 baron and bannerets, 1046 knights, 4022 esquires, 5104 mounted archers and vintenars, 7 500 hobelars, 15,480 foot-archers, 4,474 Welsh troops, 314 masons, carpenters, engineers, smiths, tent-makers, thatchers, miners, armorer, gunners, and artillery men among others. His actual naval forces consisted of 700 English ships, 8,151 mariners, 38 allied foreign ships and 1,204 allied mariners. A more recent assessment of Edward’s land forces was compiled by historian Andrew Ayton. He argued Edward’s forces were around 14,000 men consisting of 2,800 men-at-arms, 2,800 mounted archers and hobelars, and 8,000 infantry more than half of which were most likely foot archers. Regardless of the debate over the number of men in his force, Edward still mobilized the largest expeditionary force of the fourteenth century for his continental endeavor. For his point of debarkation, Edward chose the harbor of Saint Vaast-la-Hougue, located along the northern French coast, across the Channel from Southampton and northwest of the mighty city of Caen. It was an important location because it had shallow sloping beaches of firm sand that were relatively free of rocks and other impediments for landing and offloading.

---


7 Vintenars were commanders of 20 infantrymen, essentially the medieval equivalent to a squad leader in today’s modern armies.

8 George Wrottesley, *Crecy and Calais from the Public Records* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), Accesssed November 20, 2021. [https://archive.org/details/CrecyAndCalais](https://archive.org/details/CrecyAndCalais), 204. These numbers are based upon paid wages by the chancery.

The March to Calais 1346

King Edward’s forces landed at port on the 12th of July and according to the William Retford’s Kitchen Journal, they stayed there until the 17th. The chronicler Jean Froissart remarked, “that day and night the king lodged on the sands, and in the meantime discharged the ships of their horses and other baggages.” Upon their arrival, Edward’s forces seized control of “thirty great [French] ships and galleys” which were anchored in the harbor, thereby bolstering his own naval fleet. His army was too large for him to execute smooth marching maneuvers. Therefore, he divided his army into three divisions. According to Raphael Holinshed, Edward appointed Lord Godfrey d'Harcourt as commander of the right division and the Earl of Warwick, Thomas de Beauchamp, commander of the left division. Edward himself commanded the main division. All three groups were directed by the King to march along the seacoast. Additionally, he ordered his navy to sail easterly, along the coast of northern France, to secure the coastline where they “tooke all the ships they found in their waie.” It was in this manner that Edward and his three divisions “passed forth, and burnt manie towns and villages in all the countrie… this was done by the battell that went by the sea side, and by them on the sea togither.”

10 William Retford’s Kitchen Journal, as seen in Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, eds. “William Retford, Kitchen Journal” in The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook, 20–23 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 21. William Retford was the keeper of the King’s wardrobe and clerk of the King’s kitchen. His Kitchen Journal has provided historians with the exact route of the march based upon encampment locations and times.

11 G.C. Macaulay, The Chronicles of Froissart (Les Chroniques de Froissart), trans. John Bourchier, Lord Berners, ed. G. C. Macaulay (London: Macmillan and CO., 1924), 94, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101073814392&view=1up&seq=12&skin=2021 Edwa...rd kept this landing site a secret from his men as he knew there were spies within his army. These spies will be discussed in subsequent chapters.


13 Holinshed, Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, 634; Also seen in The Chronicles of Froissart, 94-5.
As Edward’s forces marched, Jean le Bel stated “the fair country of Normandy [was] ravaged and laid waste ... they burned, destroyed and pillaged everything.”\(^{14}\) According to Holinshed, and also recorded by a citizen of Valenciennes as well as Jean le Bel, “the lord Godfrie of Harecourt … on the right hand of the king, road forth six or seven leagues from the kings battell, in burning and exiling the country.”\(^{15}\) According to this calculation, Godfrey d’Harcourt’s division must have covered and burned and area of 18-21 miles as it marched. This level of coverage does not even factor in King Edward’s or Warwick’s divisions. This seems unlikely, as it would be difficult to command and relay messages quickly over such a large area of space. However, the constant reference to the burning of the countryside indicates just how destructive Edward’s forces were on local ecosystems not only through burning but also by foraging and stealing. The chroniclers remarked that Edward’s men “found it a thriving country… abounding in all things: its granaries were full of corn, its houses full of riches, its people possessed of carts and horses and wagons and sheep and ewes and pigs and calves and cows and oxen… they seized the lot and took it back to the king’s army.”\(^{16}\) Furthermore, Jean le Bel stated that:

[the English] found the land so plentiful – except for wine, and they found enough of that, too, for the people, taken unawares, had hidden nothing away. It’s no wonder they were in a state of shock: they’d never experienced war or ever seen a man-at-arms, and now they were seeing people slaughtered without mercy, houses set ablaze and pillaged, and the land laid waste and burnt.\(^{17}\)


This excerpt is unique in that it quickly captures the essence of both the literal and figurative fog of war. The literal fog of war can be seen in the devastating fires with the plumes of smoke diminishing any visibility of the onslaught. The figurative fog of war speaks to the people residing within these torched areas. The “state of shock” these unassuming villagers felt was most grievous. It is hard to argue that these people were unaware there was a war going on, but their localized communities and day-to-day actions mentally sheltered them from the possibility of an attack. Any villager seeing oncoming English troops may have quickly assumed they were simply French troops maneuvering through their villages. According to the historian David Green, some 500 towns and settlements were attacked, plundered, and destroyed during the course of this conflict and that this was a form of psychological warfare to destroy France’s ability to raise armies. Green remarks that “the ringing of church bells might as easily mean an impending attack as a call to prayer.” Despite, the securement of vast riches and reducing French morale, this devastating march took a toll on Edward’s troops.

To keep a steady march on average of 11 miles a day and to keep his men in fighting shape, each soldier needed to consume approximately two pounds of food a day. Although there was a great caravan of victuals following the army, foraging would have also been utilized for sustenance. Therefore, for a force of this size to maintain itself, it would need roughly 28,000 pounds of food per day. This does not include the horses. Most lords and riders brought with them about 2-4 horses and if on average 3 horses were used per rider, Edward’s force would

---

18 David Green, The Hundred Years War: A People’s History (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 51.
20 The average distance marched per day was calculated by utilizing William Retford, Kitchen Journal, in The Battle of Crécy: A Casebook, 20–23.
have had roughly 16,800 horses, according to Ayton’s numbers.\textsuperscript{21} The food required for the horses alone, which needed to consume roughly twenty pounds of feed a day, add up to 336,000 pounds of feed per day. None of these calculations consider what pack animals, beasts of burden, livestock nor even what camp followers consumed.\textsuperscript{22} The primary diet of the animals was grass and hay, but there are orders within the chancery records directing the shipment of oats for the feeding of war horses to Le Crotoy, south of Calais. Other support animals, namely beasts of burden and livestock, ate when the army encamped for the day. During the summer months this was easy enough, but during the winter months, when shrubbery and grasses died off due cold weather, these animals consumed whatever could be found or was provided, but most probably perished and were consumed by Edward’s men.

The English army was fueled by wheat flour, almonds, oats, malt, wine, water, salt-pork, beef, mutton, cheese, peas, beans, and fish and hens when possible. The King and the more prestigious lords, however, lived far more comfortably than the rest of the army, whose primary diet was beans, peas, salt pork and grains. Not only were the best food stuffs provided to the king, but chefs made the journey across with the army to feed the nobility. Two popular English culinary dishes during King Edward’s reign that were easily accessible to his cooks, based upon the provisions on hand, were \textit{Turk's head} for fish day or lent and \textit{Teste de Turk}.

\textbf{Turk's head} - Take choice rice and wash it and dry it; then grind it thoroughly, mix with thickened almond milk, and put in spices and saffron, as directed below, and sugar. Make a pastry case; then scald eels and remove the excrement; then cut them up; and take parsley, sage, and some broth, and grind in a mortar, and put in saffron and mixed ground spice; then cover [with a pastry lid] and put it in the oven, etc.

\textsuperscript{21} I use the term rider to differentiate between the various horse users, as there were various riders such as knights, squires, hobelers, horse archers, etc…

**Teste de Turk** - Take pork and hens and cut into small pieces; then grind in a mortar, and put in good spices and saffron; put in plenty of eggs, some bread, and some whole almonds; all the above-mentioned ingredients are to be ground together thoroughly in a mortar; then take a well-washed pig’s stomach, stuff with the filling, and cook well; when it is done, take a skewer and pierce it through the middle and remove the skin [i.e., the stomach]; then take egg yolks and beat them well with sugar in a bowl, and brush the roast all over, etc.23

Both recipes called for a considerable number of spices. Spices were often expensive and the possession of them was indicative of status and wealth. The nobility’s desire to satisfy both their physical and social hungers can be seen through the impressment of chefs into military service. This aggregation of support personnel also demonstrated Edward’s foreknowledge of a lengthy campaign. Tastes from home often are used to remedy morale issues and a lengthy campaign such as this required certain comforts for the lords to endure.

Despite shipments of food and the results of foraging, starvation and famine were common. Rot was a regular occurrence on ships traveling across the channel delivering supplies to Edward’s army. Storms at sea, spraying libations of sea water, deteriorated vast quantities of grain. The dampness and darkness of the ships’ hulls allowed mold to quickly attack the food stuffs. The beans, peas, oats, mutton, and cheese often degenerated, and meat stores of mutton, beef, and pork sometimes became infested with maggots. Additionally, without any form of refrigeration, the hot summer laid a decisive blow to Edward’s baggage train.24 Despite the biodegradation, Edwards army marched on, relying on local forage such as apples, grapes, and hunting native fauna. These localized and native food sources were greatly augmented by

---


24 CCR, 1346-9, 99; CFR, 1337-47, 486.
plundering actions against French food stores within the towns, farms, and monasteries Edward’s army travelled through.

Edward’s march first took him south all the way to Caen, then east to Rouen, south to Poissy outside Paris, and then north past Beauvais, where Edward, according to Jean le Bel, “not wanting to stop to waste that area: his sole aim, since he couldn’t bring King Philippe to battle as he wished, was to lay siege to the mighty city of Calais.” Jean le Bel’s account is conflicting because he claimed that Edward could not bring Philippe to battle. However, according to Froissart, King Philippe had followed King Edward’s forces all the way to Amiens in hopes of a battle. Additionally, according to Froissart, the French monarch either heavily garrisoned or destroyed all of the access points across the River Somme. This was an attempt by the French King to corner Edward’s forces and prevent him from marching north. Froissart says that after seeing the French army, the “King of England was right pensive, and the next morning heard mass before the sun-rising and then dislodged.” After a night of contemplation King Edward must have realized this was not the time nor the place for battle. Therefore, he conducted a hasty march across the River Somme at an access point provided to him by a French prisoner of war.

This hasty march was reflected in William Retford’s *kitchen journal*. Retford noted that the English army decamped Amiens on August 20th and marched to Acheux-en-Vimeu in one day, a distance of roughly 22 miles. That is an incredibly long and fast march for an army in a single day. Froissart also claimed that the English “departed in haste” and the French army found

---

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Bryant, *The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360*, 178. This is also seen in *The Chronicles of Jean Froissart*, 100.
within the abandoned English camps “flesh ready on the broaches, bread and pasties in the ovens, wine in tuns and barrels, and tables ready laid.” Edward’s forces continued their march from Amiens to Crécy, and then finally to Calais. The route is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The Normandy Campaign, 1346. Courtesy of W. Mark Ormrod, Edward III (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 274.

Clifford Rogers’ primary argument in War Cruel and Sharp, is that Edward was seeking a decisive battle to take the throne of France and end the war by crippling the Valois monarchy. However, if this was the case, then why did Edward conduct a hasty march north towards Calais, when it was possible to set up defensive positions outside of Amiens or Acheux-en-Vimeu and engage Philippe’s forces directly? It is entirely possible that the English monarch did not want to conduct open battle with the main French army. Additionally, according to Froissart, Edward intended to head to Calais even prior to the sacking of Caen. Froissart, recounting a conversation between King Edward and Godfrey d’Harcourt, wrote, “Ye have a great voyage to

---

31 Ibid.
do or ye come before Calais … and, sir, in this town there is much people who will defend their houses, and it will cost many of your men their lives.”

Despite the warning, Edward pressed on with the original strategic goal. This is further evidenced when Edward ordered supplies to be sent to Le Crottoy, north of the River Somme, after he departed Caen on 29 July 1346, enroute to Calais. These clues help demonstrate that Edward only wanted to do battle when the best opportunity presented itself and that his primary goal was to get to Calais quickly. Military historian and theorist Basil H. Liddell-Hart wrote in his book, *Strategy*, a good commander should “keep your object always in mind, while adapting your plan to circumstances.” It is hard not to see Edward’s goal of taking Calais as his primary strategic goal, at least by Hart’s estimation.

Edward’s army marched north to the heights between Abbeville and Crécy where the English secured a stunning victory on August 26th, 1346, against the French and Genoese. Although this victory helped mitigate any possible French resistance to the English advance, the French did not sit idly by. They began to regroup their forces, but this took considerable time. Edward must have understood the repercussions of the delay because he took advantage of this time by moving and preparing his forces for the preliminary stages of the siege of Calais. Therefore, the English King once again conducted a hasty march towards Calais in an attempt to refresh his army at the coastal port of Le Crottoy. Analyzing William Retford’s *kitchen journal* shows that Edward’s army marched about 61 miles in six days. However, according to the

---

33 Ibid.
Chronicon Comitum Flandrensiu, despite his hasty march, Edward continued “the journey he had begun, burning, ravaging, and plundering… around Boulogne, Marquise and Wissant.” Knighton also remarked that, King Edward marched towards Calais “destroying and wasting the countryside all around for eight leagues … until he came to Calais with his army… on Thursday [September 4, 1346] before the Nativity of St. Mary.”

Once at Calais, King Edward sent a letter to England in September 1346, as noted by the chronicler Robert Avesbury, stating that “for the time we that we departed Caen, we have lived on the country to the great travail” and “now we are in such plight that we must in part be refreshed by victuals.” This indicates that Edward’s army, although most likely still foraging and stealing from the various cities enroute to Caen, predominately lived off the baggage train that was assembled from the landing at St Vaast-La-Hougue. However, the march from Caen to Calais, as indicated in the aforementioned letter, demonstrates that supplies were drastically low and foraging was scarce. Every army is said to march on its stomach and, by analyzing the distances between encampments, Edward’s army marched roughly 317 miles from Caen to Calais on few provisions. The army and its animals were desperately famished by such a long arduous march. Despite the exhaustion, the campaign was a rather successful endeavor with the sacking of dozens of cities and the battlefield victory at Crécy.

---

39 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 65; Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 183. As with the route of the Campaign, I will refrain from detailing the Battle of Crécy despite its overwhelming popularity amongst military historians and in English lore.
Coming off such a tremendous victory at Crécy, English spirit was reinvigorated as can been seen in communiques to Parliament.\textsuperscript{41} It had been six long years since Edward’s last great victory at the Battle of Sluys (1340). The people of England were exhausted both physically and mentally. The exhausted coffers of England and the hard-pressed taxation that occurred must have seemed frivolous to the English people until Edward secured victory at Crécy. The emphasis of English endurance, spirit, virtue, and chivalry were echoed in Shakespeare’s, \textit{King Edward III}, as Prince Edward the Black Prince gave chase to the retreating Frenchmen at Crécy.

PRINCE EDWARD. [Kneels and kisses his father’s hand.] First having done my duty as beseeched, Lords, I regret you all with hearty thanks. And now, behold, after my winter's toil, My painful voyage on the boisterous sea Of wars devouring gulsfs and steely rocks, I bring my fraught unto the wished port, My Summer's hope, my travels' sweet reward: And here, with humble duty, I present This sacrifice, this first fruit of my sword, Cropped and cut down even at the gate of death, The king of Boheme, father, whom I slew; Whose thousands had entrenched me round about, And lay as thick upon my battered crest, As on an Anvil, with their ponderous glaves: Yet marble courage still did underprop And when my weary arms, with often blows, Like the continual laboring Wood-man's Axe That is enjoined to fell a load of Oaks, Began to faulter, straight I would record My gifts you gave me, and my zealous vow, And then new courage made me fresh again, That, in despite, I carved my passage forth, And put the multitude to speedy flight. Lo, thus hath Edward's hand filled your request, and done, I hope, the duty of a Knight.\textsuperscript{42}

Although written during the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the play does a marvelous job reflecting on English pride and valor that lasted long after the Battle of Crécy. After news of the victory spread, Parliament convened in September 1346, and authorized further taxation, and victuals for Edward’s army.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, June 1344, PROME online. Accessed January 26, 2022. \url{http://www.sd-editions.com/AnaServer?PROME+260788+parlfra.anv}. Item 7, page 1. Historians such as Paul Johnson, David Green, Michael Prestwich, and Christopher Allmand argued that the earliest phases of the Hundred Years War changed social perceptions and fostered “state”-building. This inevitably altered how the English sense of “self” transitioned, albeit not entirely, from a localized community-based identity to an English national identity.

\textsuperscript{42} William Shakespeare, \textit{King Edward III} ([United States]: Neeland Media LLC. Kindle locations), 3.5.692-99.

\textsuperscript{43} The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, September 1346, PROME online, \url{http://www.sd-editions.com/AnaServer?PROME+0+start.anv+id=EDWARDIII}, 1-4.
There were, however, certain conditional clauses applied to this approval. The Parliamentary rolls clearly indicate that the commonality “willingly and freely grants to our lord the king two fifteenths, in aid of him and of the final completion of his war, graciously begun with the aid of God, and in destruction of his enemies.” Stating that the war “begun with the aid of God” emphasizes not only Parliament’s belief in the legitimacy of Edward’s hereditary claims but it also refers to the God given English victories at Sluys, in Gascony, and at Crécy. The crux for Edward, however, is that Parliament intended this payment to be for the “final completion of his war.” Parliament even furthered this by stating that it did not matter how the war ended. Regardless if the war ended in victory or a truce, the payments would cease.

The timing of parliamentary approval was perfect as Edward’s army was near complete exhaustion. He desperately needed to reinforce and refresh his army at Calais with food, fresh water, clothing, armor, weapons, horseshoes, nails, bridles, bows, bow strings, arrows, leather, and tents. Edward’s scorched earth policy made foraging around Calais rather difficult. Holinshed, referencing the English King, wrote “we haue trauelled through the countrie with great perill & danger of our people, but yet always had vittels plenty, thanks be to God therefore. But now (as the case standeth) we partlie need your helpe to be refreshed with vittels.” Although the tactic of pillaging and plundering the countryside was a great detriment to King Philippe’s army and to the Calais garrison it was not without consequence. Once Edward’s army encamped around Calais the surrounding countryside essentially became a hot zone for skirmishes. Therefore, the shipment of victuals and war necessities, authorized by Parliament in

\[44\] The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, September 1346, PROME online, [http://www.sd-editions.com/AnaServer?PROME+0+start.anv+id=EDWARDIII](http://www.sd-editions.com/AnaServer?PROME+0+start.anv+id=EDWARDIII), Item 11, 2. The Parliamentary rolls will be discussed further in chapter four.

\[45\] Ibid., 1-4

September 1346, became increasingly important and required safe shipping lanes as will be noted in chapter three. Edward’s force at Calais was around 10,000 to 12,000.

The Siege of Calais 1346-7

“My self and Derby will to Calice straight, and there be begirt that Haven town with siege…” - William Shakespeare, King Edward III, Act III, Scene V.

Calais was a fortified rectangular town situated on an inland island as can be seen in figure 2. The town had gridded streets and was surrounded by canals. The harbor, located on the northern side of town, was separated by a fortified dike, walls and a moat. The northern side also maintained a keep and bailey with a series of curtain walls, ditches, and moats that were independent of the city and harbor. The city itself was cradled by high walls and a double moat which was filled by the tides and the inlet rivers. Calais’ first line of defense was its location. The swampy marshlands, as seen in Figures 2 and 3, could only be crossed by causeways. The stagnant water coupled with unsanitary conditions spread dysentery and disease throughout Edward’s camp, weakening his forces. Additionally, the

Figure 2- Calais, 1346. Courtesy of Jonathon Sumption, The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle, vol. I (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 536.
brackish water and the changing of the tides made soil sediment wet and loose. This made any attempt at sapping and undermining the cities walls, a common siege tactic, impossible.

Despite the natural and artificial barriers, Edward was not deterred from taking the city. His army encamped on the three landward sides facing the city. His troops dug ditches on either side of their camps to squeeze the besieged and to protect their rear. Once encamped, Edward ordered various siege tactics to capture the city. He brought with him and ordered the creation of “engines and other instruments of war used in a siege to break down the walls.”47 Common siege weapons during this era were the siege tower (belfry), the mangonel (catapult), the springald, the

ram, and ladders. These weapons maintained a symbiotic relationship with defensive technological engineering.

The later Middle Ages saw rapid encastellation throughout northern Europe and an increase in the height of walls and towers as noted by historians Robert Bartlett, Jim Bradbury, Michael Jones, and Michael Hughes, among others. The increase in the height of walls was in direct response to developments in siege technology. The siege tower or belfry was a wheeled wooden tower typically covered in animal hides to prevent fire from defensive missile attacks. Some belfries were utilized as a shield for other siege engines such as mangonels to conduct a safe barrage of the defensive walls. They were also used to shield miners conducting sapping operation at the base of the defensive walls. Other belfries garrisoned troops, and as the tower contacted the defensive wall, a plank, drawbridge, or ladder was dropped in order for the inside garrison to storm the wall. The mangonel and the springald were throwing machines that typically used stone or wooden bolts as their primary missiles. They could either be stationary or wheeled for easier movement. The goal of both machines was not necessarily to make direct contact (although they often did) with the wall but rather shoot over it in order to cause damage to the soft belly of the city. These throwing machines not only brought about a shock factor, as large heavy stones, arrows, and other debris, rained down onto the local population and garrison, but they also destroyed support structures and housing. Rams were wheeled battery machines that made direct contact with the defensive wall in order to break through the stone exterior. There is no evidence that Edward ordered the creation of rams at Calais, but they were commonly used in siege warfare. Lastly, the oldest and most fiscally cost-effective way of

---

storming walls was through the use of ladders.\textsuperscript{49} As the walls got higher, so did the ladders, making them cumbersome but effective to operate during a siege. These were the most vulnerable siege engines as they could be broken, burned, and pushed off the wall. The men climbing these ladders would be unshielded and harassed by the defenders. The French garrison was privy to Edward’s siege construction and acted quickly to prevent any major damage to the defenses.

The fear of vulnerability prompted the French garrison to fill “hurdles and sacks of straw” and place them along the walls and on top of buildings “to lessen the force of the stones hurled by the catapults.”\textsuperscript{50} This may have softened the blow from stone throwers but the real impediment to the English siege machines was the terrain. The soft ground was unable to withstand the weight of the heavier siege engines and the loose sediment made wheeling any instrument of war towards the walls improbable. Additionally, the changing of the tides played an unconscious role in the defense of the town and according to Geoffrey le Baker “even if the walls, were knocked down, there were still the deep ditches, which flooded every day with sea water and could easily be defended.”\textsuperscript{51} These issues prompted Edward to launch a series of ground assaults at the walls each resulting in failure. The city’s defenses presented a problem to the English forces and Edward feared that continued direct assaults on the walls would be folly “knowing he might well lose more than he gained.”\textsuperscript{52} The garrison was able to hold back any assault by firing down through machicolations while taking cover behind the crenelations along the wall. The crenelations prevented the return fire of English archers from hitting troops stationed along the walls and parapets. In order to remedy the situation, Edward decided to wait

\textsuperscript{49} Jim Bradbury, \textit{The Medieval Siege} (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2004), 241-76.
\textsuperscript{50} Preest and Barber, \textit{The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker}, 79.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{52} Bryant, \textit{The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360}, 184
out the garrison, knowing that time and famine would be his greatest strength during this siege.\textsuperscript{53}

However, this was not a passive action. Edward continued to order his army to conduct strengthening actions to compound the effects of time on the defenders. He also ordered his naval forces to blockade the entrance to the harbor so that “no succor could come to the citizens by sea or by land.”\textsuperscript{54}

In order to wait out the defenders, the Plantagenet King erected further fortifications to protect his army. He ordered earthworks to be raised and palisade walls to be erected creating a double layer of walls. The circumvallation and contravallation of his encampment provided his forces a reprieve from any sally the besieged might conduct and mitigated any direct attack from the main French army. Additionally, Edward ordered the construction of a wooden castle manned with cannon, 40 men-at-arms and 200 archers to seal off the harbor:

The King of England had caused a strong castell to be made betweene the towne of Calis and the sea, to close up that passage, and had placed therin three score men of armies, and two hundred archers which kept the hauen in such sort that nothing could come in nor out. Also considering that his enimies could come neither to succour the towne, not to annoie his host, except either by the downes [dunes] alongst the sea side, or else aboue by the high waie, he caused all his nauie to drawe alongst by the coast of the downes, to stop up that the Frenchmen should not approch that waie. Also the erle of Derbie being come thither out of Guien, was appointed to kéepe Nieulay bridge, with a great number of armes and archers, so that the Frenchmen could not approch anie waie, unlesse they would haue come through the marishes, which to doo was not possible.\textsuperscript{55}

As time progressed, his engineering projects evolved into a sprawling bastide lined with streets, butcher shops, smithies and markets which were “dailie kept of vittels, & all other necessarie things everie tuesdaie and saturdaie, so that a man might haue bought what he would of things


\textsuperscript{54} Martin, \textit{Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396}, 65. Naval strategy will be discussed in Chapter 3 as stated earlier.

\textsuperscript{55} Holinshed, \textit{Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland}, 647. A similar mention is made in Bryant, \textit{The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel}, 1290 – 1360, 198.
brought.” His carpenters and laborers also built mansions, houses, lodges, hovels, stables, and public buildings for the long duration of the siege. Edward named this new town Villeneuve-la-Hardie.

A letter written by W. Northborough, the King’s confessor, described this new town:

the English campe was furnished with sufficient prouision of meat, drinke, apparel, munition, and all other things necessarie: and oftentimes also the soldiers made roads and forrais into the borders of France nect adioining, as towards Guines, and saint Omer, ye euen to the gates of that towne, and sometime to Bullogne.

Edward not only created a bastide to house his forces but also a network of roads to enhance troop movements for inter and intratheater movement. As mentioned in the quote above, Edward’s navy was able to maintain a routine shipping schedule that supplied the markets at Calais. What this demonstrates is that his land forces were able to construct a port for naval supply operations while besieging Calais. It also demonstrates that English maritime forces controlled direct lines of communication from Dover and Portsmouth into Calais. Despite these incredible developments within his bastide, his force still continued to forage for food. It was during these foraging raids that the English were most vulnerable. Froissart claimed that the French king “had set men of war in every fortress in those marches, in the county of Guines, of Artois, of Boulogne, and about Calais.” Additionally, “a great number of Genoways, Normans and other on the sea, so that when any of the Englishmen would go a-foraging… there was skirmishing about the gates and dikes of the town.”

---

56 Ibid, 641. This is also seen in The Chronicles of Froissart, 106.
57 Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 184; Holinshed, Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, 647.
58 Holinshed, Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, 642.
59 Intertheater movements are movements from one geographic command to another. In this example, Flemish forces utilizing the roads that Edward’s forces built would be conducting an intertheater movement to Calais. In this instance, both the commander of Flemish forces and King Edward would represent two geographical commands. Intratheater movements are movements within a single geographical command. This would be used to describe Edward’s reinforcements landing in ports near Calais and moving across the newly built roads to get into Calais.
60 The Chronicles of Froissart, 111. https://ehistory.osu.edu/books/froissart/0110.
61 Ibid., Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 184.
challenge to the foraging expeditions, Edward maintained his original strategic plan despite having to respond to outside circumstances.

King Philippe long held friendly relationships with both Ireland and Scotland, longtime enemies of the English crown. When Edward’s forces besieged Calais, Philippe beseeched the Scots to invade England from the north stating that “the whole military strength of England was gathered at Calais, and that he should not fear to ride upon the north country.”

King Philippe sent Genoese mercenaries to assist the Scots in the raid. Philippe hoped that the English would break off the siege and return to England to handle the threat. The Scots did invade northern England, but Edward never sent assistance. His forces back home were enough to decisively beat back the invaders at Neville’s Cross in Durham. When King Philippe’s gamble failed, the French monarch was forced to reconsider his options. According to the chronicle of St. Omer:

the King of France was much distressed at heart, and didn’t know what to do: for some said that he should go into Flanders against the Flemings, and that the King of England would break off the siege of Calais in order to rescue the Flemings; others told him he should go straight to do battle with the English, for if he could defeat them, he would win the whole war. Then some of his barons came to him and told him and said they were certain that he should boldly go towards the King of England, for they were positive that the Flemings would not send anyone from their country. And based on this assurance – which was not correct – the King went to Hesdin and there awaited his men, who joined him from all sides.

On the advice of his council, and in hopes that Edward would ride out and meet him, Philippe camped at Hesdin, fifty miles south of Calais. However, Edward refused to take the bait and stood firmly around Calais. This did not mean however, that his lieutenants stood idly by.

63 Ibid., 67-75; Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 185; The Chronicles of Froissart, 108-9; Holinshed, Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, 644.
64 St. Omer Chronicle, fos. 275-276v as seen in the sources section of Clifford J. Rogers, ed., The Wars of Edward III: Sources and Interpretations, item 83 (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2010), 140.
It was during these movements of the French army to lure the English from Calais into pitched battle that Edward’s lieutenants were busy conducting raiding expeditions into France. One such raid involved the Earl of Warwick, Thomas de Beauchamp. Beauchamp’s forces rode out to a fair at Thérouanne, just southeast of Calais, and having met up with Flemish forces, proceeded to slaughter the enemy. Knighton estimated the Thérouanne guard to be around 10,000 men. The guarding force was led by the Bishop of Thérouanne who was wounded at the conclusion of the engagement. Beauchamp and his troops proceeded to sack the town and its market “carrying its treasure in carts and on packhorse to the king at Calais.”65 Additionally, in late 1346, Henry of Grosmont, the Earl of Lancaster, took “St. John-the-Evangelist in Saintonge, known to the people there as Saint-Jean-d’Angély, and the town of Tonnay-Charente” as well as Poitiers. “There were in the city more than 1,000 men-at-arms” and “great number of infantry” which the “English mingled with… [and] returned through the gates with them.”66 This tactic proved genius as the saboteurs sneakily opened the gates which allowed the main army to slaughter and plunder the city.67

Although Edward maintained a resolute constitution towards this siege, the winter months proved to be a headache for the monarch. During the winter months of the siege, Edward’s forces most likely fell below 10,000 men. Desertion and disease ran rampant throughout his camp. When Edward’s forces were not conducting assaults on Calais or conducting violent plundering actions into the countryside his troops endured the damp and rain in the marsh. With the end of the campaigning season came infectious boredom. Many men, in

65 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 65. A guarding force numbering 10,000 men for a fair seems to be quite high but there is insufficient evidence to dispute the chronicler’s claim.
66 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 75.
67 Ibid. For an exact account of all the raids look to Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 185-92, 194-7; Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 13337-1396, 81.
particular his archer corps, deserted and sailed back to England prompting Edward to issue a series of punitive decrees. In November of 1346, Edward informed his clerks that because “men at arms, armed men and archers withdrew in a great number from the king’s army at Caleis,” the sheriffs of England were to “arrest all such men, not having letters of licence, and to keep them safely until further order.”

Some of Edward’s troops seized valuable prisoners and smuggled them back, on victualling ships, to England for ransoms. One such group of deserting archers took a prisoner of war, said to be the Archdeacon of Paris, and “sold that prisoner to the abbot” thus the king ordered the said sheriff to arrest the archers and “take all their goods and chattels.”

Desertion was not the only issue with which Edward was concerned. Prior to his landing at La-Hogue and during the siege of Calais, Edward maintained a constant fear of King Philippe’s espionage efforts. One such writ directed to Edward’s lieges back home stated that spies were amongst them:

Whereas it has been certainly testified before the king and council at Caleys that enemies of the king and his realm with the assent and sending of Philippe de Valesio, his adversary, as well of others, accomplices of the said Philippe, have entered England without licence and contrary to the proclamation made in that behalf and spy out his secrets of his land and council in England and daily transmit the same to his said adversary and his accomplices…

Edward feared that French spies in England would relay back to King Philippe the conditions of English morale, shipping schedules, monetary concerns, and organizational issues. The French maintained a formidable network of espionage activities. French spies monitored the seacoast

---

68 CCR, 1346-9, 172.
69 Ibid. Similar mention is also made in CPR, 1345-8, 239. Desertion can also be seen in COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxxvii b, and CPR, 1345-8, 187.
ports alarming the French crown when Edward or his lieutenants were on the move.\textsuperscript{71} Even prior to the siege of Calais, French spies in Flanders warned the French crown and the garrison at Calais that Edward III might attempt to seize the port city. Although the French crown did not take these reports seriously, the French garrison at Calais certainly did, as its commander Jean de Vienne began shoring up supplies.

Edward’s last significant annoyance during the winter months came via the sea. Despite the English erecting and manning a castle on the harbor and ordering a naval blockade, Philippe was able to refresh the garrison at Calais with enough fresh troops and victuals to last until spring.\textsuperscript{72} Prior to this resupply operation, Edward allowed the French garrison to release 500 townspeople as a gesture of good will. Jean le Bel wrote that “the noble king, seeing these poor folk cast out of their city, summoned them all before him in his great hall and had them all provided with plentiful food and drink. When they’d eaten and drunk their fill he gave them leave to pass through his army…”\textsuperscript{73} Edward’s move proved to be incredibly damaging to English efforts, as not only was Calais less burdened by the reduced number of mouths to feed but it was also provisioned shortly after these townspeople were sent beyond the English camp.

These actions prompted Edward to forego winter garrisoning and to launch a series of assaults between December 1346 and February 1347. In one such instance he ordered fifty fishing vessels to move men with “25- and 40-foot ladders” to take the walls.\textsuperscript{74} This ultimately failed as was the case with his siege engines and resulted in an unnecessary number of casualties.

\textsuperscript{71} Sumption, \textit{The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle}, 503, 535.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 557.
\textsuperscript{73} Bryant, \textit{The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360}, 184; Holinshed also refers to this moment in, \textit{Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland}, 642-3; \textit{The Chronicles of Froissart}, 107.
\textsuperscript{74} Sumption, \textit{The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle}, 558.
One interesting casualty of these skirmishes was an archer named John Tony. This lowly English subject was maimed so severely during these assaults that the king granted him a pension of 2d. for his service to the crown.\textsuperscript{75} In addition to these failed assaults, disease and sickness continued to attack both the besieged and the besiegers. Spring and summer, however, proved to be a more fruitful time for the English king.\textsuperscript{76}

By the end of spring, the English blockade of the harbor was successful, and the people of Calais began to starve. King Philippe’s son, Jean de France, with his army of 800 men-at-arms and 1,600 archers attempted to lure English forces into a fight but when Edward refused to take the bait Jean de France was forced to retreat as noted by Knighton. “Jean de France came close to the English army on several occasions sometimes “two and sometimes three leagues off, but they lacked the supplies to stay long.” The lack of supplies was the direct result of Edward’s scorched Earth policy. Knighton points out that “the countryside round about had been wasted by the English.”\textsuperscript{77} The countryside was no longer a friend to French war efforts but rather a nuisance. The lack of local vegetation and fauna proved to be damaging for both warring men and beasts.

In early summer, King Philippe moved his main army from Hesdin north to the heights of Sangatte, just east of Calais along the seashore. Edward’s scouts informed him of these troop movements, and he determined that there were only two ways in which Philippe could get to him and the city of Calais, either over the dunes along the seashore or by cutting inland over ground. However, the ground was littered by bogs and marshes and only the Bridge of Nieulay overcame these obstacles. Therefore, Edward ordered his ships to anchor facing the dunes. In this manner,

\textsuperscript{75} CPR, 1345-8, 353, Wages earned, and John Tony will also be discussed in Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{76} Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 184.
\textsuperscript{77} Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 79, 81.
the beach was covered by siege engines, such as springalds, catapults, and ballistae along with archer fire from the ships. Philippe’s movements also prompted Edward’s lieutenants to return from their plundering expeditions along the French frontier. Henry of Lancaster made an expedition from the Siege of Calais for ten leagues into France accompanied by 800 men-at-arms and 20,000 archers. However, once he learned that the King of France was moving towards Calais, he marched his army back to Edward. Despite withdrawing, his march was not particularly peaceful as noted by Knighton:

He came with haste to the king at Calais, but he raided the country all around, and brought with him 2,060 beef and cows, and more than 5,000 sheep, which were a great relief to the army. And the earl of Lancaster had ridden for no more than a night and a day when he heard that King Philippepe had come towards Calais with 2,060 men-at-arms and crossbowmen beyond number, and that he had taken up a position between Calais and Wissant on the sea-shore ready for battle.

This devastating raid not only continued to demoralize French peasantry and wartime efforts, but it also aided Edward’s army with quick victualling from local French stores in the surrounding towns.

Once his lieutenants linked up with him at Calais, Edward sent Henry of Lancaster to camp beside the bridge at Nieulay with a large contingent of men-at-arms and archers. Henry placed a number of his troops in a tower that guarded the road to the Nieulay bridge. This tower, however, was quickly taken by the French and all the men therewithin were killed. From this vantage point, King Philippe’s marshals, the Lord of Beaujeu and the Lord of Saint-Venant, looked for the best avenue of approach. After they scouted all the possible paths, they returned to the king and “told him bluntly that there was no way of approaching the English unless he

78 Ibid., 81-83.
79 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 81-83.
wanted to suffer greater losses than they’d had at Crécy.”

The defensive posturing by the English limited Philippe’s strategic options. In order for Philippe to relieve Calais, his forces had to cross over the marshes. However, the loose and soggy ground prevented any type of cavalry involvement thereby limiting Philippe’s force potential. King Philippe’s situation became even more precarious when Edward enlisted the help of some 40,000 Flemish warriors to assist with the upcoming battle. Once the French position became desperate Philippe attempted negotiations.

King Philippe sent high-ranking emissaries to the King of England requesting him to decamp and to meet in open battle and may “God grant victory to one or the other.” This angered the English King who reminded the emissaries that Philippe was wrongfully withholding his inheritance and that he and England have “incurred great expense! And I believe it will soon have earned me lordship of the fine city of Calais!”

Edward wanted Calais first and foremost, but he did not want to shy away from direct battle. Instead, Edward cleverly told the emissaries that if King Philippe wanted battle that he would have to come to him and “if he’s [King Philippe] finding one route difficult he’ll have to take another.” Edward’s retort infers a few things. First, Edward reminded the French of his God given inheritance. Secondly, it is clearly evident that Edward wanted Calais more than an open battle. Lastly, in order to not appear cowardly, a direct afront to a very chivalrous society, he offered battle with the French King, but only on his terms. Edward understood that his best chance of winning the battle was from his

---

80 Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 199; Holinshed, Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, 647.
82 Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 199.
83 Ibid., 199-200.
84 Ibid.
encamped position and if Philippe refused to do battle with him and rescue his starving citizens, then the French monarch would appear cowardly.

The news travelled back to King Philippe who once again looked for a solution to this problem. Philippe turned to the church to assist with this matter. Several cardinals went to the English camp to treat for peace. The French offered Edward “Gascony and Ponthieu, and a marriage for his son John, or alternatively they proposed to surrender Calais to him for him to keep if the citizens were guaranteed life and limb.”85 This was an interesting proposition as the town of Ponthieu was the ancestral home of Edward III. It was the town where his grandfather, the last Capetian king, was born. This offer, however, was rescinded because Philippe only offered these lands back to the King of England on the basis of it being a fiefdom to France. Edward was not interested in performing homage to the King of France. Additionally, the English camp felt that Calais was as good as theirs. According to historian Jonathan Sumption, the rewards offered by the French crown were too insignificant for the amount of planning and work that went into this campaign and siege.86

Therefore, in late July 1347, a truce was made for four days, so that a delegation from each side could discuss an alternative to the current situation. The French delegation suggested that a battle of champions should determine the fate of the people of Calais and that the French should choose the location of the said battle. However, the Earl of Lancaster retorted that “the place ought to be assigned by Edward, king of England and France, and the natural and true inheritor of both, for Philippe de Valois had no right to either.”87 In an effort to communicate with the French army, the garrison at Calais lit a fire each night from a high tower indicating

---

86 Sumption, *The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle*, 580.
their current supplies. With each subsequent night the signaling fire grew smaller and smaller.

Neither delegation was able to concede to the other. So, on August 1, 1347, King Edward offered to fill in all the ditches and remove all obstacles around the siege lines at his own costs in order to do battle. However, during the night of August 3rd, the French army “packed everything that they could carry with them and withdrew from their camp, and put their tents and a great quantity of supplies to fire and flames, taking flight.” Thus, on the morning of August 4, 1347, the garrison and people of Calais offered their surrender to the English crown ending a siege that lasted 335 days.

At first, King Edward rejected the surrender of the town and wished to see its inhabitants suffer even further, however, Sir Walter Mauny, one of the King’s trusted lieutenants, convinced the king to accept the plea.

“I think that’s a mistake, sire,” said Sir Walter Mauny. “It wouldn’t bode well if you were to send us to one of your strongholds! By holy Mary, we wouldn’t be so willing to go if you condemn these people to death as you say, for we’d suffer the same fate in a similar position, even though we were doing our duty.”

On his advice, Edward finally accepted the surrender of Calais and allowed the people of the city to leave freely, although they had to forfeit their possessions and property. The king then asked that six of the most prominent men of the town and garrison come to him. Here, the six ‘Burghers of Calais’ were received by Edward with nooses around their necks and holding their swords in reverse. Edward wanted to execute these great men as a warning to others but Sir

---

88 Ibid.; St. Omer Chronicle, fos. 275-276v as seen in the sources section of Clifford J. Rogers, ed., The Wars of Edward III: Sources and Interpretations, item 83, 141-3; Preest and Barber, The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker, 79-80. Jean le Bel, however, has a different account on the retreat of French forces. On page 200 of his chronicle, he wrote, “the English found many abandoned tents and won a load of bread and wine and victuals brought there by tavern-keepers who’d promptly fled at the sight of the English: they plundered and destroyed the whole encampment.” See, Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 200.


90 Bryant, The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360, 200-1.
Walter Mauny’s plea still rang true to the King, and he found himself accepting their surrender as well. The keys to the city were presented to the English King, and he decreed that none of the original inhabitants of the city were allowed to ever set foot in Calais again. Instead, he wished to repopulate the town with pure Englishmen. The timing of the surrender boded well with the King of England as the late summer of 1347 was unusually hot and caused a significant number of English casualties to die from heat exhaustion and dehydration. The troops were not the only ones who were affected either, as both animals and crops suffered under the heat, leading to a dearth of grain in England during the month of August.91

The march to and capture of Calais was only possible by the resolute efforts of the English people and the decisive leadership of Edward III. Edward’s ability to maximize force generation and output was pivotal in the destruction of the French countryside and the capture of Calais. He mobilized a fair portion of his economy, labor, and industry into the war effort. Taxation and the regulation of food stores also demonstrated an all-out attempt to win the war in France. Not only were the English people being mobilized for the war effort, but the entire English biome was utilized, whether consciously or not, for the war. Agricultural and natural resource allocation was under the direct control of English sheriffs which monitored forestry, mining, fishing, and farming efforts.92

Edward also deftly demonstrated his ability to work with Parliament in order to secure these resources for his wartime efforts. From 1337 until 1346, Edward delicately balanced a

91 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 85, 87; The Chronicles of Froissart, 118. There is a discrepancy on the account of the surrender. Jean Froissart, Jean le Bel and Holinshed remarked that Queen Isabella was able to reduce King Edward to compassion for the people of Calais. This account may be attributed to Froissart and Jean le Bel’s desire to demonstrate acts of chivalry based on love. However, having studied King Edward, one quality of his always stood out: He was a pragmatic leader that often listened to the advice of his lieutenants. Therefore, it is more likely that Sir Walter Mauny’s warning had a greater effect. Preest and Barber, The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker, 80; Holinshed, Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, 648; St. Omer Chronicle, fos. 276v-277 as seen in the sources section of Clifford J. Rogers, ed., The Wars of Edward III, item 85, 143-142.
92 The role of support functions will be examined in greater detail in chapter four.
waning English spirit with his own political ambitions. Without the victory at Crécy in 1346, Calais would have been an even more difficult feat, and, without Calais, the English would have had nothing to show after nine years of war. It was the perfect port for future operations and would be held in English hands until 1558, long after the Hundred Years War concluded. Historians like Craig Lambert believed that the capture of Calais allowed England to “keep pace with European advances in warfare” as it was a conduit for intellectual reform to travel to and from the European continent and England.⁹³ It was through Edward III’s leadership that England was able to mobilize, deploy, and operate with, the largest English landing force in the fourteenth century in order to devastate France and capture the port city of Calais. This force not only terrorized the countryside and the garrison at Calais but also wreaked havoc on the local ecosystems of Normandy and France. Edward’s siege of Calais demonstrates his ability to respond to and adapt from outside circumstances. His forces were often required to tactically adapt to changing circumstances, but his strategic goal never changed. This execution of warfare was only possible through the assistance of the Navy and support systems back in England.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH SEA POWER 1346-7

‘Free Supplies and open retreat are two essentials to the safety of an army or a fleet’

– Alfred Thayer Mahan, “Mahan on Naval Warfare,” 76.

The English land campaign of 1346 in Northern France was aided by the Crown’s ability to organize and utilize its experienced maritime forces. Despite the overwhelming success of these forces at the naval Battle of Sluys in 1340, the French navy was rebuilt, and, in its aftermath, reinforced by their allies. This reconstituted fleet harassed English shipping, terrorized English coastal towns, and resupplied besieged cities. In order for Edward III to successfully lay siege to Calais, his navy needed to secure the harbor on the northern side of the city and enforce a total blockade. Despite the success of his land-based forces, the English Royal Navy and its impressed ships struggled to effectively blockade the city. Therefore, Edward III continued to allocate resources to naval endeavors. This chapter will demonstrate that Edward’s naval forces were tasked with three prominent roles in order to capture Calais. These three roles in conjunction with King Edward’s ability to maximize force output and adapt tactical responses to enemy pressures demonstrated a unique strength of the English navy which inevitably led to an English victory.

The first role of the fleet was concerned with logistics. Naval forces, impressed or otherwise, were required to maintain open shipping lanes for both the transportation of reinforcements and victuals during the campaign and siege, while also providing a safe conduit of retreat for English forces. The second role of the fleet was to blockade the harbor of Calais in an attempt to prevent supplies from entering the besieged city. Additionally, this blockading
force was required to engage, fight, and capture enemy naval forces. In the words of Peter Hoskins, “the success of the whole operation would depend ultimately upon ensuring an effective blockade.”¹ The third role of the fleet was to act as an auxiliary fighting force for ground-based operations. The primary task of which was to act as a covering force against enemy movements occurring along the seashore.

All three of these tasks, according to maritime historian Craig Lambert, were only possible due to the “sophistication of English maritime logistics.”² Additionally, Lambert argues that without an economically efficient government the task of invading France for several decades with thousands of troops would have been unfathomable. Although the exact number of sailors and ships involved in the siege cannot be known exactly, historians have a good estimate of these details. In the eighteenth century, George Wrottesley, whose Crecy and Calais, is a translation of various rolls such as the French Rolls and Memoranda Rolls, was able to present an estimate which holds up fairly well to historians’ calculations today. Wrottesley’s numbers were derived from pay records and writs concerning lost sources, in particular, one of the King’s Wardrobe Books. Although this evidence has never been recovered, Wrottesley estimated that there were 700 English ships manned by 8,151 mariners and 38 allied ships manned by 1,204 mariners.³ This naval force was incredibly large even by today’s standards. However, a force of this magnitude was necessary for Edward to take Calais.

¹ Peter Hoskins, Siege Warfare During The Hundred Years War: Once More Unto The Breach (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military Publishing, 2018), 55.
³ George Wrottesley, Crecy and Calais from the Public Records (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), 204, https://archive.org/details/CrecyAndCalais. The 38 allied ships came from: Bayonne, Spain, Ireland, Flanders and Gelderland. These numbers have been validated by historians such as Sumption, Rogers, and, more recently, Lambert.
Naval Aggregation and Logistics

The renowned naval theorist, Alfred Thayer Mahan, described the sea as “a great highway.” Although he wrote during the late nineteenth century describing naval warfare during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, this adage can easily be applied to the Middle Ages. Edward utilized the channel as “a great highway” to conduct both trade and warfare. During the war, some English coastal towns were transformed into large logistics depots. In particular, the ports of Southampton, Portsmouth, Dover, Sandwich, London, Orwell, Ipswich, Yarmouth, and Boston all held valuable roles in maintaining the English war effort. The English fleet was predominately aggregated at Portsmouth for troop transportation to the European continent in June 1346 but began assembling as early as 1345. Additionally, although troop transportation efforts were ordered for the early summer of 1346, the army began mobilizing early in the spring of 1346. Edward ordered that all able-bodied men ages 16-60, all men-at-arms, archers, and hobelers, were to proceed to Portsmouth with all speed in order to assist in the campaign.

It was also at this time that Edward ordered his admirals to arrest all ships, particularly in Bayonne (Gascony) found in the ports or on the sea for the King’s service to France. All ships, ship masters, and mariners who refused the call to arms were to be arrested and held in prison. The King also ordered the seizure of ships carrying victuals to other ports across the channel for the use of his military. Both the arrested and impressed ships and their victuals were deemed a war time necessity and were not only utilized to aid his landing forces but also ensured sufficient payments were accrued for the expedition. This tactic of impressing all non-military ships for

---

5 COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxvi b.
6 CPR, 1345-8, 109.
7 CPR, 1345-8, 109; CCR, 1346-9, 44-45; COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxix, cxvi b.
military service has created a debate amongst historians about the efficacy of this policy. Most notably, a current assessment done by the scholar Graham Cushway, stated that this policy “ensured that success could never be sustained.”\(^8\) However, in order for Edward to conduct the largest English invasion of France until the modern era, impressment was the only feasible options. Professional standing armies and navies were severely limited at this time.\(^9\) Therefore, conscription and impressment were the most feasible option. Impressed ships were often modified to help transport Edward’s forces and supplies. In order to transport significant numbers of horses across the channels, many ships were outfitted with wide gangplanks for access to the ship and stalls within the cargo hold to house the animals.\(^10\) Reoutfitting non-military ships for wartime use was both a costly and timely endeavor but entirely necessary for the execution of military maneuvers.

The impressment of non-combatant ships into military service was not particularly popular with some of the county’s merchants however, in particular those counties which held some of the aforementioned logistics depots. Many merchants were unable to make profits or conduct business while their ships were martialed into the navy. Not only did the lack of business hurt these merchants but the impressment of ships into the King’s service greatly increased the risk of ship loss and destruction. Some ships were destroyed at sea due to stormy weather. Others were lost in naval engagements with both the enemy and pirates. Most interestingly, however, some ships were scuttled under King Edward’s orders. Thus, some merchants never recovered their ships and although the King tried to compensate them, he was

---

\(^8\) Graham Cushway, *Edward III and the War at Sea*, 217-8.
\(^9\) The concept of the professional army and navy is hotly debated. I consider knights and archers to be a professional fighting force. Not only were these men paid for their services, but they trained extensively. Knights were trained from their youth on in riding and fighting. Archers, in particular, longbowmen, also trained with their incredibly cumbersome bows. As for the navy, the Royal Navy of England (the King’s ships) is generally agreed upon as being a professionalized force, albeit a small one.

unable to do so in every case. Parliament was not going to approve the funding, construction, and maintenance of a large standing English navy at this time. However, they did understand King Edward’s wartime intentions and that it was his desire “to cross the sea with as much power as possible” that made impressment vital.

Once this powerful force was assembled and embarked, it tried to depart for France, but poor weather prevented its sailing. The King’s forces, desiring favorable winds for a fast voyage, waited nearly a month. The chronicler, Geoffrey le Baker, remarked that “at long last t… they began to make sail with a thousand ships, pinnaces and small boats. Then the king’s council met in secret. For the ships’ captains still did not know to where to steer their ships when they left harbour.” As noted in the previous chapter, Edward was concerned with enemy espionage. Therefore, he kept his location of disembarkation a secret until all of his ships were well offshore where he then relayed a message telling the helmsmen to direct their ships to the harbor of Saint-Vaast-La-Hogue.

The choice of this harbor was unique in that it allowed for safe entry into Normandy. France was well aware that Edward was sending a large landing force to the continent, but they did not know where it would strike. The French King assumed that Edward was going to land in Gascony and help his besieged forces there. According to Froissart, Godfrey d’Harcourt advised the king on expeditionary routes into France, telling the King to “not to go into Gascoyne, but rather to set aland in Normand… [as] Normandy is one of the plenteous countries

---

12 CCR, 1346-9, 44-45. CCR, 1346-9, 44-45; CPR, 1345-8, 109. COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxix, cxvi b
14 Ibid.
of the world.”16 English forces in Gascony were holding their own against the main French army led by King Philippe’s son, Philip, Duke of Orléans, so Edward must not have felt it was necessary to direct his efforts to Gascony. Despite his lack of military involvement, several writs within the Calendar of the Patent Rolls and the Fine Rolls ordered supplies and victuals to be sent directly to Edward’s lieges in Gascony. Additionally, Sir Hugh Hastings who was in Flanders acquired Flemish support and launched various skirmishes into Northeastern France. Because of this two-pronged English attack, French forces were dispersed accordingly. Therefore, Edward directed his landing to Saint-Vaast-La-Hogue in Northern France, in order to create a three-pronged attack on Philippe VI’s kingdom.17

Therefore, upon reaching La Hogue, Edward’s forces disembarked. Froissart remarked, “so that day and night the king lodged on the sands, and in the meantime discharged the ships of their horses and other baggage’s.”18 Once organized, Edward ordered the formation of three battle lines, as was previously mentioned in chapter two. Edward then appointed the Earl of Huntingdon to “keep the fleet of ships with a hundred men of arms and four hundred archers.”19 He then directed the navy to sail up northeasterly coast. As Edward and his army made a series of marches overland, the Royal Navy harassed the coastline of France and fought and seized foreign ships as they travelled along the coast northeasterly towards Calais.20 In a letter from King Edward to the Knight Thomas Lucy, the English monarch stated that “our fleet, which had remained nearby, burnt and destroyed the whole coast of the sea from barfleur to the canal at

---

16 The Chronicles of Froissart, 94.
18 The Chronicles of Froissart, 94.
19 The Chronicles of Froissart, 94.
20 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 55.
Colleville near Caen." He also claimed that his navy destroyed nearly 100 or more enemy vessels. Some chroniclers, as noted in chapter two, said that his naval forces were predominately seizing rather than burning ships along the coast. Both instances taking places were most likely true. Edward’s total devastation of the enemy’s naval power is rather unique. The late Middle Ages was an era of resource management for warfare. Ships are expensive and time consuming to construct, especially during war. More often than not, commanders simply aggregated enemy vessels within their own fleet to reduce resource drain. However, Edward’s navy was destroying most of the ships they encountered.

There is sufficient debate amongst historians as to when or if Calais was the primary goal of Edward’s march. Jonathan Sumption has argued that seizing Calais was simply a measure to reinvigorate English martial spirit. Clifford Rogers likened the siege to a consolation prize for Edward as he was unable to draw King Philippe VI into a direct battle. However, Jean Froissart claimed that taking Calais was Edward’s sole intention as he recorded that Godfrey d’Harcourt told the English monarch that if he was able to take Calais he would “wear the keys to the kingdom of France at belt.” The taking of Calais was pivotal for future English military endeavors. Despite historians’ misgivings about importance of Calais the navy pursued its advanced to the French city and upon reaching the port they began blockading the harbor.

22 References to the importance of Calais prior to the siege can be seen in: Rose, The Medieval Sea; 97, 113; Sumption, The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle, 267-8. Additionally, pirates sailing from Calais in the summer of 1345 wreaked havoc along English coastal towns as seen in CCR, 1346-9, 579.
23 Sumption, The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle, 538, 585.
As the navy sailed up the coast, Edward regularly used his ships as a means of housing prisoners of war. In one such instance, Froissart claimed that after King Edward sacked Barfleur, he made “all the men of the town … go into the ships, because they would not suffer them to be behind them for fear of rebelling again.”27 This utilization of his naval forces is interesting because Edward was using his ships as mobile prisons. By doing this, Edward demonstrated strategic forethought. He was effectively cutting off any future resistance from the populations of captured cities and thus securing his lines of communication. Edward could then use his navy to assist with the refreshment of his army.

By the time the English army reached the city of Calais, it was in desperate need of resupply. Edward ordered his sheriffs back home to gather and send victuals overseas to his forces outside Calais. Additionally, he requested reinforcements to replace some of his exhausted troops. These orders were given during the Autumn of 1346. One such writ to the sheriffs asked for “the dispatch of men-at-arms (homines ad arma), armed men (armati), archers, and others to Sandwich by Sunday the 15th [of] October to assist in the siege of Calais. Chargers (grossi equi) are to be left behind, as the force would be landed close to Calais.”28 The exclusion of chargers, rather, war horses, is significant because it demonstrates a few tactical concerns for Edward. First, Edward must not have controlled the harbor of Calais in its entirety. Since there was no suitable landing spot, he could not yet bring his larger ships up to the shore for offloading. Therefore, reinforcements must have been brought from the primary ships to the seashore by small sea crafts, most likely fishing vessels, as he was requisitioning these crafts since the siege

27 The Chronicles of Froissart, 95.
28 COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, cxxvii
began.\textsuperscript{29} Secondly, because it was not feasible to transport horses via fishing vessels, additional horses must not have been deemed necessary for Edward’s tactical plan. Lastly, these horses required mass quantities of feed to stay healthy and were most likely regarded as not being worth the cost.\textsuperscript{30} If one were to accept Rogers’ analysis that Edward was predominately seeking a decisive battle against King Philippe and that the siege was just a ploy to draw him out, it seems hard pressed to think that Edward would not have wanted additional heavy cavalry for a “decisive” battle.\textsuperscript{31}

Edward mostly victualed his army through English contracts by sea and through foraging expeditions into the countryside of France. However, he also brought in supplies by seizing foreign ships and impressing domestic cargo runners and unloading them in France before they were repurposed in England for military use. In order for such an operation to have been conducted effectively, Edward must have left small naval and army garrisons in each of the port cities that he sacked on his way to Calais. Although Edward predominately brought troops and supplies into France, he also sent troops, prisoners, and plunder back to England, creating a cyclical network of exchange.\textsuperscript{32} This exchange or “ferry service”, as described by Craig Lambert, continued for the duration of the siege but was mostly successful in bringing fresh troops

\textsuperscript{29} This can be seen in Sumption, \textit{The Hundred Years War I: Trial by Battle}, 558. Additionally, requisitioning can be seen in CFR, 1346-9, 119. This is a regular tactic of King Edward as he made a similar decree early in 1346 as seen in CFR, 1337-47, Vol. V, 451-2.

\textsuperscript{30} The amount of feed required by this expedition can be seen in chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{31} I genuinely dislike the concept of a decisive battle but feel it necessary to include this type of vocabulary as it has become integral part of the military historical tradition. This concept is a fabrication of modern historians and military theorists. There are very few true decisive battles in history despite the plethora of wars that have occurred. The entire concept can be traced back to Henri Jomini, a French General whom observed the Napoleonic War. His antagonists, in military theory speaking terms, Carl Von Clausewitz argued that battles of attrition predominately decided the outcomes of wars. For additional research into these theoretical frameworks, consult Antoine-Henri Jomini, \textit{The Art of War}, ed. Thomas E. Griess and Jay Luvaas (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1971) and Carl Von Clausewitz, \textit{On War}, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Everyman’s Library, 1993).

regularly during the summer of 1347. To ease the qualms of those involved in these overseas movements, he ordered the protection of “each member of the army on the sea and during the crossing, and the merchants who will carry victuals.”

It is true that Edward’s maritime forces struggled to take control of the Calais harbor. He was constantly annoyed by his enemy’s ability to send fresh victuals and troops into Calais for the first six months of the siege. Froissart chronicled that,

nothing could come into the town but by stealth, and that was by the means of two mariners, one called Marant and the other Mestriel; and they dwelt in Abbeville. By them two they of Calais were oftentimes recomforted and fresed by stealth; and oftentimes they were in great peril, chased and near taken, but always they scaped, and made many Englishmen to be drowned.

The English monarch not only dealt with large French and Genoese ships entering the harbor refreshing the garrison but also smaller vessels crossing overland. These small French ships, particularly from Boulogne, waited for the marshlands surrounding the city to swell up at high tide in order to send supplies to the besieged city overland. In order to cutoff resupply to the city, the Earl of Northampton, William de Bohun, one of Edward’s Lieutenants, built a hedge of wooden stakes and a series of palisades to prevent these over land crossings during high tide.

In order to prevent the French from sending larger ships into Calais harbor, Edward devised a clever scheme. He ordered his navy to intentionally scuttle some of his larger ships at the mouth of the harbor to prevent access. In one particular instance, he sunk a ship called la Michel of Fawy. Edward compensated the ship’s master and owner, Peter Foulk of Wynchelse, for the damages incurred by him. Edward intentionally scuttled ships within Calais harbor in

33 Craig L. Lambert, Edward III’s Siege of Calais: A Reappraisal, 245–56.
35 The Chronicles of Froissart, 112.
37 CPR, 1345-8, 260.
38 Ibid.
order to prevent French ships from accessing the port. In addition to these actions, as noted in chapter three, Edward ordered the building of a castle manned with artillery, archers, and crossbowmen to secure the harbor.\textsuperscript{39} The King also ordered a large contingent of his navy at sea to secure the harbor entrance. This naval blockade was constantly harassed by French ships and Norman pirates.\textsuperscript{40} This prompted Edward to maintain vigilance over the condition of his navy. In one such case, early in 1347, he ordered a council to be held in Westminster in order to “consult about the state of the navy.”\textsuperscript{41} It was also at this time that Edward detained all ships within the port of London for his use at Calais.\textsuperscript{42} Edward kept records of the condition of navy in order to better understand the cost, loss, and usage of his maritime forces.

Despite all of these defensive actions, Edward still struggled to stop French resupply missions from entering Calais. However, according to Knighton, in April of 1347:

\begin{quote}
After Easter… there came a fleet of thirty ships and galleys which scandalously, without hindrance from King Edward or his men, brought supplies into the town of Calais and retired without loss while the English looked on. And at once the king ordered the channel into the town to be blocked [again], and the earl of Warwick took over the keeping of the sea with eighty ships.\textsuperscript{43}
\end{quote}

It was at this point in late spring of 1347 that King Edward’s frustrations would be answered. As can be seen in the quote above, the newly appointed naval commander, the Earl of Warwick, Thomas de Beauchamp, one of the commanders of the three divisions during the march to Calais, was given command of 80 vessels and tasked with securing the harbor. Warwick was able to successfully block the harbor and impede French resupply efforts into the harbor through

\textsuperscript{39} Bryant, \textit{The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360}, 198.
\textsuperscript{40} Holinshed, \textit{Holinshed’s Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland}, 647. A similar mention is made in Bryant, \textit{The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290 – 1360}, 198; Preest and Barber, \textit{The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker}, 78.
\textsuperscript{41} COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxxxii b.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Martin, \textit{Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396}, 77.
the massing of forces. This massing of English naval power coupled with a newly appointed commander was a great success. Because the harbor was shut off, French resupply efforts were forced to shift from accessing the harbor to finding another marshland crossing location at hightide for small fishing crafts to maneuver. Additionally, small rivers leading into the Calais marshlands were also utilized by the French. In the early summer of 1347, the English navy mitigated these actions by repositioning additional naval forces to cover hightide overland operations and river operations. As a result, French resupply efforts were intercepted, attacked, and seized by English blockading forces. These English actions forced the desperate French to push their way through English lines. In June 1347, eleven merchantmen, twenty-five merchant cargo vessels, escorted by ten Genoese galleys and twenty-one armed ships tried to sail past the Somme River, on their way north to Calais, but they were intercepted near Le Crotot by a large contingent of 120 English vessels under Admirals John Howard and John Montgomery. 44 These futile actions continued throughout the summer but ultimately failed as noted by Knighton,

At the time the earl of Oxford, the lord Stafford, who was later made earl of Stafford, and Sir Walter Mauny put to sea with a large fleet, and intercepted the French fleet bringing supplies to Calais. And they took twenty ships of the said fleet and many galleys, with a huge quantity of supplies, and slew men and sank ships as they would, and took what plunder they chose to King Edward at Calais. 45

45 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 79.
On one such instance, the English intercepted a ship carrying messages from the Captain of the Calais garrison to King Philippe. The message and its messenger were taken at sea and delivered to King Edward. The letter contained the following exert:

Know, most gentle lord, that your people in Calais have eaten their horse, and the dogs and the rats, and there remains nothing to them on which to live unless they eat each other. Wherefore, right honourable lord, if we do not have ready succour, the town will be lost. And we are all agreed, if we do not have aid, to out upon the enemy and die with honour soon than perish here by default, and may God give you grace to requite us and our heirs for our labours.  

When he read the letter, Edward imparted his own seal to the letter and then asked it to be delivered to King Philippe with a note telling him to “hasten to help his people in Calais who were perishing of hunger for his sake.”  

It was at this time that the garrison sent out “some fifty of the lesser townsmen.” This was done to reduce the number of mouths to feed within the city.  

When the people were brought to the English King, he refused to accept their surrender and ordered them back into the city. However, the garrison refused to open the gates and let them in. Thus, these fifty people were trapped in the ditches outside of the walls “and day by day they died, perishing slowly of cold and hunger.” Philippe VI, dreadfully aware of the internal and psychological unraveling occurring at Calais, ordered a final resupply. Eight unescorted French barges, in an attempt to remain unseen, carrying victuals departed Dieppe and sailed for Calais. However, Edward’s forces seized the cargo ships and the goods within. The failure of this last-ditch effort spelled doom for Calais. The blockade took an incredible amount of time to be successful but the changes in naval tactics, and the reflexive responses to enemy movements

46 Ibid.  
47 Ibid., 79-81.  
48 Ibid. There is some debate amongst the chroniclers about this moment. Some chroniclers say 500 people left the gates at this time. Others say 50 but that there were 500 people who had been sent out earlier in the year and that these people were warmly greeted by the English King who let them pass through his lines to Guînes.  
49 Ibid.  
50 Hoskins, *Siege Warfare During the Hundred Years War: Once More unto the Breach*, 61.
clearly demonstrated Edward’s tactically adaptive thinking. When the blockade finally did take
effect, the French were left hopeless, and Edward understood it was only a matter of time before
the garrison surrendered.

**Naval Force Support**

Outside of logistics, blockading and indirect naval engagements, Edward also utilized his
navy for force support. As stated earlier, Edward ordered his navy to travel up the coast of
France in order to assist his land march through Normandy and France. Although, this was not
the most prominent of Edward’s maritime forces, it proved to be vital for campaign success.
When King Philippe moved his army to the heights of the Sangatte, five miles southwest of
Calais, some of Edward’s naval forces repositioned and anchored to overlook the dunes on the
seashore between the Sangatte and his own forces. If Philippe moved his forces across the beach,
the navy was prepared to fire down upon them with springalds, ballistae, catapults, and arrows.51
In order to fire these projectiles, ships were often adapted for the needs of the military as
mentioned earlier. Shipwrights raised the body of the ship at both the stem and stern by layering
timber beams across these decks and forming crenelated platforms.52 These raised fortifications
were referred to as castles and provided a firing port for both archers and engines, on the front
and rear of the ship.

These “mobile” castles were crucial to success on the water. English ships were not only
outfitted with mariners but also with both men-at-arms and archers. English longbowmen and
crossbowmen provided covering fire, from their parapets, for the men-at-arms to conduct
boarding actions. In order to execute these actions, ships sailed right up to an enemy vessel and

---

launched either iron hooks or drop wooden planks and ladders onto the enemy vessels. This would allow for the men-at-arms to board the enemy craft. Additionally, some of these naval castles were outfitted with stone-throwing machines and other missile instruments to inflict damage and neutralize enemy crafts. This type of warfare was exemplified during naval Battle of Sluys in 1340.

Naval warfare at this time was typically less concerned with sinking enemy vessels, as this was seen as a waste of resources; most naval commanders simply wanted to seize control of enemy ships in order to aggregate them into their own fleets. Therefore, naval commanders were more concerned with turning naval battles into pseudo land battles, where men-at-arms and archers on both sides would fight to gain control of the ship. These tactical actions were no different during Edward’s campaign and siege of Calais. Although his navy did sink many enemy vessels as stated earlier, it continually fought and seized control of French and Genoese (French allied) ships to be impressed into their own ranks as well.

Edward’s use of the navy was essential in his capture of the port city of Calais. The murky marshland and the impregnable high walls of Calais, which at first offered great protection to its inhabitants, slowly enveloped the people, no longer as a place of refuge but as a tomb. The mighty keep which dissuaded possible attacks looked more like a headstone than a place of strength. The mighty city of Calais was reduced to nothing more than a crucible of famine, sickness, and desolation. All of this was made possible by English sea power.

The navy maintained constant vigilance over the channel both by shadowing Edward’s movements across land and by fending off piracy actions aimed at disrupting lines of supply. The English navy, as has been seen, was efficient at establishing and maintaining lines of communication for resupply and retreat. This exchange network was able to keep the English
army supplied and reinforced. Upon the successful conclusion of the siege of Calais, Edward’s navy escorted his forces back to England for a much-needed reprieve. The navy’s effort to blockade the harbor of Calais may have taken a considerable amount of time, but Edward’s determination to secure the harbor through various changes in both tactical doctrine and the relieving and reappointment of certain commanders aided his endeavors. When the blockade finally took effect, the garrison ultimately was forced to surrender. Edward’s use of his naval forces as covering agents along the seashore of the Sangatte prevented any direct harassment across the beachhead by King Philips land forces. The primary mission of Edward’s navy was simple and yet full of many complex nuances. The required flexibility of the navy to execute varied missions of support cannot be downplayed. Edward’s ability to maximize every element of his force structure secured his victory during this campaign and siege. He not only brought maximum land force power to the siege but maximized his own naval output to secure critical objectives. His massing of naval forces, however, was only made possible by both the industries and peoples of England as will be discussed in chapter four.
‘...all forces intended and available for a strategic purpose should be applied simultaneously...’ Carl von Clausewitz, “On War,” Ch. 12, Bk 3.

The allocation of resources, money, and manpower made possible the land and naval campaign which led to the capture of Calais. These resources were granted to the King through acts of Parliament and monarchical orders. Therefore, the King could not have captured Calais without the support of the Members of Parliament, the merchant class, the clergy, and the nobility. The orders of the King were executed by the county sheriffs, arrayers, purveyors, and courtly officials. These divisions of medieval England’s social order ultimately provided King Edward with the support necessary to execute his military objectives. Each division maintained various roles to aid in the war effort. Parliament provided the necessary fiscal support for Edward’s campaign via taxation and resource allocation. Foreign and domestic merchants loaned the King money for his military expenditures. The clergy maintained three key roles: monetarily, the church was called upon to support the English war effort; civically, the church provided a forum for the spread of wartime information to England’s rural and urban populations; religiously, the clergy served as a conduit for the religious justification of Edward’s goals. The nobility’s primary roles fell within two categories: first, they were tasked with providing and mobilizing manpower for the King’s military efforts; secondly, nobles who did not accompany the King to Normandy were tasked with defending the realm during the King’s absence. This chapter will examine the prominent roles played by each of these structural divisions. These classes provided King Edward the maximum support necessary to conduct a successful campaign to seize Calais.
None of these divisions of power, however, acted independently of one another. As will be discussed, there was a diffusion of power and a blending of responsibilities and assurances throughout much of the administrative systems. Most importantly, one cannot simply analyze governmental and religious systems as being self-autonomous. The English people were responsible for the functionality of these administrative systems. The farmer, logger, miner, weaver, and fisherman were just as important to the English war machine as the fighter, sheriff, noble, cleric, and kingly official. Lastly, it is important to mention the role that the environment played, directly and indirectly, on the English war effort.

**Parliamentary Support**

Parliament convened twice during the last campaign of the first phase of the Hundred Years War; first in June 1344; and, second in September 1346. These dates are significant in that they were utilized to advance the efforts of the English crown in Normandy and France. In June of 1344, Parliament was convened to discuss the current war with France and to determine what level of financial support, if any, they should provide to King Edward.

[The Lords] and the commons of the realm assembled in the White Chamber in the presence of our lord the king and, having regard for the great misfortunes and perils which could occur to our lord the king and to all his subjects and allies if the malice of his said enemy was not prevented, and considering the great burdens which the great men and the commonalty of England have had and suffered as a result of the war which had lasted so long due to false truces and armistices which have been made before this time, and seeing clearly that an end to this war or a good peace could not be achieved with a great force of men and great show of strength, they asked our lord the king of one accord, and each individual great man for himself, to bring an end to this war…¹

---

The desire of the government and the people was clearly laid out before the King in this recording. Parliament acknowledged that the war was necessary to keep the realm safe, but the “commonalty of England” had suffered greatly as a result of it. Therefore, to end the war, whether by subduing the enemy or receiving a “good peace,” Parliament understood it was going to require a “great force of men and great show of strength.” Therefore, it granted the King a triennial tenth in the aid of completing his military business. The Commons granted the king two-fifteenths from the people and two-tenths from the cities and boroughs as payment to conduct operations. Additionally, it granted the King a fifteenth penny of their goods and a tenth from the cities and boroughs. With these grants, the King was able to organize and pay for the expeditionary force. In addition to the subsidies already granted in 1344 and 1346, Parliament also granted the King 20,000 sacks of wool during the spring of 1347 to be used for payment purposes. Edward ordered the collectors of customs in the ports of Gloucester, Tyne, Hull, Boston, Sandwich, Ipswich, Bristol, Chichester, Winchelsea, Great Yarmouth, Lynn, Southampton, and Exeter to monitor wool exchanges and ensure proper customs were paid so that he may have both money and wool quickly.

Although Parliament granted King Edward large sums of money and wool for his wartime needs, the King also relied on merchant loans, as can be seen through various chancery records. In late spring and early summer of 1347, Edward began preparing for reinforcement at Calais by once again entering into contract with various merchants to help acquire the necessary funds to continue the siege during the summer months. He promised to pay these merchants back

---

2 Ibid. Items 9, 10, page 2.
4 CCR, 1346-9, 304, 363; The request for wool was approved in Parliament on March 3, 1346, and was further requested by King Edward on March 8, 1347, as seen in CFR, 1347-56, Vol. vi. 13. It was then again referenced on May 21, 1347, as seen in COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxxxvii; This requirement was reiterated by the King again on July 28, 1347, as seen in CPR, 1345-8, 362.
5 CCR, 1346-9, 44-5, 307; CPR, 1345-8, 348.
when it was feasible to do so. However, some of these merchants, as seen in chapter three, were left with negative returns. He was able to offset this by offering customs grants and exemptions to these merchants to make up for lost revenue. An example of this can be seen in this record.

Whereas the king, for 40,000 marks which they have undertaken to lend him in parts beyond the seas, has granted to his merchants, Walter de Chiriton and Gilbert de Wendlyngburgh and their fellows, that they shall receive all customs and subsidies due to him in the ports of England, assignments contained in covenants made between him and them only expected, until they shall be satisfied of the said sum, and granted also that for making the loan they might enter 20,000l. of goods and true debts due by him to them, whereof they will acquit him, and that an assignment should be made to them of the said 20,000l. on tenths and fifteenths granted to the king, which still remain to be paid, not assigned to others, as in an indenture between the king and the merchants is more fully contained; with their assent and at their request he has granted to Conrad Femol and John Conyngg and their fellows, merchants Almain, that they, for 20,000 marks which they have lent the said Walter and Gilbert and their fellows towards the load of 40,000 marks, they shall receive 1 mark on every sack of wool, 1 mark on every 300 wool fells and 2 marks on every last of hides exported from England after Midsummer Day, out of the customs and subsidies so to be received by Walter and the others, until satisfied of the 20,000 marks, and that they may enter 13,000 marks of good and true debts of the king to any persons, whereof they will acquit him, in part satisfaction of their loan to his merchants, and shall have an assignment of the 13,000 marks on the said tenths and fifteenths under the form in the indenture aforesaid, provided that the 13,000 marks be subtracted from the 20,000l. granted to Walter and his fellows. Until Conrad and John be repaid in full, one part of the cocket seal in each port shall remain in the custody of the collectors of said customs under the seals of the said Conrad and John or their attorneys.

As can be seen in this exert, merchant loans to the King were sometimes beneficial to the merchants in the long run. Although they were sending large sums of money to the Crown, they were provided with investment opportunities along with the promise of repayment. Several other merchants provided the king with 10,000 marks for the “expedition of important business.” Edward, however, was unable to pay these merchants back by the requested date, therefore he offered them compensation, “in consideration of their losses on account of the nonpayment and

---

7 CPR, 1345-8, 277-8. Reference to this contract can also be seen in CCR, 1346-9, 248-9.
by pretext of divers other loans made by them to him in his great necessity, he [Edward] has granted to them 5,000 marks as a gift, and it is his will that they shall receive both these sums our of moneys.”

In this instance, the merchants who brokered a deal with the King were not only promised a return on their investment, but were also granted a gift for their consideration. This boded well as other merchants and even clergy members would take advantage of the King’s gifts.

**Money for War and Recruitment**

Outside of Parliamentary taxation and merchant loans, England’s Church played a key role in providing revenue for the war. English kings had long taxed the Church to cover governmental expenses. As can be seen in the Parliamentary Rolls, the Church and its archbishop, bishops, prelates, priories, and proctors were tasked with providing a triennial tenth to the English Crown in the fall of 1344. As the campaign continued, costs rose, and further funding was requested. The King was able to compromise these additional requests of the church by offering to amortize £20,000 for their assistance in the war as a gesture of good will.

Although the churches were taxed, many priories, abbeys, etc. provided King Edward with monetary loans or gifts. All throughout the campaign, but especially during the winter months of 1347, the Crown relied on these monetary loans to fend off the famine and sickness that encroached the English camp during the siege. The prior of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, England, even gifted 2,000 florins “out of regard for the king’s urgent necessity,” to the Crown. Additionally, the King’s clerks recorded the amount of money owed to each abbey

---

8 CPR, 1345-8, 292.
11 CFR, 1337-47, 489.
and priory. This does not mean, however, that all benefices were delivered to the King willingly.

Some revenue acquired by the Crown via the Church was through confiscation. Many of these loans have been compiled and calculated as shown in figure 4, table 1, listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>l. s. d.</th>
<th>l. s. d.</th>
<th>l. s. d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough 40</td>
<td>Niwenham 100</td>
<td>Northampton 8 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coggeshale 100</td>
<td>Stanleye 100</td>
<td>Puppewell 8 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walden 10</td>
<td>Bernewell 10</td>
<td>Wardon 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamton 4</td>
<td>Suleby 11 6 8</td>
<td>Merevale 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenilworth 16</td>
<td>Seleby 20</td>
<td>Lesnes 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerondon 10</td>
<td>Woburine 10</td>
<td>Waverle 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunbrigge 4</td>
<td>Nuttele 100</td>
<td>Furneux 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sempryngham 100</td>
<td>Bridlington 20</td>
<td>Brustleham 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertsbridge 10</td>
<td>St. Edmunds 40</td>
<td>Walyngford 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruton 100</td>
<td>Derham 4</td>
<td>Dorcestre 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thornton 40</td>
<td>Bradenstoke 100</td>
<td>Salisbury 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynesham 10</td>
<td>Spalding 40</td>
<td>Coventry 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosebond 10</td>
<td>Launde 113 4</td>
<td>Lichfield 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoneley 8</td>
<td>Thornholme 10</td>
<td>Burton-on-Trent 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromholm 100</td>
<td>Blithburgh 50</td>
<td>Stafford 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle 24</td>
<td>Faversham 4</td>
<td>Vaulieu 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufford 11 6 8</td>
<td>Sibbton 4</td>
<td>Swymesheved 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Radegund's 4</td>
<td>Tame 10</td>
<td>Markby 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begharn 8</td>
<td>Glastonbury 60</td>
<td>Grlmesby 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colcestre 15</td>
<td>Coventre 10 13 4</td>
<td>Circestre 25 6 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelham 4</td>
<td>Leyston 4</td>
<td>Waltham 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury 84</td>
<td>Malmesbury 30</td>
<td>St. Osyth 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereford 24</td>
<td>Flaxle 5</td>
<td>Halme 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ledes 4</td>
<td>Thurgarton 10</td>
<td>Norwich 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester 20</td>
<td>Thorneye 100</td>
<td>Wemlyn 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford 10</td>
<td>Langele 12</td>
<td>Southwyk 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leycestre 18</td>
<td>Bristol 12 13 4</td>
<td>Winchester 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croudle 20</td>
<td>Gysburn 20</td>
<td>Croxton 6 13 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assheby 5 13 4</td>
<td>Master Walter de Stauren 106 8</td>
<td>Dover 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich 8</td>
<td>Shrewsbury 21</td>
<td>York 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butteleye 12</td>
<td>Cumbermere 4</td>
<td>Whity 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chacume 51 13 4</td>
<td>Great Malvern 12 13 4</td>
<td>Ryaux 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Albans 20</td>
<td>Peneney 50</td>
<td>St. Agatha's 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxe 4</td>
<td>Neuhous 13 6 8</td>
<td>Teuesbyre 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordesle 6</td>
<td>Athelyngneye 10</td>
<td>Dale 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angleseye 50</td>
<td>Tuholme 5</td>
<td>Worsop 106 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyneum 20</td>
<td>Wormesle 40</td>
<td>Meaux 12 13 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revesby 10</td>
<td>Wygemore 21</td>
<td>Sherwood 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayntre 113 4</td>
<td>Little Malverne 6</td>
<td>Waldgrave 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouchestre 20</td>
<td>Brommore 100</td>
<td>Durham 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glocesestre 50 13 4</td>
<td>Burcestre 10</td>
<td>Smythefeld 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkestall 12</td>
<td>Taystok 13 6 8</td>
<td>Dore 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rly 80</td>
<td>Westminster 40</td>
<td>Hereford 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawedon 100</td>
<td>Wynchecombe 19</td>
<td>Fereby 66 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twynham 9 6 8</td>
<td>Cartemel 4</td>
<td>Esham 66 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntingdon 100</td>
<td>Vale Royal 12 13 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sautre 10</td>
<td>Rameseye 50</td>
<td>Grand Total: 1637l. 2263s. 129d. 448 marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Table 1. Compensation owed to the priories and abbeys of England on account of their aid in the war against France as seen CPR, 1345-8, 337-42. Compiled by Jordan Bruso, 2021.

---

12 CPR, 1345-8, 425.
These churches, as can be seen in figure 4, table 1, provided the Crown with a substantial amount of revenue. However, the revenue only tells one side of the story. At closer examination, the majority of these churches are located in the coastal counties or on the border between Scotland and England. Both areas were often shrouded in violence from outside aggression. The coastal counties had long dealt with French and Genoese Piracy and pillaging. Likewise, the northern counties along the Anglo-Scot border suffered from Scottish raids and even an invasion at Neville’s Cross in 1346. These violent actions were one of King Edward III’s justifications for going to war with France. The proximity of violence played a direct role in the accruement and management of wartime funds. In the summer of 1347, with the siege at its most critical juncture. Edward once again asked for funding and wool subsidies from the English church. Knighton remarked that, “King Edward asked help of the abbeys and priories throughout England, that is, as much wool as each house could provide.” This request was granted, and the Church authorized a biennial tenth as payment.

Revenue raised for the Crown paid for the troops, victuals, and support personnel going to war. The process of recruiting, conscripting and equipping men was done by the sheriffs and the arrayers of the various counties. Although this was a fairly uniform process, it took considerable time. It took almost two years to array Edward’s forces before they sailed for Normandy in 1346. In an attempt to expedite the process, Edward issued a series of writs to his sheriffs. One such writ was directed to the sheriff of Gloucester in June of 1346, ordering that he “bring to Porchester with all speed all the money which he has received for the king’s use.”

---

13 Martin, Knighton’s Chronicle 1337-1396, 77.
14 Ibid., 87.
16 CFR, 1337-47, Vol. V. 472; COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cvii & cvii b; CPR, 1345, 1345-8, 59; Additional requests can be seen through COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, as well as the CPR 1345-8, & CCR, 1343-6.
These requests often included writs demanding the delivery of troops to various seaports by a given date.

The wages for war, per day, amounted to 6s. 8d. per day for an earl; 4s. for a banneret; 2s. for a knight; 1s. for a man-at-arms; 6d. for a mounted archer; 3d. for a foot archer; and 2d. for a Welsh lancemen. These wages did not account for the cost of equipping them, which came at the county’s expense. Edward’s maritime forces were also paid wages. Despite the promise of wages, there was hardly a defined method of managing these payments. Some troops, once mobilized, were paid by their respective counties until they reached the border of their county, at which time they then fell under the King’s wages. Some troops did not garner wages until they reached their mustering locations. Other troops received nothing until they departed their point of debarkation, while some of their peer’s received payment while waiting for transport in those same seaports. The luckiest troops received wages for the duration of their mobilization.

As noted in Chapter 2, at the outset of the 1346 campaign, Edward issued a series of decrees ordering all fit and able-bodied men between the ages of sixteen and sixty to be summoned for martial duty. Despite, lordly summons, there were several reasons why men wanted to go to war. The most common reasons included, acquiring money/booty/arms/land, social mobility, adventure, fame, honor. Other reasons included fulfilling familial traditions and

17 Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III 1338-62, 36. In medieval England, the basic monetary unit, were the silver penny (d.), shilling (s.), pound sterling (£). Additionally, there were marks. Marks were equivalent to 2/3 £ or rather 13s. 4d. French money was also used by the King of England. A livre (l.) was worth 20 sous, each worth 12 deniers. The exchange rate from livres to pound sterling was 5 livres to 1 pound sterling. The florin was another form of currency. These gold coins often varied in worth based on the time and place of minting. However, florins typical were worth 36d. These parameters can be seen in Rogers, War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy Under Edward III, 1327-1360, xiii.
18 CCR.1346-9, 132-3.
20 COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cviii & cviii b.
demonstrating one’s skill in battle. However, one of the most effective recruiting ploys used by King Edward was contractual pardons.

The King granted pardons for any criminal offense and exemptions from duties, in exchange for good and honorable service overseas. John de Wyngefeld, for example, received an “exemption for life, for good services in the war … from being put on assizes, juries, recognitions, or inquisitions.” These decrees may have ballooned Edward’s forces but with it came certain consequences. As a result of this recruiting tactic, a fair portion of the army and the navy were made up of vagabonds, criminals, and troublemakers, looking to receive a pardon and/or pay. The recruiting of such vagrants often led to mischievous activities and lawlessness.

Delays in the transportation of troops from seaports to Normandy, whether due to the weather or logistical issues, only furthered the lawlessness. In the summer of 1346, there was a rise in violence in many of the port cities. On one such occasions in July 1346, a notification was sent out by officials in Windsor stating that “contention which lately arose between some mariners and others on the king’s last passage beyond the seas, in the town of Portsmouth, both the ears of Philip de Kent … were maliciously cut off.” These were hardly isolated incidents. Only a few days later, another notification was sent out stating that, “both the ears of John Bernehous of Sparkwelle … were cut off by the mariners.” Incidents such as these were most likely the result of boredom and alcohol consumption. As long as incidents such as these occurred after a period of “good service,” the offending party was typically forgiven. As mentioned in chapter two, the English archer, John Tony was granted a pension for getting maimed during one of the assaults on Calais. Once he got back to England, however, he was

---

22 CPR, 13458-8, 146.
23 Ibid., 154.
convicted of robbing Katharine Page and John Geffrey of Stanton. Despite the conviction, John Tony was pardoned for “his good service in the war” with France. The question then arises, was John Tony’s experience in the war to blame for his criminal behavior back in England? Or was John Tony a troublemaker prior to setting foot in Normandy? Another instance can be seen when, Ralph, son of John, son of Walter Baille of Kirketon, was pardoned, “in consideration of his good service … for the death of Simon Legges of Kirketon.” Criminal activity in England, especially in London, was so high that Parliament, on behalf of the King’s orders, issued a decree that forbid, “on penalty of forfeiture” regardless “of whatever estate or condition” the carrying of arms within city limits.

The lawlessness seen through some of these actions may help to explain some of the disorderly devastation that occurred during King Edward’s march to Calais, as noted by the chroniclers Froissart, Knighton, Baker and Jean le Bel. As noted in earlier chapters, as the army moved, a trail of smoke by day and fiery lights by night signaled English movements throughout France. Despite Edward’s devastating chevaucheés, the King tried to instill discipline into his troops through fear of punishment. Despite ordering his men to avoid the sacking of certain holy places, these incidents still occurred. At Carentan in 1346, Froissart chronicled that King Edward having seen the abbey of “Saint-Messien near to Beauvais” burning, despite his orders to leave it alone, had twenty of the arsonists hanged before the army. The excessive pillaging by Edward’s army may be attributed to unpaid wages. Many of these troops were promised wages

24 CPR, 1345-8, 353, 371.
25 I find John Tony’s situation to be rather unique. He is one of the few instances where a low-class English subjects received a pension and a pardon for his service. His criminal conviction would also make for an interesting case study into the causes and effects of war (especially Edward’s devastating countryside chevaucheés) on a person’s psyche. It may be possible he brought that expeditionary lifestyle back to England.
26 CPR, 1345-8, 154.
28 The Chronicles of Froissart, 99.
and when they were not provided, troops may have turned to plundering for supplemental income. However, troop pay was not the only issue with which King Edward had to deal with. He needed to utilize the majority of his money to feed and equip his army.

**Feeding and Equipping the Army**

The victualling of forces greatly drained England’s treasury coffers. During the late Autumn months of 1346, English sheriffs were busy executing court orders from the crown. The King ordered his sheriffs to “make proclamation against the exportation of corn otherwise to the King’s army at Caleys.” Additionally, he requested his clerks to acquire the first of his two mandated, tenths and fifteenths, promised to him by Parliament. During winter, when foraging was even more difficult, the King requested additional aid from his merchants. One such merchant, Thomas de Drayton, of Great Yarmouth, was ordered to “cause his ship called 'la Alienore' to be made ready for the king's service with double equipment, and to be munitioned with victuals for forty days.” While another merchant, James Pyk of Hastings, was ordered to freight 100 quarters of oats to the King at Calais. As the siege endured, Edward made sure his merchants continued to bring food and other victuals to his forces at Calais for its entire duration. During times of emergency, and fear of battle, Edward hastened these orders. In July 1347, when King Philippe’s army camped on the Sangatte, Edward ordered “the speedy dispatch of victuals for the King’s army before Calais.”

Agricultural workers sent staggering amounts of supplies to the King’s forces, as can be seen in figure 5, table 2. Although the orders displayed here only make up a few of the King’s

---

29 COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxxx.
30 CCR, 1346-9, 132-3.
31 CCR, 1346-9, 185.
33 COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxl.
requests what is important to note is where the majority of this production is coming from. As with the monetary revenue from the priories listed in figure 4, table 1, the counties predominately responsible for agricultural production laid within those coastal and border counties. This of course makes sense as the exterior counties had large populations, sufficient infrastructure, and a close proximity to seaports, to support such wartime demands. Despite this, the transportation of these victuals must have taken considerable time. Large containers, such as tuns, were needed to transport victuals. Once sufficient storage was accumulated, these containers were cleaned, and carted to the milling facilities.\(^{34}\) These facilities would fill the containers and then cart them to a collection depot. It would have been advantageous for these depots to be located along rivers so that smaller vessels could sail these tuns down to the seaports. County Sheriffs maintained responsibility of these river boats and their goods until they reached the port of debarkation where the Admirals of the North or the West, assumed responsibility for the exportation of these supplies. In order to track the cost and delivery of these goods receipts were kept by both the sheriff and receiver to demonstrate quotas that were being met. This operational procedure can be seen in figure 5, table 2, below. This table was produced by H.J. Hewitt, and it represents a compilation of receipts of given supplies for the King’s forces in 1346.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccccc}
\text{County} & \text{Corn brought} & \text{Flour produced} & \text{Pack in Oats} & \text{Salt Pork} & \text{Carcasses of Mutton} & \text{Slides of Beef} & \text{Wey of Cheese} & \text{Peas and Beans} & \text{Port} \\
& \text{Quarters of:} & \text{Quarters of:} & \text{Tuns} & \text{Quarters of:} & & & & & \\
\hline
\text{Cambridge and Huntingdon} & 450 & 392 & 60 & 243 & 100 & 38 & 26 & 2 & 63 & Lynn \\
\text{Essex and Hertford} & 412 \frac{1}{2} & 340 & 55 & - & 160 & - & 42 & 13 & - & Maldon and London \\
\end{array}
\]

\(^{34}\) CPR, 1345-8, 113.
The demand for supplies placed a great burden on the various counties of England. Complaints from the people of these counties can be seen throughout the chancery records. The farmers of England, in particular, thought they were paying more than their fair share to keep Edward’s forces victualled. On one such occasion, the sheriffs of Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Oxford, and Berkshire were accused, by their own people and neighbors, of demanding the poor to meet excessive quotas while “sparing the wealthy altogether to extort money from them.”

On another occasion “trustworthy persons” from Rutland beseeched the King to reduce their required quota as they were already meeting other wartime demands. In response, the King halved their grain requirement. The early success of Edward’s campaign, as noted in his letter to Parliament in 1346, only further demonstrated to Parliament that this method of supply was working, therefore, the counties continued to support the export of resources to the King for the duration of the siege regardless of how English communities felt about it.

Outside of victuals, weapons and armaments were also requested at the behest of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Northampton</th>
<th>Nottingham and Derby</th>
<th>Rutland</th>
<th>Yorkshire</th>
<th>Boston and Hull</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1346</td>
<td>652 ½</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1347</td>
<td>552 ½</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>310 ¼</td>
<td>131 ¼</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1348</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1349</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1350</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1351</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1352</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1353</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1354</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Northampton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Table 2. Resource contribution.  

---

35 Hewitt, *The Organization of War under Edward III 1338-62*, 55. This table is a complete reproduction of Hewitt’s original table. His ability to track down and account for all resources for the year of 1346 has been demonstrably important to understanding the economics involved during Edward III’s campaign and siege of Calais.  
36 CPR, 135-8, 113. These complaints inevitably led to chancery investigations.  
37 CCR., 1346-9, 44.  
38 Ibid., 185, 188-9; CPR, 1345-8, 270.
King. In order to keep his men well-armed, the King asked his counties to continually supply his troops with fresh war materials, as noted in chapter two.

Figure 6, table 3, listed below, much like figure 5, table 2, captures some of the King’s requests for bows and sheaves of arrows to be sent to the front lines in 1346. These numbers, much like the numbers in figure 5, table 2, come from recorded receipts of payment. As noted earlier, there is a recurring theme when it comes to England’s ability to wage war. The majority of armament requests are directed to the coastal counties. As stated earlier, this operational procedure in place has as much to do with the readily available infrastructure and riverways, as it does with the proximity of seaports. This mass production of goods had to be shipped quickly and the convenient locations of nearby ports aided this demand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counties:</th>
<th>Bows ordered in 1346:</th>
<th>Sheaves of arrows order in 1346:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambs and Hunts</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex and Herts</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hants</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northants</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford and Berkshire</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset and Dorset</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey and Sussex</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick and Leics</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Table 3. A few requests for military supplies. 39

---

39 This table was composed based upon the work done by Hewitt, *The Organization of War under Edward III 1338-62*, 64.
Altogether, Edward requested 2,280 bows and 5,550 sheaves of arrows to supplement his stores in Calais. These calculations do not consider what the army currently had on hand in Calais. In order to acquire arrows of this magnitude fairly regularly, it must have taken considerable time. English arrows utilized the pinion feathers of the grey goose because they contained inherent natural oils making them water resistant. Therefore, these arrows were reliable to shoot despite inclement weather. Each arrow was made with three of these feathers. However, the grey goose can only produce six of these feathers in an entire year. Therefore, the demand suggests, that the people of these counties must have observed and possibly maintained the geese population. Additionally, bows took a considerable time to produce. There were two kinds of bows based on cost; the ‘white’ bow was inexpensive, costing approximately 12d, while the ‘painted’ bow cost around 18d. Both bows were made from the Yew tree. However, the ‘white’ bow was produced quickly negating the long seasoning process of the wood. The ‘painted’ bow was cleaned, seasoned, and dried for months before a form of varnish was applied to the wood. Both types of bows were utilized by Edward’s forces in Normandy and represent the conviction of the monarch. King Edward utilized all available means necessary to conduct a successful campaign and siege.

In late spring 1347, as noted in chapter three, the King, desperate to enforce a total blockade of the harbor of Calais, ordered the creation and requisition of additional ships.

41 Unfortunately, I have never uncovered any documented record of geese management. However, chancery records of the early 15th, like CPR, 116-22, 178, mentions feather quotas. Further studies should be conducted to determine how or if England maintained geese populations for military efforts. One chancery writ in 1418, ordered the supply of 1,190,000 goose feathers, CPR, 1416-22, 178. It is imperative that further studies look into these ecological ties to warfare.
43 This blockade and its 120-vessel flotilla were discussed in the previous chapter.
Requests for war ships were sent to the various coastal counties. London, for example, was ordered to provide two large ships, each manned with 60 seamen and 20 archers, to “form part of a fleet of 120 vessels.” These requests for ships, manpower, and victuals were not without cost and were covered by the revenue raised through taxation and loans. Although this chapter does not go into detail how the forests and mines of England were being managed to supply the needs of the military, it is important to acknowledge they were vital to English success. The ability of the forestry and mining services of England to procure, manage and manufacture timber and metals for the war was instrumental in the success of English forces in Calais. Timber and metal from English forests went into the construction and maintenance of defensive fortifications, ships, wagons, tuns, arrows, weapons, armor, stirrups, siege machines, etc. The vast network of wartime operational procedures was made possible through the work England of English subjects.

The people of England were required to feed Edward’s war machine both through manpower and production. King Edward’s victories were the result of the burdens paid by his people. He was not only heavily taxing them but also sending them to war. The experiences of war, both first and secondhand, affected the social fabric of England. Therefore, it is important to understand how the people of England, for the most part, understood the war. In order to do this, communiques from the military front that were sent back to England need to be analyzed. Wartime production was the result of hard-working English people, and these people were heavily influenced by the words of the various writers and speakers throughout England.

44 COLB of the City of London, 1337-52, Folio cxxiii b.
45 CPR, 1345-8, 348, 354; CCR, 1346-9, 307.
46 I use the term firsthand to describe the experiences of those people who physically fought or served on the continent. Secondhand war was experienced by the families back in England receiving maimed, distraught, or killed family members.
The Dissemination of Wartime Information

Dissenters of the war in England were often controlled by administrative reforms. As stated in Chapters 2 and 3, King Edward III was greatly troubled by the espionage efforts within his kingdom. Time and time again, he attempted to mitigate both these threats and potential threats from influencing or damaging his strategic capabilities. Prior to the launch of the expedition, in March 1346, Edward learned that people within England were “spreading such false rumors, whereby dissensions may arise between the king and the magnates and the people of the realm.” In an attempt to control infectious rumors, Edward ordered that “no one shall presume to publish false rumours or say things whereby discords may arise, publicly or privately” under penalty of imprisonment. Prior to the deployment of his forces, Edward ordered the arrest of anyone coming “to the realm with letters and other things prejudicial to the king and his people.” Despite, royal decrees, rumors continued to spread. In the winter of 1347, the royal court charged John de Florencia, John de Arecio, John de Urduno, and Richard Felawe of Winchester (Winchester) brought within the realm “bulls, letters, instruments, and other suspicious things” that were prejudicial to the king and his ongoing war efforts. The indictment also mentions how these men went from “place to place in London clandestinely” in order to conceal their identities and efforts. The dissemination of wartime information fell within four categories, those being, official accounts, experience, observation, hearsay, and clerical services.

Outside of publishing royal decrees, King Edward III attempted to control the spread of misinformation through the use of his parliament. During the war, Edward kept fairly constant

47 This group of people was predominately made up of spies and foreign, non-resident preachers. These people will be discussed accordingly.
48 CCR, 1346-9, 57.
49 Ibid.
50 CCR, 1346-9, 149.
51 CPR, 1345-8, 249.
52 Ibid.
communication with Parliament. He did this in order to garner support and ease the public's fears. He often utilized clerical members to relay messages to Parliament. One letter addressed to Parliament, which convened in September 1346, read:

“…God had given our lord the king and the great men and others of his company since their arrival at la Hogue in Normandy, such as good towns, castles and prisons, takings of war, both at Caen and in many other places, and also the victory which God gave them at Crècy, where the enemy of France was defeated with all his great host, and the kings, prelates, dukes, counts, barons, knights and other great men of his people were killed, taken and wounded; and how our lord the king had arrived before Calais, and had laid siege there, which siege he did not intend to conclude before he had conquered the town, with the help of God, and in which the inhabitants have done a great deal of damage to him and his people of England. And after this conquest he would go after his enemy in pursuit of his quarrel, without returning to England before he had brought an end to his war overseas, with the aid of God. To accomplish which thing, the said messengers prayed on behalf of our lord the king that the said prelates, great men and commons would discuss and take counsel to provide aid and remedy to complete the things which have been so graciously begun; since, when our lord the king undertook the war by the common assent of all those in parliament, they promised that they would aid him with all the men and money at their power. And thereon an ordinance was exhibited, made by the said enemy and some of the great men of France and Normandy, to destroy and ruin the whole English nation and language…”

The king then requested the “authority” to enlist, and have deployed, 4,000 men-at-arms, knights, esquires, and 20,000 foot-soldiers, 5,000 of which were to be crossbowmen. This cleverly written letter did a few things. First, it confirmed to Parliament that he was winning the war thus far. Secondly, his references to God are a reminder to the Lords, Commons, and Clergy, that his efforts and successes were the direct result of God’s intervention, thus granting him the spiritual authority necessary to conduct his campaign. His request for additional funding and

53 Ibid., 145.
55 I use the term “authority” loosely here, as the King had power to force conscription.
manpower was approved. It was also at this time that the King declared protection for all soldiers and merchants coming to and from Calais in order to appease peoples fear of crossing the hostile waters of the channel.\textsuperscript{57} English and enemy ships were seizing and confiscating goods and chattels from transient shipping.

Messages likes these were not only common they were important in sustaining the people’s willpower. It is difficult to say for certain how the war was understood by the various counties definitively, but surrounding communication painted a portrait for these people. As the data shows in figures 6, 7, and 8, a counties proximity to perceived violence played a major role in wartime participation. Support for the monarchy, or rather the lack of active resistance against the monarchy, was predicated on the circulation of propaganda throughout various English communities. The experiences of the soldiers, such as John Tony, returning from the campaign and subsequent siege of Calais, greatly influenced English people’s perception of the war. As noted earlier, in regard to pardons and parliamentary rulings, the demonstrations of violence and criminal activity by returning veterans appalled English communities.\textsuperscript{58} In the early summer of 1347, a group of armed men wounded Peter de Grymesby, the King’s bailiff of Holderness, during a communal fair. This armed band then proceeded to steal all of the entry fees, tolls, and profits.\textsuperscript{59} Although the record does not indicate whether this group of armed bandits were veterans, or people out of doors, it does deftly demonstrate a social migration of, and reaction to, violence from the military theater back to England. The spread of propaganda helped remedy some of this internal discord.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. Accessed January 26, 2022, item 8, page 2.
\textsuperscript{59} CPR, 1345-8, 317.
For those fortunate enough to be literate, the works of contemporary chroniclers, provided a manuscript (often biased and embellished) of the key events. Contemporary poets and musicians also provided a narrative on the war compiled of hearsay and/or observation. Poets like Laurence Minot, and his work Edward III in France, and the Welsh Poet, Iolo Goch, enthralled their audiences through verse. Iolo Goch’s poem I’r Brenin Edwart y Trydydd (Panegyric to Edward III) reflects upon the war. Lines 37-48 read:

You were an enemy to Calais
because of taking the town — sheer force.
Gracious your journey to Crécy —
40. fair grace from Christ is yours —
feeding your army, fierce rank,
lively ravens, on the king of Bohemia.
A danger to the gates of Paris was (18 miles from Paris during his campaign)
the battle’s uproar where you struck a blow.
45. You will fly, you are so bold,
as far as heaven. You are a bird
Now you will not be dispossessed,
no man will break the boundary of your land.60

Although the poem is fairly accurate in terms of Edward’s successful victory at the Battle of Crécy, the death of the King of Bohemia at Crécy, and the proximity of Edward’s forces to the gates of Paris at one point, it is also full of propaganda. It tells its listeners that Edward’s campaign is guided by divine will.61 Additionally, the last two lines of the poem reminds its listeners that the King is fighting to regain what was rightfully his. However, it is lines 37 and 38 that remind the people of the kind of war being waged. It was a war of “sheer force”, and only this type of energy transfer from England to France would secure an English victory. However,

61 Lines such as “fair grace from Christ is your” and “you will fly, you are so bold, as far as heaven” indicated the divine nature of the campaign. There are also continuous biblical references throughout the full poem.
the expenditure of this energy relied on the excitement of the masses. This excitement can be attributed to the English church.

The role of the Church was instrumental in the seizure of Calais. Not only did certain religious orders fight in the war, but as a whole, as previously noted, they raised revenue (sometimes it was confiscated) for military expenditures. They also provided the religious interpretation for justification of war. In March 1346, King Edward informed the provincial prior, of the order of the friars’ preachers in England, the cause of this war with Philippe de Valois.62 He then ordered this prior to “expose that cause in public and private speeches and to the clergy and people.”63 Additionally, prominent clergy members acted as the primary arbiters for diplomatic negotiations between England and France.64 However, it can be argued that their most important role was providing English communities a source of information on the war.

The clergy was effectively able to deliver messages from expanded networks of information despite the spatial challenges. Despite the efficacy of this system, King Edward III ordered the vigilance of clergy during these tumultuous times. During the early stages of his siege of Calais, Edward confiscated the income and benefices of non-resident alien appointed to English churches by the Papal See.65 Parliament also ordered that “money which is in England and is due to aliens, to the pope or to any other bishops, abbots or any other, that none of the same money should be exported outside the realm … and this duty should be annulled.”66

62 King Edward never, from what I can tell, referred to King Philippe VI of France as the King of France, but instead consistently called him Sir Philippe de Valois.
63 CCR., 1346-9, 57.
65 CPR, 1345-8, 245, 425.
Additionally, Parliament warned all “alien friars” to “leave the realm … and if they should remain … they should be treated as outlaws.” As can be seen through the chancery records and through the actions of Parliament there was a widespread distrust for foreign missionaries. Therefore, it must be assumed, that these holy men were deemed a potential threat to the English war effort.

It was imperative for Edward to utilize England’s own resident clergy to foster the war effort throughout his domains. News of English successes during the campaign and siege are highlighted in many clerical works. One cleric of Canterbury, writing in the *Canterbury Chronicle*, wrote that “black birds were seen flying in the air over the army of the French, as if trying to seize their bodies and prophesying the death of the French.” What this demonstrates is that divine judgement has already been delivered upon the French. One such letter written by Richard Wynkeley to the Blackfriars in London delivered powerful news from the front on Edward’s success at the Battle of Crécy. It is undoubtable that such news reached the communities of England. Another such message of victory was delivered by Michael Northburgh, the future Bishop of London (1354-1361). Messages like these would have been delivered during gatherings at holy mass. Not only was the English church spreading word of the campaign but so were foreign observers. The *Annals of Zwettlel* described England’s victories as “God willed.” The dissemination of this information must have played a significant role in impeding active resistance against the English crown.

---

67 Ibid. Item 39.
Without the productional output of his people, Edward III would not have been able to wage this devastating war against his adversaries in France. His ability to organize various divisions of power greatly aided in this endeavor. He was able to accrue vast quantities of money from his people, most notably, the revenue raised by parliament, the church, and his merchants. By adapting administrative reforms to fuel his war machine, Edward III was able to launch the largest invasion of the fourteenth century into Normandy and France. His ability to delegate operational tasks to his sheriffs and clerks ensured a smooth transition of money, manpower and energy to Normandy and France. Despite the few instances where county sheriffs abused their power and mistreated the poor, the operation as a whole was a success. The role of the English church during the campaign, likewise, cannot go unrecognized. The delivery of news via sermons to far reaches of the English realm only aided Edward’s war machine. The type of complex war waged by King Edward III was predicated on “sheer force” and overwhelming strength. This type of warfare is often attributed to modern wars, however, as can be seen through this analysis, the roots of it laid within fourteenth century medieval England.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The capture of Calais in 1347 exemplifies King Edward III’s adaptive military thinking. The “sheer force” that wreaked havoc on the physical and moral economy of the French was a byproduct of excessive force. However, this excessive force was necessary to capture Calais. The seaport was a primary strategic location because of its proximity to the European continent. The capturing of this port provided the English army with a close conduit for military operations. It also provided the English Crown with a foothold on the European continent and acted as a constant reminder of the hereditary dispute over French-held lands. Securing Calais also helped control the Channel waters. This control helped prevent French and Genoese pirates from raiding English ships and England’s southern coastal towns. Calais’ close proximity to Flanders also fueled English economic ventures. Therefore, it could be argued that King Edward wanted to capture the port city in order to set up a wool deposit and trading hub with his Flemish trading partners.\(^1\) In order to accomplish these endeavors, Edward III was required to make a total investiture into his military affairs. By understanding his land campaign, his naval campaign, and his non-militant support, historians can better contextualize the siege of Calais and its place in medieval military historiography.

King Edward’s land campaign relied heavily on conscription and recruitment. The army he amassed for the invasion of Normandy and France was the largest expeditionary force to cross Channel waters during the fourteenth century. Once the English forces landed, they began a

---

\(^1\) Kelly DeVries has pushed for an inquiry into this argument as can be heard in Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, *Bow and Blade: The Battle of Crécy - Part 2 (1346)*, podcast audio, February 2, 2022, https://www.medievalists.net/2022/02/battle-crecy-1346-part-2/.
series of devastating raids throughout the countryside of Normandy and France known as chevauchées. These raids consisted of more than just the sacking of cities. By plundering French cities, capturing fortified locations, and destroying the countryside, Edward was able to self-victual his forces and render the lands desolate. All the meanwhile, he was reducing French fighting capabilities. The lack of agricultural production raised food prices. The burning of homes led to a significant rise in homelessness. All of these issues affected French tax revenues. These actions were done in the hopes of reducing French military power for the upcoming siege. Once the English army arrived outside the moats and walls of Calais, Edward ordered the seizure of the city.

Upon his arrival at Calais, King Edward wanted to conduct normal siege operations. These operations typically involved the sapping of walls, the poisoning of wells, the deployment of ladders for assault, and the use of siege engines to either shoot over or take down the walls. However, the natural landscape surrounding Calais hindered these actions as the soil was wet and loose preventing the movement of heavy machinery and the changing of the tides prevented the use of sapping. Therefore, the King launched a series of raids aimed directly at the walls in an attempt to take the city. When these raids failed, he decided to take his large force and enforce a total blockade. He stationed men along the perimeter of the city as well as along the causeways that allowed access over the marshlands. His men then constructed a large bastide with a castle protecting the entrance of Calais’ harbor in order to prevent the reinforcement and refreshment of the garrison. Although many of the French resupply efforts were successful, in the end, Edward’s army and navy were able to effectively cut off the city.

---

Edward’s navy played an integral role in the capture of Calais. In order to launch his massive campaign, Edward required a large navy; both in people and infrastructure. This navy was constituted of the royal fleet, merchant ships, fishing vessels, and other impressed ships. The role of the navy was to transport the army to Normandy and Calais, transport supplies to the army, act as a mobile prison, and secure the entrance of Calais’ harbor by enforcing a naval blockade. Edward’s navy was also used for covering actions against the main French army when it was perched upon the Sangatte. These roles, coupled with King Edward’s tactical responses to his enemies, illuminate the unique strength and adaptability of his military forces, ultimately leading to an English victory.

The success of the military resulted from the underlying work done by the English people, not just the military alone. Parliament, the clergy, merchants, administrative officials, and English subjects all played a specific role that relied upon one another. Orders from Parliament were executed by the administrative officials, who in turn, utilized the English subjects in order to produce the said order. For example, this occurred when Parliament ordered certain wartime goods or weapons to be procured and developed. Parliament, the merchants, and the clergy helped raise revenue for the war effort, evident in taxes, loans, and gifts. The clergy also acted as a mediator between English subjects and the realities of war, by disseminating wartime information that supported Edward’s cause. These non-military actors played a fundamental role in the success of King Edward’s war efforts and help demonstrate how King Edward III was able to mobilize England’s economy for wartime measures.

The goal of this paper has been to challenge both old and new military history. Old military history was obsessed with battle and had no further interest in understanding warring societies. New military historians are mostly concerned with analyzing the social context
surrounding war but in doing so they generally leave tactical concerns and battle narratives out of their works. This thesis was an attempt to amalgamate the old with the new and provide a nuanced approach to understanding the intellectual concerns of warfare. Despite what Victorian era historians have argued, warfare during this period was complex. The interconnected environments of England, Normandy, and France were pioneered through military action. Commanders such as King Edward III were not only tactically competent, but they also maintained a larger strategic outlook. Edward’s decisions were not usually the result of accidental encounters with the French as an ad hoc response to crisis but rather the product of a deliberate thought process and forward planning. Many historians have argued that Edward’s success in 1346 came at Crécy and that his primary goal was to engage in open battle with the French. However, upon his forces landing at Saint Vaast La Houge, Edward began relaying communique back to England requesting supplies to be sent along a route that led to Calais. Chroniclers such as Froissart furthered this argument by claiming that Edward desired to go to Calais after sacking Caen, as noted in chapter two.

This plan of action was formulated prior to any large open battle with the main French army. Despite King Philippe VI of France following King Edward’s forces as they marched to the Somme, the English monarch never went to battle. However, if one is to conduct a successful siege, time for encampment is crucial. The early stages of a siege are predicated on building defensive fortifications and securing the perimeter of the desired city. With King Philippe following Edward’s forces, Edward must have known that he had to fight the French prior to getting to Calais. If not, then the main French army posed a threat during the preliminary stages of the siege. This would explain Edward’s hasty march to the heights between Abbeville and

---

4 *The Chronicles of Froissart*, 97.
Crécy. These heights were tactically advantageous to the defensive position. Once here, Edward’s army dug in and won a decisive victory against the French and Genoese. This decisive victory forced the French to retreat and lick their wounds while English forces pressed on to the coast, to get resupplied, and then finally on to Calais. Despite the victory, the French army was still intact and posed a constant threat. It just needed some time to recover. King Edward took advantage of this time by entrenching his forces around Calais. After these actions, he never engaged the main French army in direct battle again because it was unnecessary to do so, despite French provocations and chivalric norms.

Another goal of this paper was to demonstrate the complexity of siege warfare. A successful siege was not always predicated on time. Time is but one variable to any conflict. This thesis has demonstrated that Edward not only brought overwhelming force via land and sea against his enemy, but he also mobilized his economy back home to fuel the war effort. Therefore, military historians of the modern period should not dismiss the results or nuances of medieval warfare. King Edward understood the complexities of invading another kingdom, acquiring a strategic foothold in hostile territory, and fostering allegiance among supporting communities. He was also keenly aware of the usage of “time” as both a friend and a foe in warfare, making him a clever commander.

While the focus of this paper has been on King Edward III’s capture of Calais from an English perspective, this study like many others leaves room for more scholarly research. This campaign can be used to further analyses on warfare and the environment. These analyses could include the geographical and agricultural landscape of Calais and Edwards tactical use of countryside chevauchées. Additionally, the summer of 1346 was incredibly hot and rainy which
hindered Italian agricultural support to France as the peninsula was crippled by famine. Another avenue for further research could be directed to the psychological effects of warfare on both veterans and civilians alike. This thesis acknowledged, but never intensely analyzed, the issues surrounding the effects of war on returning English veterans and their place within English society. Lastly, although this thesis attempted to demonstrate sieges as central pieces of warfare, further analysis is needed. From 1337 to 1453 conflict between the French and the English was mostly centered around sieges. The battles of Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and Agincourt (1415) are still historically popular today, but they were only three events in a span of 116 years. However, according to Kelly DeVries, this same time period yielded over 350 sieges of fortified towns and castles. Therefore, it is time to accept sieges as a critical area of study within military history.

There are a couple misconceptions about military historians in the eyes of other historians. First, that the study of warring societies has no intellectual value. However, this could not be further from the truth. Warfare is one of the few common events that all human cultures across time and space have shared, participated in, and learn from. Therefore, the study of warfare can help bridge and explain the ideological differences between human societies within our larger biome. Studying warfare is also a study of the human mind in action in the physical world. Whether these actions are derived from a commander’s orders or if they come from the actions of common warriors or even peasants, understanding these moments is important. The

---


scars left by war not only shaped the physical landscape but also the mental landscape which can have a lasting impact on how societies develop.

The second most common misconception about military historians is that they promote war. I do not know any military historian that promotes the furthering of the mass violence, raping, pillaging, plundering, and burning of both the world and its inhabitants. In fact, studying warfare demonstrates how violent and grotesque humans can be. King Edward’s forces, as demonstrated in this thesis, participated in all of these violent actions. This thesis has acknowledged the horrific nature of warfare and has not encouraged it. Many of Edwards troops as seen in each chapter of this thesis had a difficult time in readjusting to civilian life. Likewise, the civilian populations of England had a difficult time in adjusting to the return of veterans from war. This uneasy relationship often led to many violent situations. The mental scars of war are shared across both time and space, and they can be seen in troops returning from war today. Although, time passes and technology changes, warfare has remained relatively the same throughout history. However, by studying these events, historians can better prepare human society for conflict and its effects.

Above all, military historians of any era should not shy away from the often referred to “Dark Ages” but rather embrace them in a new light. As has been argued, historians can and should look to the medieval warfare of this period as a guiding structure to modern wars. King Edward III after capturing Calais exiled its communities and repopulated it with English subjects. It was an attempt to colonize and assimilate France in order to support his claim to the throne. However, this action never produced lasting results. Therefore, prudent modern military commanders should look to the actions of King Edward III as a prerequisite to understanding the military takeover of hostile lands before attempting to pursue such actions.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Chronicles


Chancery Records


http://www.sd-editions.com/AnaServer?PROME+0+start.anv+id=EDWARDIII.

Public Records: Chancery Rolls.  

The Avalon Project by Yale Law School, Document in Law, History and Diplomacy,  
https://avalon.law.yale.edu/.

Literary Sources  
Charny, Geoffroi de. *A Knight’s Own Book Of Chivalry*. Edited by Richard W. Kaeuper.  

Pizan, Christine de. *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*. University Park, PA:  
Penn State University Press, 1999.

Letters and Poems  
Fowler, Kenneth A. “News from the Front: Letters and Despatches of the Fourteenth Century.”  
https://books.openedition.org/irhis/1134


Miscellaneous and Collected Source Material  


**Secondary Sources:**

**Articles**


**Military Theory**


**Books**


BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Jordan Bruso was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts, in 1991 and raised in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, in the small farming community of Peru. After graduating from Wahconah Regional High School in 2010, Jordan Bruso enlisted in the United States Marine Corps after a brief stint in engineering school at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth. While in the Marine Corps, Jordan held the job of Marine-Air-Ground-Task-Force Planning Specialist and Force Deployment Chief. After two meritorious promotions to the rank of Sergeant and receiving two achievement medals from the Department of the Navy, Jordan was enrolled in various military theory classes as well as operational strategy, logistics and leadership courses. After exiting the Marine Corps in 2016, Jordan attended Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude with a B.A. in military history in 2018. After Keene State College, Jordan enrolled in the M.A. history program at the University of Maine in 2019. While at the University of Maine, Jordan worked for the Bangor International Airport in Bangor, Maine, as an operational and logistics officer. Mr. Jordan Bruso is a candidate for the Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Maine in May 2022.