THE ARMIES OF CRÉCY AND POITIERS

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The Hundred Years War

It is beyond the function or the size of this book to describe the causes or the history of the Hundred Years War, but the following brief introduction will give the reader some historical perspective.

In the short period between 1314 and 1328 the three sons of Philip IV of France reigned in rapid succession; but on the death of the last, Charles IV, the main line of the House of Capet came to an end, and the crown of France passed to Philip de Valois. Philip based his claim on a clause in the Salic Law which stated that women were not allowed to inherit landed property. Besides his three sons Philip IV also had a daughter, Isabella, who had married Edward II of England; and through his mother their son, Edward III, claimed that his right to the throne of France was stronger than that of Philip de Valois. Edward protested forcefully that Salic Law might prevent a woman from succeeding to the throne but it in no way prevented the inheritance passing through a woman to the male heirs.

The animosity between England and France had existed for many years. The English kings had not forgotten or forgiven the French for John's

Froissart, 'Causes of War': English representatives are led by the kneeling Bishop of Lincoln, and on the right, a messenger wearing a surcoat emblazoned with the arms of England presents a challenge to the King of France. (Bodleian Library)
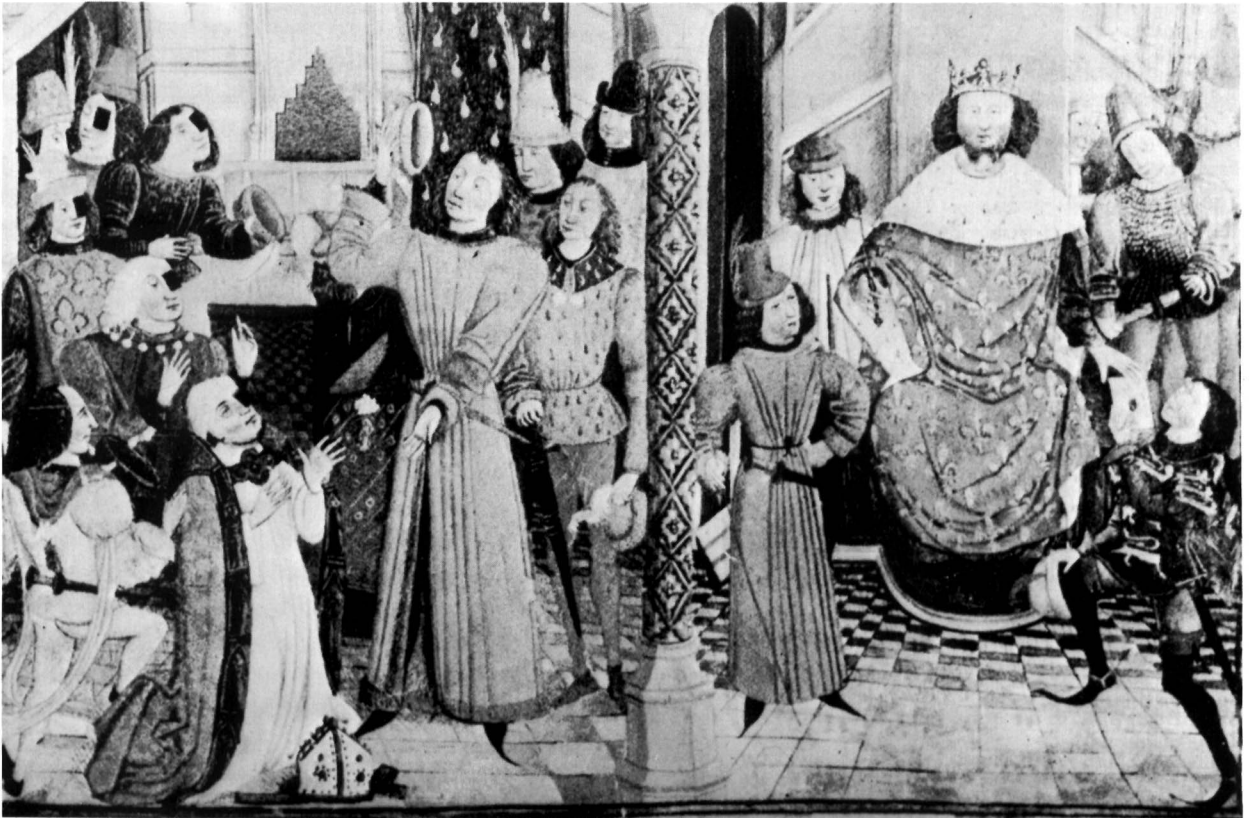
Froissart, 'Battle of Crécy'. A study of two armies fighting over hilly ground, which should not be taken as a very serious attempt to depict the tactical realities of the actual battle. Longbowmen are shown on both sides. (Bodleian Library)

expulsion from Normandy in 1204. The need to avenge this ignominious defeat was still strong. Philip IV had encroached on the Duchy of Guienne, a traditional area of English supremacy, and while England fought its long wars against the Scottish chieftains Philip supported the latters' claim for independence.

Apart from this continuous enmity between the two nations and the claim to the French throne, Edward had other reasons to desire war. Because of his failure in Scotland and the revolts of his turbulent barons, Edward II had been murdered; Edward III, ever conscious of his father's fate, welcomed a war with France as a diversion for hot-blooded English nobles who had perhaps acquired the unfortunate taste for killing kings.

Though the barons gave him cause for anxiety, the middle classes fully supported him, and were eager to finance the war. The reason for their enthusiasm was that Philip de Valois, in order to annoy his rival, had instructed his Flemish subjects to cease trading with the English. During this period English sheep were recognized as the best in Europe, so valuable that their export was prohibited in case the breed was obtained by another nation. The wool from these sheep was the raw material on which Flanders depended for the prosperity gained in her looms and factories. In retaliation Edward ordered an end to the export of wool, though at the same time he offered good incentives to any manufacturers of Bruges and Ghent who cared to live and set up factories in Norfolk or on the East Coast and become English subjects.

This offer did little to satisfy the patriotic Flemish, and discontent with the King of France

grew daily. So when Edward III embarked upon the war in 1338 he was supported by the English sheep farmers and Flemish merchants and artisans, all of whom had an investment in an English victory.

The war can be divided into two clear phases: firstly, the conflict between Edward III and the House of Valois, which lasted until 1375; and secondly a fresh effort by the Lancastrian kings, after an almost complete cessation of hostilities under Richard II. In each phase the same pattern emerged: dramatically complete English victories which faded into long and mismanaged campaigns and final French achievement.

Crécy

After an easy crossing of the English Channel Edward III's expeditionary force landed at St Vaast la Hogue, 18 miles south-east of Cherbourg. The landing took place on 12 July 1346, but it was a further six days before the army was ready to begin its march through the Cherbourg peninsula towards Paris. As it left the coast the English army separated into three divisions; the vanguard was under the nominal command of Edward, Prince of Wales, the central division was under the king, and the third division, acting as rearguard, was led by the experienced Earl of Northampton (plate G3).
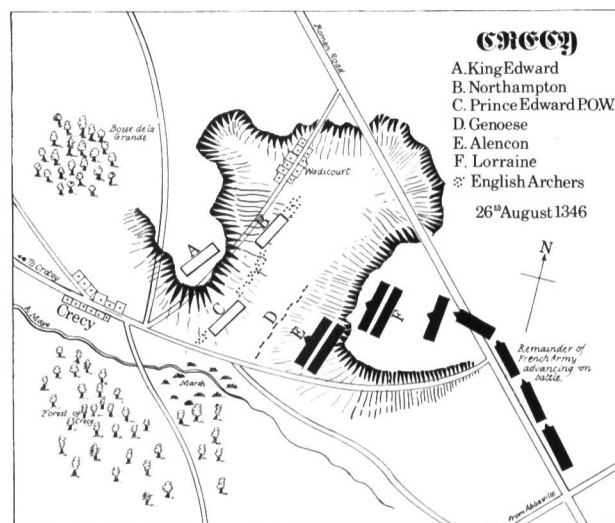
On 22 July the English reached St. Lô and opened out into line, moving through the Norman countryside on a broad front, possibly two miles wide. Northampton marched in the north, Prince Edward in the centre and the king at the southern end of the line.
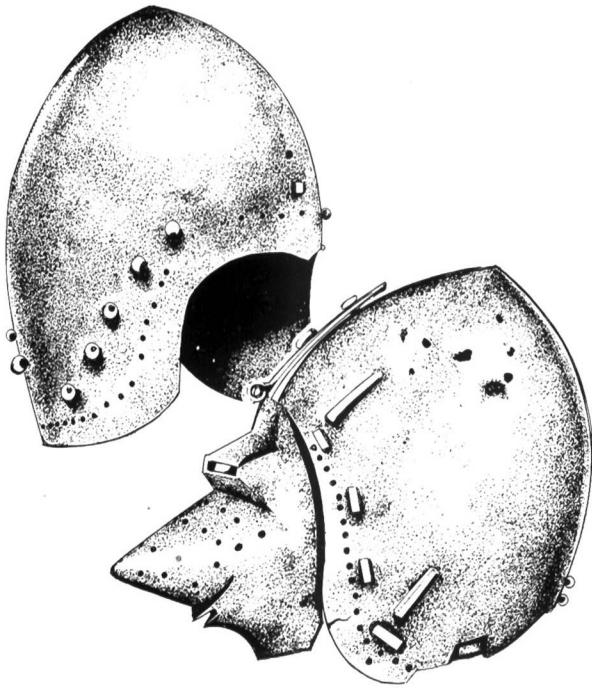
By the 26th the town of Caen was taken after a brief struggle which resulted in the capture of Constable Count d'Eu and a number of other noble prisoners along with booty, jewels and fine materials. The larger English force had little difficulty in overwhelming the small number of Norman men-at-arms and local militia. (The capture of the Count d'Eu was to have tragic repercussions. Unable to raise his ransom, he was released after four years' captivity only to be beheaded by King Jean on suspicion of treason.)

After resting at Caen for a few days the English moved in column towards Rouen. On 31 July the army again opened out in a broad front and reached Lisieux on 2 August. Here Edward learned that Philip of France was preparing to resist the English advance. Philip had taken the *Oriflamme*, the great war flag of France, from its resting-place in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, and by 25 July had enough troops at his disposal to set out to meet the English, his initial objective being the defence of Rouen.

Edward continued his advance east; at the same time he despatched a reconnaissance force under Godfrey d'Harcourt, a French knight banished from his homeland, to feel out the defences around Rouen. The reconnoitring English returned with bad news. Rouen was well defended and the bridges over the Seine had been destroyed. Edward now made a dash towards Elbeuf, only to find the bridges broken here too; he led his men down the southern bank of the river, leaving a trail of burning and pillage behind him. The two armies were now close, the French keeping pace with the English with only the Seine between them. At Poissy the English waited while their engineers repaired a bridge over the Seine; meanwhile Philip entered Paris without engaging his enemy.

When they left Poissy Edward's army marched north as quickly as possible, hoping to join their Flemish allies in Picardy. Each day they covered up to 16 miles in spite of becoming involved in small skirmishes and an attack by King John of Bohemia's contingent. By the 22nd Edward was

CRÉCY
A. King Edward
B. Northampton
C. Prince Edward P.O.W.
D. Genoese
E. Alençon
F. Lorraine
∴ English Archers

26th August 1346

Two late 14th century bascinets, showing vervelles for attachment of the camail. Note method of attaching 'pig-faced' visor.

within three days' march of the Flemish, but the River Somme separated them and Philip's growing army began pressing the English hard. Repeating their strategy along the Seine the French smashed the bridges over the Somme, and large numbers of local communal levies waited on the northern banks. Edward's search for a place to cross the river between Abbeville and the sea seemed fruitless until he learned of a tidal causeway across the shallow mouth of the Somme. The English reached the crossing point, called Blanchetaque, and waited until the tide ebbed. The Meaux Chronicler records that the whole army had crossed within one hour.

Meanwhile Philip, aware that Edward would be searching for the crossing point, dispatched a force under the knight Godemar de Fay to find the English and attack them while they attempted to land on the northern bank. In the growing light of dawn the English found the French waiting for them. The advance guard entered the water led by Hugh Despenser, Reginald Cobham and the Earl of Northampton and after a short engagement the French made off with heavy losses. As the tail

end of the English army scrambled ashore the French arrived on the southern bank behind them, their pursuit halted by the rising tide.

Philip's army did not wait for the next convenient opportunity to cross the Somme but moved back to Abbeville, where they spent the night of 25 August. For the next few hours the English probably waited to see if the French would follow them and then continued their march north; on the skyline ahead of them they could see the forest of Crécy, four or five miles deep and eight miles long. Edward was almost certainly searching for an advantageous position to stand and fight. His army was tired, hungry and footsore. Having accepted that a major battle was now inevitable, the English king carefully selected a slight hill just to the north of the village of Crécy-en-Ponthieu.

The shape and course of the events that followed are in a general sense known, but the smaller details remain confusing points of dispute.

As dawn broke on 26 August the army could observe the terrain around them. It was gently rolling country, with the army situated just north of Crécy on a slight ridge. The English right flank was close to the village, beyond which flowed the little River Maye. This end of the line was secured by the forest of Crécy and the possibly swampy ground around the river, the forest being well within bowshot. Approximately 2,000 yards away at the other end of the ridge were the houses and gardens of the village of Wadicourt, which provided ample protection for the left flank. The waggons and baggage carts were formed into a hollow square and were probably placed near the right flank of the army, though their exact location is a point of conjecture.

The size of either army at Crécy is a source of continuous argument, as are the numbers involved in any medieval conflict. So we can only estimate that there were possibly 9,000 to 10,000 Englishmen present, but there may have been as many as 14,000.

Edward's force was drawn up in its battle positions in the morning. It was a tired army that had marched over 300 miles through enemy territory in one month; but it had rested on the 25th, and now organized itself at comparative leisure. The three-divisional formation was re-

tained. The right division, closest to Crécy, was entrusted to Prince Edward. On his staff were the experienced earls of Warwick and Oxford (plate E3); Count Godfrey d'Harcourt; and four Knights of the Garter, Sir Thomas Holland (plate G2), Lord Stafford, Bartholomew Lord Burghersh and Sir John Chandos (plate G1). His division consisted of some 1,000 men-at-arms, 2,000 to 3,000 archers, and 1,000 Welsh spearmen. Closer to Wadicourt and drawn back further up the slope than Prince Edward's division lay the rearguard under the earls of Northampton and Arundel; also present was the Bishop of Durham. Northampton's division had perhaps 1,000 men-at-arms, 3,000 archers and an unknown number of Welsh spearmen. The king placed his division in the centre, a little back from the ridge top, with some 700 men-at-arms and 2,000 more longbowmen.

The grouping of the all-important archers is again a source of speculation. Geoffrey Baker records that they were placed on the army's flanks, while Froissart ambiguously describes a harrow pattern; perhaps they stood in between the three divisions and then retired to the flanks. However, we do know that a large number of holes about a foot wide and a foot deep were dug in front of the forward line. Their function was to break the momentum of the French cavalry charge, just as similar pits had unbalanced the English cavalry before Scottish archers at Bannockburn. The whole English army fought dismounted. Their tactics were to shake and, if possible, break the French attacking columns before they reached their objective; it was hoped they would be so severely mauled by the English archers that they could be repelled easily by the comparatively small body of men-at-arms.

Having drawn up the army in its fighting formation Edward, ever-conscious of his troops' morale, rode a small white horse through the ranks of his waiting army, calmly repeating his commands and encouraging and instructing his men to guard his honour and defend his right to the throne of France.

While the English army ate a meal and waited for the first sight of the enemy, the leading elements of the French army left Abbeville. So confident were the French nobility of easy victory that they had already shared out the potential English prisoners between themselves and calculated suitable ransoms for various notable English commanders and knights. As the French vanguard rode out of the town the main force swelled with reinforcements coming in from the surrounding countryside.

The French army was very large. Richard of Wynkeley, one of Edward III's clerks who was present on the field of battle, estimated that there were no less than 12,000 mounted men and some 60,000 infantry. There were possibly as many as 6,000 of the respected Genoese crossbowmen fighting for the French. Sadly from the French point of view, this massive force was ill-disciplined, badly organized and lacked any consistent system of command. With Philip at its head the army snaked towards Crécy, with peasants gathering along the roadside exhorting their lords to annihilate the English; the van was eight miles out of Abbeville before the rearguard left the town.

Edward III's standard. The 'hoist' contains the red Cross of St George on white; the 'fly' is equally divided blue over red, and the border is of alternating blue and red. The charges are as follows: Lion—gold, blue talons where on red ground, red talons against blue ground. Crowns—gold. Sunbursts—gold rays from white clouds. Motto—gold lettering on white bands edged with gold.
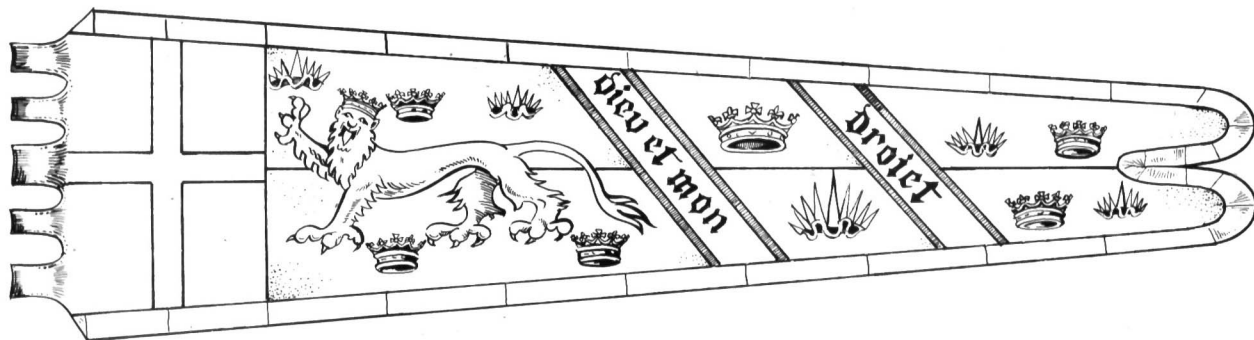
The badly damaged effigy of Sir John de Montacute, 3rd Earl of Salisbury in the nave of Salisbury Cathedral: in 1369 he was created knight banneret in the field. His armour is very similar to that worn by Prince Edward, but the sword belt is buckled and looped instead of being clasped. The sharply pointed bascinet clearly shows the lace-and-staple attachment of the camail. The 'coat armour' appears to show hinges up the right side and laces up the left, suggesting that it was actually attached to his body defences rather than being a separate jupon. Arms: Quarterly, 1st and 4th Argent, three fusils conjoined in a fess Gules; 2nd and 3rd Or an eagle displayed Vert, legged and beaked Gules.

By mid-afternoon the French had closed on the English troops, and paused to send forward a reconnaissance party consisting of the royal standard bearer Miles de Noyers, Jean le Beaumont and Henri le Moine of Basle. On their return they advised Philip that in view of the strong English position he should halt and re-form his

army and prepare for battle the following morning. It seems that Philip did order a halt, even a withdrawal; but the French nobility, now thoroughly roused and eager to prove their courage, would not obey. Totally unable to control the situation, Philip ordered an attack.

As a cohesive formation the French army had no experience in the field, but their men-at-arms were the flower of European chivalry from northern and central France. Many of them had fought against the Earl of Derby in Aquitaine; and they were strongly reinforced from amongst the troubled feudatories of central Europe. The infantry was braced by the Genoese, but the great mass of common foot soldiers were inexperienced urban and rural militia, ill-trained, ill-led and totally unreliable.

Led by their own commanders Carlo Grimaldi and Otto Doria, the Genoese were first into battle. Leading the forward division of mounted troops were probably blind King John of Bohemia and his son Charles. These were followed by Charles Duke of Alençon, the king's brother.

Accounts of the Genoese advance vary greatly. It is said that they were tired after a long march and in no mood for fighting, that they halted at least three times as they trudged forward towards the English. However, we must consider how difficult it was to organize such a large mass of men and move them into action, especially when we remember that the French army's internal communications would involve several languages.

As the Genoese advanced it began to rain; it may have been a brief shower or a thunderstorm, but when this had passed the sun shone again, from behind the English and into the eyes of the Genoese. Once within range the Genoese released their first volley of bolts, and then bent to span their cumbersome weapons. Whether the rain had reduced the effectiveness of their arbalests is difficult to establish, but it seems logical to assume that the Genoese, being professional soldiers used to fighting in many weather conditions, could compensate for any moisture on their weapons. The English archers returned the Genoese fire. Thousands of longbows were drawn and then released, filling the air with their own deadly rain. It is unlikely that the Genoese had ever experienced such concentrated firepower. In

addition to this they *may* have been fired upon by some crude stone-hurling cannons lodged under the baggage carts; though not effective weapons in themselves, the noise and smoke would be disturbing. All this was too much for the Genoese, who broke ranks and ran.

The sight of the Genoese running away angered the Duke of Alençon so much that he ordered the cavalry forward toward the English right flank. The Genoese were now caught between two opposing forces and mercilessly ridden into the ground. Alençon was closely followed by other French nobles, all hacking their way through the tangled mass of men and mounts to get at the English front line—only to lose their impetus under the showers of arrows, their mounts stumbling and shying among the pits in front of the English forward line. Column after column hurled itself on the English right, each man pressing hard on the heels of those before. The result was appalling confusion, with each fresh body of cavalry losing its momentum and being swamped by the mass of those already repulsed, often before it came within range of the withering fire from the English archers.

Blind King John of Bohemia followed his son Charles into action, guided by a faithful group of knights; his body was later found on the field of battle. During the close fighting in and around the right flank involving Alençon and the Count of Flanders the 16-year-old Prince Edward was hurled to the ground, only to be saved by his standard bearer Richard Fitzsimon. Fearing that the King of England's son might be killed, Godfrey d'Harcourt sent Sir Thomas Norwich to Edward for help, but the king dispassionately dismissed this request, sending Sir Thomas back to his position. Thus Edward III demonstrated to his men that he was prepared to place his son's life alongside that of any other man in his army. Later, he quietly sent 20 knights under the Bishop of Durham to the Prince's position. On arrival they found the prince and his staff resting on their swords, while Sir Richard Fitzsimon and Sir Thomas Daniel raised the prince's standard again.

There were as many as 15 French attacks, each one repulsed by the crossfire of the archers or beaten back by the men-at-arms in Prince Edward's division. Philip of France participated

Sir John Gifford, 1348; Bowers Gifford, Essex. An interesting brass illustrating the transition from mail to plate. The loose-sleeved mail hauberk hangs over plate—perhaps splinted?—defences on the forearms; there are plate defences at shoulder, elbow and knee. The surcoat appears to fit tightly above the waist and to fall in loose folds below.

in the fighting; he was unhorsed twice and probably wounded in the face. The English, heeding their king's commands, did not break ranks to pursue their enemy; Edward was well aware of the threat posed by the massive numbers of communal levies who followed in the wake of the French nobility.

As darkness fell the French attack waned, and Philip was led away from the field by the Count of Hamault. All night the English remained in their positions, lighting fires to keep warm and illuminate the area in case of a night attack. In the morning, with the English victory beyond dispute, a count of the French dead was taken. On the field lay some 4,000 French soldiers, amongst them the Duke of Alençon, Count Louis Nevers of Flanders, the counts of St Pol and Sancerre, the Duke of Lorraine, the King of Majorca and King John the Blind of Bohemia.

Poitiers

In 1350 Philip IV died and was succeeded on the throne by his son Jean 'the Good' (1350–1364). The fluctuating contest of arms between England and France had continued, and in 1356 Prince Edward, with the splendid strategic idea of bringing the greater part of western France under English control, initiated a new expedition into Aquitaine. In the north the Duke of Lancaster (plate C2) started out from Cherbourg towards Brittany, while Prince Edward advanced from Bordeaux. Prince Edward's strategy was to fight, burn, pillage and amass loot, rather than to take towns or occupy territory, and eventually to join forces with Lancaster.

With an Anglo-Gascon force under his command the prince reached the Loire on 3 September, only to find the bridges destroyed; turning west towards Tours he found King Jean's army moving rapidly to meet him. Realizing an engagement was unavoidable, the prince began to search for a good defensive position. At this time he was approached by the Cardinal Talleyrand de Perigord, who informed him that Jean's army intended to bring him to battle on 14 September, and that he, the Cardinal, would act as inter-

mediary in an attempt to bring about a peace.

On 18 September the English army found a suitable position to stand and fight on a wooded slope about two miles south of Poitiers. Jean, with what was probably the largest field army of the century, was confident of victory, but was temporarily held in check by Cardinal Talleyrand, who made another attempt at negotiating a peace. Prince Edward, aware that he was in a desperate situation, offered huge concessions, even the return of Calais and Guînes, but nothing short of complete surrender would satisfy the French. As negotiations continued Edward strengthened his defences and Jean's army hourly grew larger. Finally negotiations broke down, and Jean prepared his plan of attack.

The French king was advised by his two marshals, Audrehem and Clermont, and by Sir William Douglas, a Scottish veteran of the Anglo-Scottish border wars. Clermont favoured defeat through starvation by encircling and blockading the English. This was the course of action most feared by Prince Edward. Douglas, remembering the devastating firepower of the English archers, advised the king to use his men-at-arms as infantry. To achieve this they had to remove their spurs and shorten their lances to five feet. A small body of 300 élite horsemen was retained to smash a gap through the ranks of the English archers. They were led by the senior French commanders, the Constable of France (the Duc d'Athenes) and the two marshals.

A cavalry charge would open the French attack, to be followed by three dismounted divisions. The first division was led by the 19-year-old Dauphin, as yet lacking any experience in battle; the second division came under the command of Duke Philippe d'Orleans, brother of Jean, and as inexperienced as the Dauphin; the third division, at the rear, was under the king. Their starting position was on a plateau facing roughly southeast, with the River Miausson to their west. The firmly entrenched English were some 500 yards to their front.

Prince Edward's Anglo-Gascon army faced the French on another plateau. To their east was a low hill, overgrown with vines, bushes and brambles. To the west lay the valley of Miausson. A thick hedge grew across the front of the English position, giving cover or protection for the full length of their lines. The flanks were protected by a marsh at the western end and a gap with hedges on both sides at the eastern end. South of the English position there was a ford over the Miausson called the Gué de Homme, carrying a road south to Bordeaux.

There were probably 6,000 to 8,000 mixed Gascon and English troops in Prince Edward's army. He deployed them in divisional formation, two at the front and one at the rear. The earls of Warwick and Oxford led that on the left flank, and Suffolk and Salisbury that on the right. Salisbury's men were protected by a barricade of waggons and trenches hastily prepared during the truce. Behind

Effigy of Guy, Lord Bryan in Tewkesbury Abbey; he fought at Crécy. His head rests on his great helm, his feet on a lion. Much of the body defence still appears to be of mail or fabric; note interesting splinted leg protection.

Froissart, 'Siege of Calais'. Mounted knights advance on their enemy, with fighting infantry and baggage waggons in the foreground. Although Froissart's written chronicle is genuinely contemporary, we cannot be certain when the illustrations were prepared. He died in *c*.1410, and the un-dated first known edition of his chronicles may have appeared as much as 50 years later. The styles of armour shown are certainly those in vogue at the time the illustra-tions were painted, not genuine reconstructions of mid-14th century costume. Even so, it is interesting that this picture includes knights wearing great helms alongside others in 'snout-faced' bascinets. (Bodleian Library)

the two forward divisions stood Prince Edward's division. As at Crécy the whole English army fought on foot.

Even in the opening hours of the battle it appears that Prince Edward intended to break off the engagement and slip away. With the archers holding the hedge along the front of the position

Warwick began to move away over the Gué de Homme, followed by the heavily laden baggage carts.

On observing Warwick's movements the two marshals, Clermont and Audrehem—still quarrel-ling over the opening strategy—separated and charged at two different parts of the English army. Audrehem attacked Warwick, who was now returning to the main force, and Clermont went headlong at the Earl of Salisbury's position. This separation of the French mounted contingent was a blunder conspicuous even among the many errors made by the French that day. Not only did these two hot-headed French nobles ignore their orders, but they totally failed to be effective at the points they attacked. Warwick's archers were having little effect on the heavily armoured

frontal areas of French men and horses, but the Earl of Oxford pushed out the archers on the English left until they stood safely on marshy ground. From here they poured their fire into the flanks and rumps of the French horsemen. Clermont sought the gap in the hedge and found it, only to have his men shot down and dragged off their horses by archers concealed behind the hedge. He and many of his brave followers were killed at this spot.

Jean, unaware that the initial attack had foundered, ordered the Dauphin's division into action on foot. In the Dauphin's entourage were his two brothers, 17-year-old Louis, Duke of Anjou, and 16-year-old Jean, who was to become the Duke of Berry. They pressed forward up the slope, and being well-armoured did not suffer badly from the English bowmen; but by the time they reached their objective they were tired. Even though they fought savagely and bravely they could not break into the English position, and gradually began to fall back, losing the Dauphin's blue and gold standard in their retreat. At the height of this attack the two forward English divisions were totally engaged, fighting from behind a screen of trenches, hedges and overturned baggage carts, the fighting taking the form of numerous small hand-to-hand struggles up and down the line. With the sight and din of battle all around him Prince Edward patiently waited in the centre. Close to him were members of his household, amongst them Sir Nigel Loring, Sir William Trussell and Sir Alan Cheyne. As at Crécy the English were forbidden by their commander to break ranks and pursue the enemy; but the sight of the fleeing French was too much for Sir Maurice Berkeley, who mounted and rode after the tail of the Dauphin's division—only to be ignominiously captured.

While the French regrouped the English removed their wounded, gathered sheaves of arrows and drank water brought from the stream on their left. As the English rested, extraordinary decisions were being made by the French high command. For some still inexplicable reason the Dauphin and his younger brother were ordered off the field of battle, and with them a large protective screen of mounted men-at-arms. This sight must have been demoralizing for the French troops waiting to go into action. Then, as if infected by a sense of failure running rife in the French ranks, the Duke of Orleans also turned and led his division away.

Jean, nearly beside himself with anger at the apparent cowardice of his brother and the failure of his first two attacks, ordered the *Oriflamme* forward to signify a fresh all-out attempt to crush the enemy. With his youngest son Philip (the future Duke of Burgundy) beside him, Jean led the massive third division ponderously forward.

With a French division which was still larger than the whole Anglo-Gascon army advancing upon them, any hope that victory was theirs quickly disappeared from the minds of the English waiting on the hill. It is said that one soldier standing near the prince shouted 'Alas! We are beaten!' only to be answered by the prince, 'Thou liest, thou knave, if thou sayest we can be conquered as long as I live!'

Jean's division fell upon the English with great ferocity. Again the armies locked in terrible hand-to-hand fighting, many men so desperate to turn the course of battle that they resorted to knives and stones; the archers used the same arrows again and again, each time plucking them from the French dead and dying. In the midst of this terrible struggle Prince Edward demonstrated his military ability. He ordered the Captal de Buch to lead a party of men to the French rear. When he was in position the Captal was to unfurl the banner of St George and attack; meanwhile Sir James Audley led a cavalry charge into the French. Attacked on both sides, Jean's division lost all confidence in
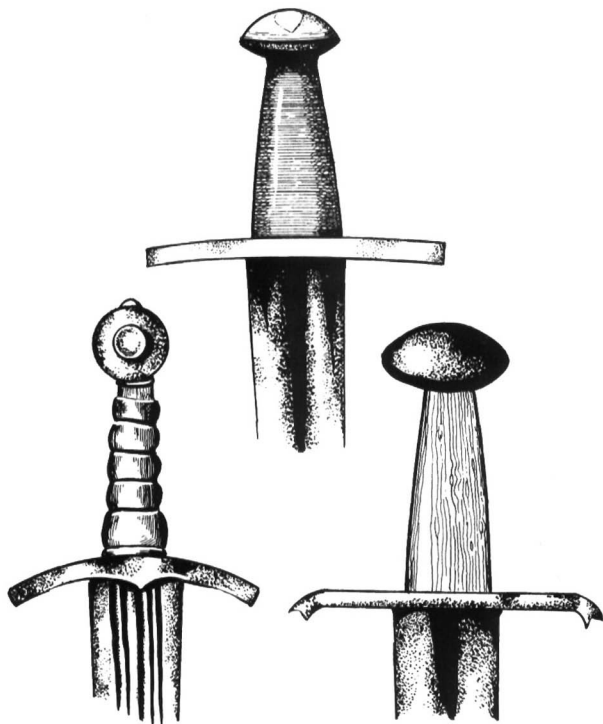
Impression of one of the gauntlets from the accoutrements of Prince Edward at Canterbury Cathedral; note the spikes, and the lion-shaped gadlings at the knuckles.
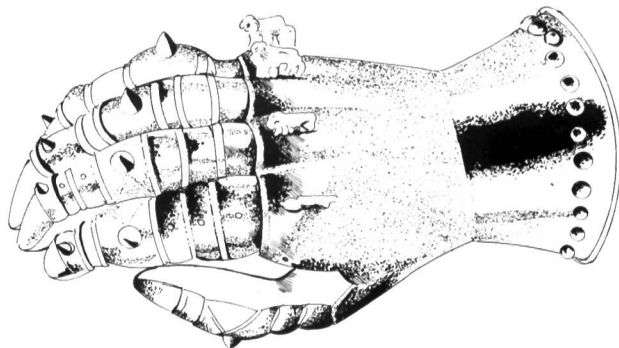
their attack and began to fight in small, desperate groups. Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, proud bearer of the *Oriflamme* (plate F3), was hacked to the ground and killed. Eventually King Jean was found, his helmet off, swinging a great battle axe over the piled corpses which lay around his feet, at his side his 14-year-old son (plate F1). In the end the French king was taken, either by Denys de Morbecque, a knight from Artois, banished for manslaughter and now serving the English, or by Bernard de Troy, a Gascon in the retinue of Sieur de Tartas. It seems that in the confusion around Jean's position de Morbecque had the king and then lost him, de Troy capturing him on a second occasion.

The defeat of Poitiers removed a complete level of French leadership and left the remaining population outraged and horrified at the inability of the aristocracy to fulfil their feudal obligations of protection. The king disappeared into sumptuous captivity. The constable, two marshals and the bearer of the *Oriflamme* were dead. One archbishop, 13 counts, five viscounts, 21 barons and bannerets and some 2,000 men-at-arms were captured or killed. Of the English dead, no reliable figure has been recorded.

The Chain of Command

As a general rule the commander-in-chief of the medieval army was usually the leader of the nation, tribal group or clan. It was within his power, and part of his responsibility in his society, to decide where and when war should take place.

Beneath the ruler lay the different levels of command which usually reflected the hierarchical nature of the medieval world, with the higher offices going to the senior peers—though in both the French and English armies there were minor exceptions to this rule. Certain of the senior members of the hierarchy held offices which carried various duties within the army. These were the constables and marshals.

In the French army of the Crécy–Poitiers period the Constable of France was the senior military officer, outranking even royal princes and second only to the king. His responsibilities encompassed the efficient running of the army and tactical command when the king was not present on the field of battle. If the king was absent the constable was entitled to fly his banner over any captured towns or castles and in theory all booty belonged to him. He was paid a fixed salary in peace or war of 2,000 francs a month. In the English army constables did not usually command troops, and on the rare occasion when this did occur it was because he was a peer of high rank and not through his military office. Under the three Edwards the constable's duties became the maintenance of order in the neighbourhood of the court and the protection of the King's household. In the field these duties extended to the area of the royal camp. Somewhat later, when Edward III set up the Court of Chivalry, it became the duty of the Lord High Constable to preside over enquiries into crimes committed by knights, and, with the Earl Marshal, to organize tournaments.

The function of the marshal was to physically lead the army on campaign and to select suitable

14th century sword hilts. There was great variety among the swords of this period, some knights even carrying two, one for slashing and another with a narrow, tapering point for thrusting.
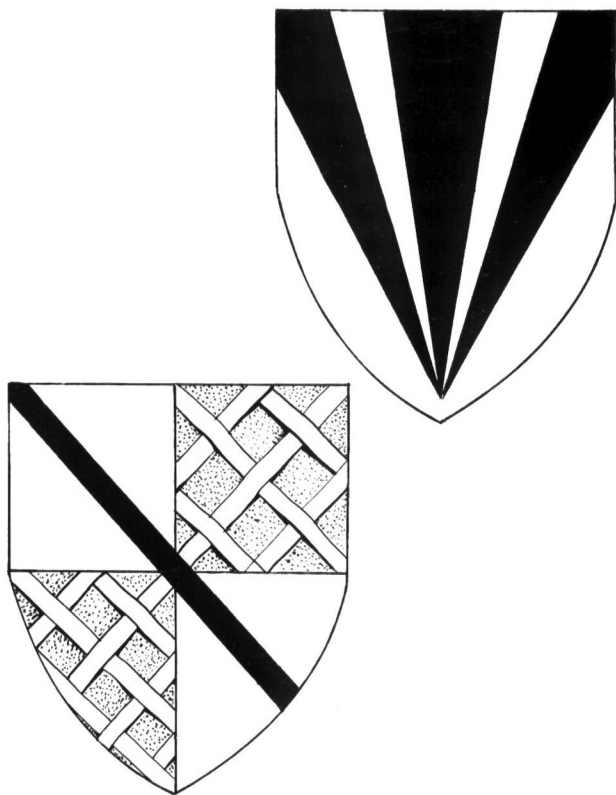
Froissart, 'English troops drive away the enemy'. Infantry with longbows and spears are visible in this illustration, which clearly shows the sallet-type helmets more typical of the 15th century. (Bodleian Library)

places to halt and camp. On arrival at the camping place the marshal allocated the different sites for nobles to pitch their tents. They were also involved in the manoeuvring of various formations in the field.

In both armies there were other minor offices, such as the Master of the Crossbowmen of France, this office exercising command over all archers and infantry; and at Poitiers we see the Earl of Oxford functioning as commander of archers.

Throughout the medieval period we find the commander-in-chief, be he leader of tribe, nation or clan, present on the battlefield. Although he was present the commander-in-chief did not actually lead the front ranks into battle in most medieval conflicts, or even come into physical contact with the enemy. It seems to have been a general characteristic of the medieval commander to entrust the tactical development of the battle to a proficient, experienced general and to place himself with the reserves. From the 11th century to the end of the Hundred Years War we have numerous examples of this. In 1044 at the Battle of Noit, Geoffrey Martel of Anjou grouped his troops

in six divisions and commanded the sixth, which served as reserve. Henry I of England, fighting at Tinchebray in 1106 and Brémule in 1119, remained dismounted in the second line which formed his reserve. At Falkirk King Edward led his reserve third division, and at Bannockburn both commanders fought with their reserves. There are many other examples, too numerous to record in the space allowed, but the general pattern that emerges indicates that the medieval commander controlled his army from a distance, usually only being involved if the reserve was committed. This pattern was repeated in both armies at Crécy and Poitiers.

Manoeuvring the army on the march, in action and around the camp must have been extremely difficult, but this was achieved in a number of ways. Verbal instruction would be passed down through the hierarchical chain of command, often requiring translation into several different

15

(Top) Arms of Guy, Lord Bryan; this Crécy veteran was the king's banner-bearer in France in 1349 when the French under de Chargny attempted to recapture Calais. Or, three piles conjoined in base Azure. Crest: On a chapeau Gules, faced Ermine, a hunting-horn Sable, garnished Or.
(Bottom) Arms of Edward, Lord le Despencer, KG (Plate E1): Quarterly, Argent and Gules; in 2nd and 3rd a fret Or, over all a bend Sable. Crest: Out of a ducal coronet, per pale Gules and Argent, between two wings, a griphon's head of the last, beak and ears of the first, gorged with a collar per pale Or and Argent.

different commanders' positions.

Trumpets seemed to have been used in much the same way as banners, although they would obviously be more suitable where audible as opposed to visual instructions were required, for example in camp, at night and where large formations of troops moved over uneven terrain. The chronicler Jean le Bel records the trumpet commands of the English army under Edward III: at the first blast, horses were saddled, at the second the troops had to put on their arms and at the third to mount and get into their formations. Some writers describing the opening moments of the battle of Crécy mention the Genoese crossbowmen moving forward with a great noise of trumpets and drums.

The Cavalry

The medieval army consisted of two arms, the cavalry and infantry; although from the first quarter of the 14th century there was a steady growth in the use of artillery, this third arm did not become really effective until the 15th century.

Despite its glamour and apparent importance to medieval nobility, the primary and almost only function of the cavalry was the break-through, and as the medieval period progressed this was achieved by using increasingly heavier troops and horses. The heavy protective armour for men and mounts gave confidence and helped to overcome fear of death from wounds; but the mere fact that donning the armour and preparing for war took so long tended to fix battles in pre-arranged locations with both sides knowing exactly where their enemy stood.
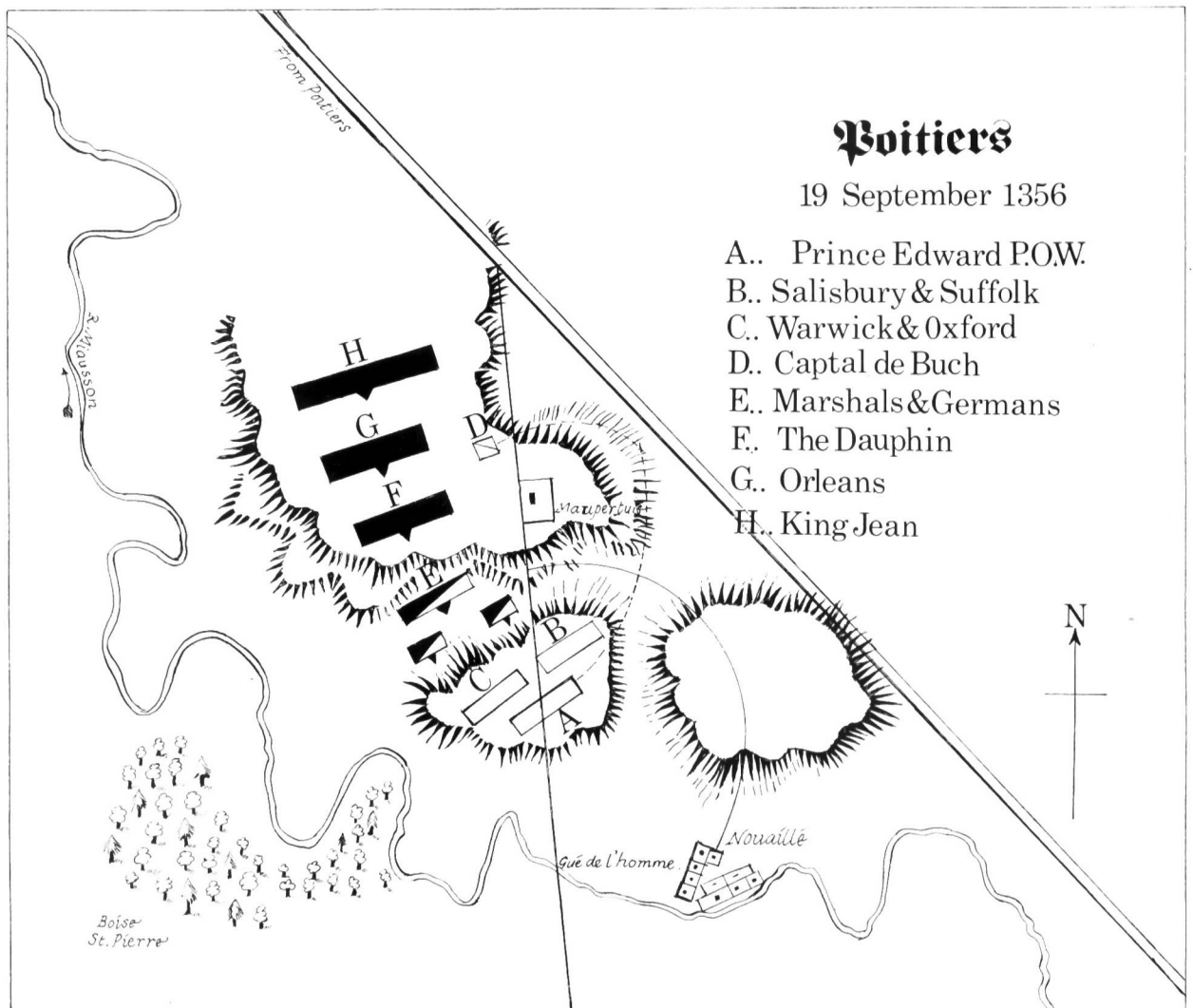
The break-through can be divided into two distinct phases, the first phase being the closely-packed charge at the enemy unit. When we use the term 'charge' we must not imagine that cavalry of this period could deliver the attack with the speed of their counterparts in later centuries. It is unlikely that this unwieldy and cumbersome force achieved speeds much faster than a trot. The shock of impact was still considerable but it was achieved in a more ponderous manner. The second phase was the penetration, a phase when

languages as it reached the lower echelons. This was a particular difficulty for the French at Crécy.

Banners and trumpets were probably a more efficient system of ordering troops. On the march, marshals usually rode ahead of the army carrying banners, thus giving direction. We know that when moving his army over long distances Edward III strictly forbade his troops to leave the main force. Each knight must hold his position in his lord's formation and not ride in front of his lord's banner. On the battlefield banners directly indicated changes of direction. To take the banner forward was the sign to begin the attack; the banner was used to halt the army or to withdraw or set up camp. In the confusion of fighting the banner served as a rallying point and marked the

the bravest men could demonstrate their knightly qualities of courage and leadership. Having broken into the enemy's ranks it was hoped that their terrified opponents would turn and run, but at this point the cavalry became vulnerable, especially if the break-through force was too small. Then they could be isolated, particularly by confident and courageous infantry, and killed at will; so the tendency was to avoid deep penetration and withdraw for a second attack. The epic poem *Girart de Roussillon* emphasises this: 'Strike, kill, tùrn everything upside down in the mêlée until you have pushed through the enemy ranks, and then attack them again altogether.'

In general, medieval cavalry was deployed in massive formations or battles. The lack of training in tactical skills or cavalry manoeuvres gave the commander little choice in the way he was to use his force. This, coupled with the immature arrogance and uncompromising courage of the nobility who formed the greater part of the mounted arm, gave even the most imaginative commander many problems and little flexibility. The French cavalry at Crécy and Poitiers give us classic examples of these characteristics.

Throughout the period cavalry strategy amounted to little more than a charging mass of mounted men, shields raised, lances lowered. If cavalry clashed with cavalry the moment of impact would be appalling with men and screaming horses crashing to the ground to be ridden over by their comrades. Then hundreds of individual struggles would occur, each man gasping for air inside his armour while he searched through the

Poitiers

19 September 1356

A.. Prince Edward P.O.W.
B.. Salisbury & Suffolk
C.. Warwick & Oxford
D.. Capital de Buch
E.. Marshals & Germans
F.. The Dauphin
G.. Orleans
H.. King Jean

Froissart, 'The Battle of Poitiers'. Knights in 15th century sallet and barbutte helmets and elaborately decorated suits of complete plate ride through woodland, with a town—Poitiers?—in the background. (Bodleian Library)

slits of his visor for an enemy to hack down. Sometimes each side would withdraw, regroup and charge again. The individual display of courage was always regarded as the highest military virtue, far outweighing any tactical ability.

Knights or men-at-arms, being the all-round soldiers of the age, did not always fight on horseback. They fought on foot, on land and in naval engagements, as at Sluys. Generally they attacked castles on foot and were deployed dismounted to stiffen units of foot soldiers. Apart from the notable examples of Crécy and Poitiers, we find knights fighting on foot at Tinchebray in 1106, at Boroughbridge in 1322, and again at Duplin Moor. In 1333 at Halidon Hill Edward III used knights on foot to defeat the Scots, and in the Hundred Years War

we find the French adopting this strategy not only at Poitiers but at Cocherel and Auray in 1364 and Najera in 1367.

Although cavalry were usually deployed in large formations, each formation could be broken down into smaller units which varied in size depending on nation or campaign. The smallest of these units was termed a 'lance'. This generally amounted in the English army to a knight, a man-at-arms and two mounted archers (these latter were mounted for mobility but fought on foot). The French equivalent consisted of a man-at-arms, a squire, three mounted archers and a hobilar—a light cavalryman, riding a small horse. The next larger unit numbered between 25 and 80 men and was commanded by a knight flying a triangular pennoncel on his lance. A unit of this size could be compared with the squadron in the 19th century cavalry regiment; grouped with other units of a similar size it made up part of a large formation under a knight flying a swallow-tailed pennon.

Should this individual distinguish himself in the field the pennon was simply changed to a banner by removing the swallow-tail ends, and thus the knight became a knight banneret. Two, three, or perhaps more of these latter formations became a division or battle, usually commanded by the sovereign, a senior member of the royal family or a noble, the commander using a banner as his badge of rank. While describing the significance of flags as symbols of rank, it is worth mentioning the other principal flag known as the standard. This could only be flown by the sovereign, peers, knights banneret and feudal barons. It was a narrow tapering flag divided into two rounded ends, and never furled during campaign. The standard was used as a rallying point. The length varied depending on the rank or status of its owner.

It is important to understand that medieval cavalry did not consist solely of knights; there were also men-at-arms, squires and sergeants. The term 'men-at-arms' is a loose and inaccurate way of describing armoured fighting men, and while all knights were men-at-arms, not all men-at-arms were knights.

Besides the heavily armoured units of horsemen there was an increasing use of an early form of light cavalry. Edward I had been experimenting with light horsemen since 1296, when he included 260 Irish hobilars in his army in Scotland, and in 1333 Edward III raised a corps of mounted archers so that he could manoeuvre his fire power on the field of battle.

Cavalry Armour

Armour worn during the Hundred Years War passed through many changes. It was a period which started with armour consisting of a mixture of chain-mail, *cuir-bouilli* and plate, and finished with knights being totally enclosed in a suit of plate. There can be little doubt that armour worn at Crécy and Poitiers varied considerably, and improvements which occurred during the century were effected in both nations at roughly the same time.

At the beginning of the period the surcoat was still in fashion, this particular variation of the


A drawing of the tomb of a French knight and his lady, *c.*1414. Note the use of heraldry on both figures. (Bodleian Library)

garment covering the upper half of the torso and hanging loosely in folds below the waist, terminating at, or just above, the knees. Generally it opened at the sides but was sometimes slit up the front and laced at the neck. The arms of the wearer were displayed front and rear, above the waist, the

Effigy of Sir Hugh Despenser, 1349, Tewkesbury Abbey. He did not fight at Crécy, but his armour gives a useful example of the longer style of surcoat, with a mail hauberk almost touching the knees. The bascinet is rounded, probably indicating an earlier style; the lace for the camail does not pass across the brow, as in later examples.

lower edge of the garment being finished with dags, escallops or some other pattern. The reader will find numerous examples of this form of surcoat on brasses and effigies throughout England and
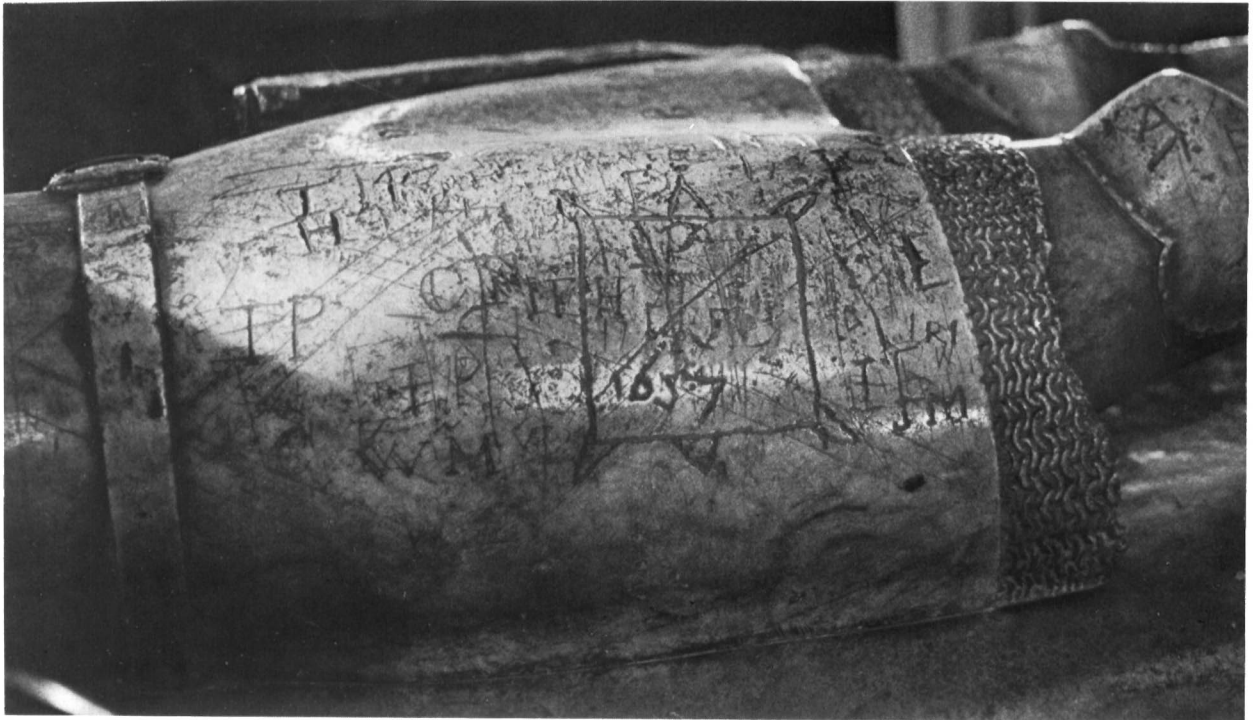
France, one of the best examples being the Hastings Brass dated 1347 at Elsing, Norfolk.

By about 1350 we find this garment gradually being replaced by the jupon, more tightly fitting and shorter, and generally without sleeves. It was still used to display an heraldic device, but the neck was concealed beneath the lay of the camail. The shorter skirt was again edged with escallops, acanthus leaves, or dags. Fortunately, evidence in the form of brasses, effigies and manuscripts is considerable, and suggests that the jupon may have been worn so tightly that creases and folds cannot be seen. It was probably composed of several pieces of material sewn together and finished with an outer layer of silk, velvet or some other rich material, some jupons even being stuffed or quilted. Prince Edward's jupon hung for many years above his beautiful gilt tomb in Canterbury Cathedral; this garment had short sleeves.

Beneath the jupon there was probably some form of breast plate, replacing the mail hauberk worn beneath the surcoat earlier in this period. It is likely that this breast plate covered the upper area of the chest as far down as the diaphragm; an alternative was a defence of metal hoops rivetted to fabric and passed horizontally around the body. Since very little contemporary armour has survived, it is difficult to establish if there was a corresponding rear plate which could be attached to the front to form a complete cuirass, but as military fashions changed and the jupon was discarded, there emerged in around 1410 suits of armour with combined front and rear plates. Thus it seems quite possible that the cuirass was undergoing development during the latter half of the 14th century.

Beneath the plate defences of the torso we find an aketon, or a simplified hauberk. This former provided padding and was a securing point for the metal plates; it also supported the areas of chainmail which provided protection where the plates articulated with the movement of the arms. Effigies frequently show a fringe of chain-mail beneath the bottom edge of the jupon, suggesting a mail skirt on the aketon to protect the groin, when a conventional hauberk was not worn.

Helmets of the mid-14th century were of two distinct types, the helm and the bascinet. The helm was of massive construction, often with a cruciform reinforce at the front incorporating the vision slots, and was normally made in one piece—although helms with opening visors were beginning to be seen. Since the beginning of the century the top surface of the helm had been becoming more domed or pointed, to provide a glancing surface. The helm was worn over a mail hood—coif—over a padded cap.

The bascinet owed its birth to a metal skull-cap worn beneath the helm, and gradually began to replace the helm altogether. There was almost certainly a long period when both the helm and the bascinet were seen side by side as the headgear of knights in battle, and this period coincides with our subject. The bascinet grew more substantial, more pointed at the rear (to give a glancing surface when the head was tilted forward, as during a charge) and acquired in many cases a visor of its own, in the so-called 'snout-faced' or 'pig-faced' style. Some bascinets of the period seem to have been fitted with visors of exaggerated, even grotesque proportions. The use of heraldic crests on helms continued in this period, though how widely they were worn in battle is not really known. Crests never seem to have been worn on bascinets, although coronets and circlets were worn round them by royalty and some noblemen.

Attached to the rear and sides of the bascinet was a curtain of mail known as the camail. This provided all-round protection to the neck and shoulders, leaving only a small area of the face exposed. It was fitted to the bascinet by means of a lace woven through the eyes of a series of staples known as vervelles, and fastened in a knot or tassel. After about 1390 we find this lace passing through a narrow channel formed by two raised, decorated rims around the head-dress. Good examples of this characteristic can be found on the brasses of Sir John de Wyngfield, Letheringham, Suffolk, who died in 1389, and Sir Robert Albyn, c.1400, of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire.

Plate armour of the 1350s was characteristically clean and virtually free of decoration, usually closely following the contours of the body, while the mixed armour of the early decades of the century employed various protective devices to cover the upper limbs, from single gutter-shaped plates, or mail over the upper and lower arm, to roundels of plate at the elbow and shoulder joints.

To appreciate the skill achieved by armourers of the second half of the 14th century we only have to examine the gauntlets worn during these years. They usually consisted of one plate to cover the wrist and back of the hands and a number of smaller overlapped plates on the fingers, each being stitched separately to a leather glove. The wrist was protected by the bell-shaped opening of the gauntlet. Spiked or raised pieces of enamelled metal known as gadlings were joined to the knuckle portion of the gauntlet and were used as a means of offence as much as decoration.

As armour became more sophisticated the belts became more decorative. They were worn low around the hips, fixed to the jupon in some way and buckled at the front, often exquisitely finished with jewels or enamel brooches, using flowers, geometric patterns or heraldic devices as a theme for design. A straight-bladed sword with a large hilt hung from the left hip, and from the right a misericord, or 'dagger of mercy', with its needle-

The arms of (top) Chandos and (bottom) Oxford: see Plates G1 and E3.
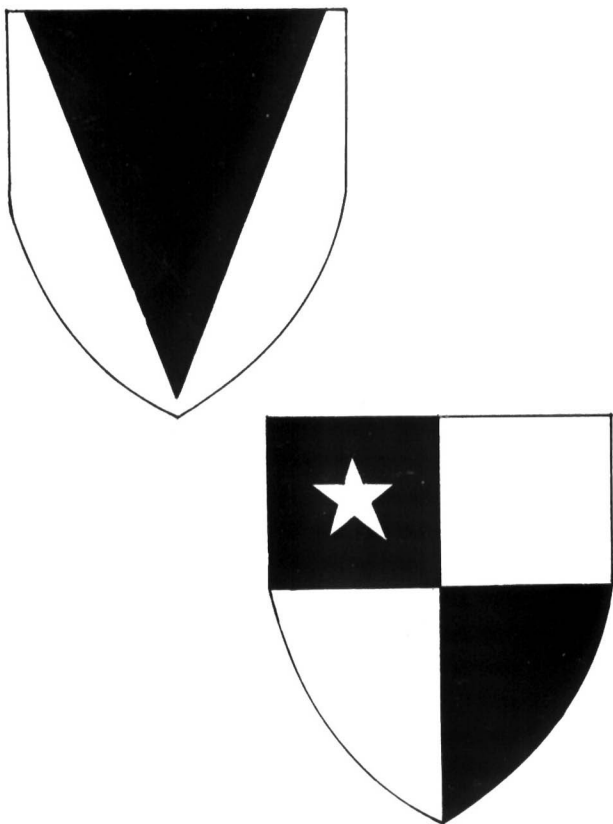
sharp point to find a way through the narrow gaps between the plates of armour. Many effigies show the dagger and sword secured by chains to the wearer's jupon. This is particularly evident on the Continent, a good example being on the effigial slab of Sir Pierre de Chanteinelle, 1352, at Flavacourt, Oise.

Shields throughout the period remained heater-shaped, but with the improvement in armour had become smaller. A good contemporary example is Prince Edward's shield from Canterbury Cathedral. It is of wood covered with leather and his arms are displayed in high relief, the lions and fleurs-de-lis being made from moulded gesso or leather.

Protection for the lower limbs gradually advanced from chain-mail to *pour point* (a thickly quilted fabric covering, sometimes studded), through to splinted armour, and later to complete plate. Throughout the first half of the 14th century we find combinations of all three being used. The feet were covered by mail or sollerets—cunningly articulated, these were footwear consisting of long, narrow overlapping plates.

Infantry

The infantry fighting on both sides at Crécy and Poitiers varied considerably. These variations showed themselves in weapons, armour, numbers and morale.

The French had by far the larger number of common foot soldiers, though there are no reliable statistics for those present at either battle. For the most part they had no precise tactical function. There was little for them to do other than trail in the wake of the mounted men-at-arms, frequently arriving on the battlefield after the fighting had ended. They were poorly trained, therefore difficult, if not impossible to manoeuvre in action. What armour they possessed was limited to a simple iron helmet or war hat and a leather or padded fabric jerkin. Their weapons were often little more than modified agricultural implements. Drawn from the parishes under the feudal system, they were generally natives of the area around where the campaign took place. They were

frightened peasants and burghers serving their masters through obligation and not through any personal desire to defeat the enemy. In battle their function was to appear in threatening masses; they took part in the many sieges of the period, and performed the menial duties of camp life. The nobility considered them of little importance, and besides, there were always enough mounted troops to render them superfluous.

Apart from this mediocre body of levies the French employed mercenary infantry, usually from the northern Italian cities, particularly Genoa. It is possible that there were also some Scottish foot soldiers fighting under the French banner. These mercenaries are discussed in the next section.

Having to limit the size of his army to transport it across the English Channel, Edward III had selected his men with great care; it was a small, but experienced and professional force. The infantry was composed primarily of archers and Welsh spearmen, classes of troops who had been tempered by years of warfare into some of the finest infantry in medieval Europe.

The high reputations of their Flemish, Scots and Swiss infantry contemporaries were founded on specialist skill with heavy hand weapons. Obviously, what set the archer apart from all others was his unique ability to project a deadly missile at speed, in large numbers, in any direction, and at considerable range. These characteristics allowed a completely new tactical plan of battle to the army which had large numbers of bowmen— although, even in England, the great weight of medieval conservatism was relatively slow to alter its essential attitudes in recognition of this fact. Yet English armies evolved to make use of the longbowman generations ahead of any others in Europe; France stubbornly refused to allow any kind of low-born infantry to play any central or seriously co-ordinated part in the overall plan of battle (inasmuch as such a plan existed at all), and paid for this great error at a grievous price.

Edward III's archers must, by definition, have been fine muscular men, deep of chest and strong of arm and shoulder. Their skill and strength were acquired through long and patient practice with the tools of their trade. The trainee archer gradually increased the draw-weight of his bow;
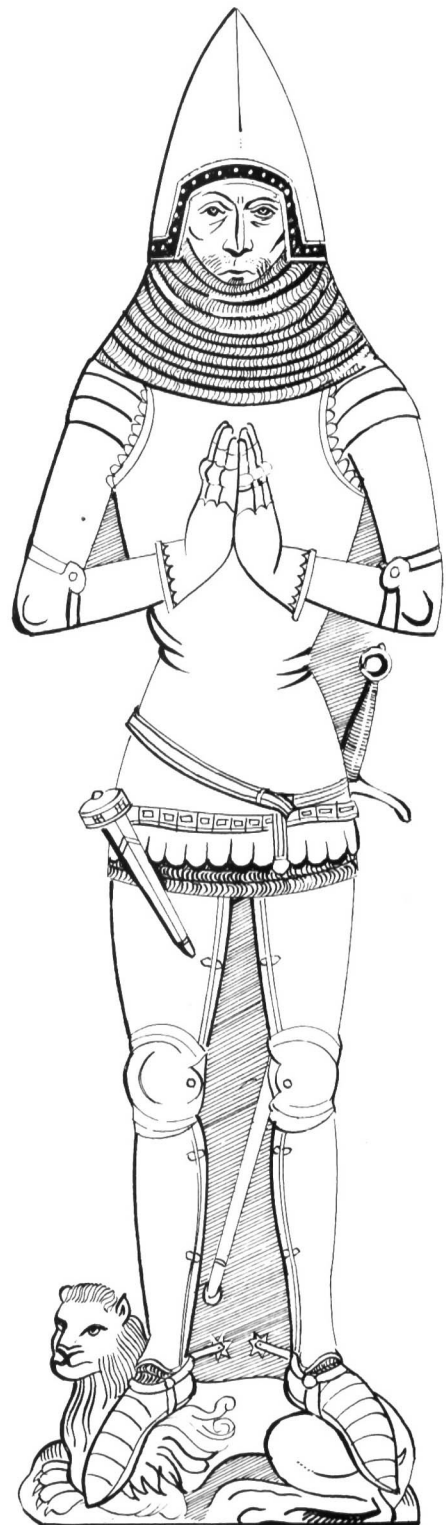
Sir Robert Albyn, c.1400; Hemel Hempstead, Herts. Complete plate armour, the short, tight-fitting jupon having fringed arm holes and skirt. The pointed bascinet is fastened to the camail, being a lace passing between two raised rims round the entire bottom edge of the bascinet.

as he grew stronger, so the length and weight increased to stretch him still further. He had to learn to shoot quickly and accurately; each arrow was fitted to the string and drawn to the ear, while the left arm and shoulder pushed the stave away from the body in one smooth, continuous movement using all the muscles of the arms, chest and back. The natural stance was left side on to the target, allowing the use of archers in fairly closely packed ranks on the field of battle.

The longbow used at Crécy and Poitiers was considered to be at its best when made from imported Spanish yew, but home-grown yew was also used in huge quantities. Bows of elm, wych elm and ash were also fairly common, but lacked the unique mechanical qualities of yew. Arrows, traditionally measuring a 'cloth yard' long, seem in practice to have been from 30 to 36in. long, and were made of as many as 15 different woods including brazil, hornbeam, birch, ash, oak, blackthorn and beech. The bows were of varying lengths between five and six feet, and had draw-weights of between 80 and 160lb—though it must have taken a very considerable archer to pull the latter. Given obvious variations due to wind speed and direction, the range of such bows was about 300 yards. With the infamous 'bodkin' arrowhead, a narrow, square-section tip with a chisel point, it was possible to penetrate any type of fabric or leather defence or iron chain-mail with ease, and at short ranges to pierce even plate armour. The archers at Crécy probably carried two sheaves of arrows—i.e. 48 arrows—pushed through the belt or carried in a quiver. Once drawn up in their fighting positions the archers would thrust a number of these arrows into the ground at their feet, making it easier to reload quickly and smoothly. A good bowman could release 15 shots in a minute, and any archer who fell below ten per minute was not considered worthy of his place in the army. It must be remembered that archery was the legally required leisure exercise of a great part of the male population of England in the Plantagenet period, and that natural competitive feelings would play a part in raising standards. The archer was no cowed peasant levy, but a proud craftsman who commanded craftsman's wages and knew his own worth—the daily rate of three to six pence, de-

pending on area and details of function and equipment, was a very considerable wage for the 14th century.

The individual skill of the archer, however great, was not enough to win battles. The outcome was decided by the use of thousands of archers. Even when they were not within effective range their presence on the battlefield was a constant threat, which could force enemy formations to change direction. When the arrow-storm was unleashed its deadly effect was indirect as well as direct, for apart from those cut down, other enemy soldiers could be broken and herded by the threat. At Dupplin Moor in 1332 it is recorded that Scots troops were pressed so closely together as they huddled under the lash of the arrows that many were found dead who had not received a wound.

With the outstanding exception of Bannockburn, whenever Scots and English fought, a mixed force of English archers and men-at-arms carried the day, as at Halidon Hill, Nevill's Cross, Homildon and Flodden. As early as 1342 the outcome of the battle of Morlaix should have taught the French the lesson that a frontal attack upon men-at-arms supported by archers in a sound defensive position was tantamount to suicide. At that engagement an English army led by the Earl of Northampton positioned themselves on a ridge with a wood behind them and a concealed trench in front of them. The French army, with Genoese in the van and cavalry close behind them, were badly mauled by the archers, and only escaped total defeat because the English ran out of arrows.

Apart from his specialist rôle the English archer —'the God-damn with his crooked stick', in French mouths—was of course an effective all-purpose light infantryman as well. When the fighting closed to hand-to-hand range he threw down his bow and grappled the enemy with sword, dagger, hatchet or club; we see this at both Crécy and Poitiers.

Before leaving the archer, it is amusing to record an anecdotal tradition—quite possibly apocryphal, but too attractive to ignore—as to the origin of that time-honoured British gesture of contemptuous defiance, the 'V sign'. During the Hundred Years War the French often mutilated captured English archers by cutting off the thumb and first two fingers of the right hand to prevent

1. Peasant infantryman
2. Crossbowman
3. English archer

A

Edward Plantagenet, Prince of Wales
('The Black Prince')

B

1. Laurence Hastings, Earl of Pembroke
2. Henry Plantagenet, Earl of Derby, Duke of Lancaster, KG
3. Ralf, Lord Basset of Drayton, KG

1. Louis de Nevers, Count of Flanders
2. Charles de Montmorency, Constable of France at Crécy
3. The Duke of Bar

D

1. Edward, Lord le Despencer, KG
2. King Edward III of England
3. John de Vere, 7th Earl of Oxford

1. King Jean II ('the Good') of France
2. Sir Eustace de Ribeaumont, standard bearer at Poitiers
3. Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, Oriflamme bearer at Poitiers

F

1. Sir John Chandos, KG
2. Sir Thomas Holand, KG
3. William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton, KG

G

1 and 3.   Infantrymen
2.   Crossbowman

H

them ever drawing bow again. It has been stated that archers used to taunt the enemy before battle by jerking the first two fingers at them, to show that *they* were still intact, and eager for battle!

In general, medieval infantry fought in large formations, drawing strength and confidence from the protection this gave them from the less numerous cavalry. While inexperienced infantry could be terrified and scattered by a charge of heavily armoured horsemen, as were the Flemings at Courtrai in 1302, it is generally true that once they had successfully defended themselves and won even a minor victory they became a useful part of the army. Another factor effecting infantry morale was the knowledge that unlike the 'chivalry', who were normally regarded as far more valuable captured alive and ransomable than dead, the common foot soldiers could expect no mercy if defeated. For this reason experienced infantry fought to the bitter end with great ferocity; the Swiss, Scots, Irish and Welsh established wide reputations in this way.

It is dangerous to project modern attitudes onto men of much earlier ages, but in conclusion one should perhaps mention the fact that the infantry-man of the 14th century was engaged in a social as much as a political struggle. National feelings certainly played a part in his motivation, to judge by the surviving evidence of the wording of appeals used by commanders to whip up their men's feelings for battle; but it is also tempting to wonder how aware the English archer might have been of the social dimension. Resentment of the arrogance and oppression of the nobility was certainly widespread and vocal at this time; and the ability of the common English archer to topple the flower of the aristocracy out of their saddles must surely have given them food for thought?

Mercenaries

Despite the fact that the medieval economy was essentially agrarian, with only limited amounts of money exchanging hands, mercenary troops were used to strengthen most armies from a very early period. They were invariably competent soldiers, fighting on foot or horse, with the ability to sway the course of action in their paymaster's favour.

Although in theory the feudal system should have provided the various rulers of Europe with ready-made armies, in practice it was unable to meet this demand. There were difficulties in maintaining a feudal force in the field for periods longer than 40 days. The different contingents continually quarrelled with one another; the peasant levy was always poorly equipped, badly trained, and invariably unfit, and seldom shared their masters' enthusiasm for war. So eventually most feudal armies were braced with bodies of mercenary troops. William the Conqueror recruited knights and other adventurers for his invasion of England in 1066. When called upon to defend his kingdom from Canute IV of Denmark and Robert the Frisian in 1085, William raised thousands of mercenaries in France, amongst them archers. King Stephen used mercenaries led by a Flemish nobleman, William of Ypres, against the Empress Matilda in 1135. Henry II frequently employed a mercenary army in France, because they enabled him to keep knights under arms for longer periods than the obligatory system would allow. Henry and his son Richard used paid troops to crush the lords of Aquitaine, paying them a penny a day for their services. This sum was later increased to two pennies under Richard.

England had never been able to provide an army on the feudal model. In the early years of his reign Edward I had used obligatory service, but found it a slow and unsatisfactory way to raise an army; the period of service was too short for his operations in Scotland and Wales and the standard of discipline too low. At first Edward had used obligatory service to form the nucleus of his army and then paid volunteers to strengthen it; gradually the balance changed until by the early years of the Hundred Years War recruitment by contract was widely used, and payment was made to all levels in the army hierarchy from archer to earl. It is important to point out, however, that most of Edward III's army was composed of English or Welsh paid soldiers, giving the army a character unlike those of France or Italy which included large groups of hired foreigners from Brabant and Flanders.

By the time of Crécy the French had a partially professional army, but the aristocracy who

Froissart, 'A Battle'. Good details of 15th century infantry in a mixture of mail and plate, with what appear to be examples of padded aketons. Note the plackarts—half-breast plates—at left and right foreground. Although not relevant from the viewpoint of costume to the 14th century campaigns, Froissart still gives us a vivid impression of medieval warfare. (Bodleian Library)

provided the leadership were for the most part slow to accept the increasing numbers of paid men. In general the high-born French nobles despised their own peasant troops, the Genoese crossbowmen and the English archers alike.

Perhaps the best mercenary soldiers, that is to say soldiers of one nation hired for payment by another, were the crossbowmen from the northern Italian cities, chiefly Genoa. At Crécy and Poitiers they fought for the French. They were usually far better equipped than the native infantry that

fought beside them, being clad in plate and mail armour, well disciplined and confident. They followed the command of their own leaders, Carlo Grimaldi and Otto Doria; these in turn were under the command of the national leader. They were foot soldiers whose specialist weapon was the arbalest or crossbow. This was heavy and slow to operate, but it was very accurate to approximately 100 yards, could be operated by a relatively unskilled man, and did not require the strength necessary to draw the longbow. At Crécy the Genoese were used in the first assault on the English positions and advanced in a shower of rain, which may have rendered their weapons ineffective. Failing to fulfil their requirements, they were ridden down by the impatient French knights.

Being dependent on war for their existence,

mercenary troops became a major social problem when any conflict ended. Having received their wages from their current paymaster they frequently wandered the countryside looting and pillaging until they found further employment. This was especially so in France in the period of unrest and confusion after the battle of Poitiers. It was the frugal custom of the day to pay off medieval armies on the spot as soon as possible, and these wandering bands of ruthless marauders were one of the worst evils suffered by France in the later 14th century.

Supply

The problems of keeping a medieval army in the field were vast and complex. All too often it is assumed that such an army could 'live off the land', but an examination of the population of medieval towns suggests that the armies far outnumbered townspeople and therefore made a total dependence on local foodstuffs and materials impossible. For the French, fighting on their own soil, these difficulties were somewhat reduced; but as the English transported their campaign requirements across the Channel, we can only be amazed that they managed to sustain their campaigns for such long periods. We know, however, that Edward III had an extremely well-organized supply system throughout his reign, with a large number of non-combatants serving the fighting men.

The requirements of the English army can be grouped into four main areas—victuals, arms, horses and pack animals, and miscellaneous goods. All of them required transportation in various ways to keep up with a highly mobile army.

The function of the victualler in England was to purchase the foodstuffs for men and animals from the counties of England and to organize carriage to the ports, whence it could be sent to Flanders, France, Gascony or, in the case of the Scottish wars, to Scotland. Allowing for the communication systems of the day this was accomplished with great efficiency.

These victuals would normally consist of various sorts of meat—pork, beef and mutton, mainly

A classic example of late 14th century armour: the brass of Sir George Felbrigg, Esquire-at-arms to Edward III, at Playford, Suffolk. The complete plate armour exposes mail only at armpit and knee. The jupon is short and apparently tight-fitting, with an ornate belt attached low on the hips. The sword's proportions might suggest that it was intended for two-handed use, but see later illustration of hilt styles.

salted, and counted in carcasses; oats, peas and beans, bought in quarters; wheat, bought in quarters, but ground and shipped as flour; cheese, bought in 'weys' or stones; stockfish or herrings and dried fish. The prices of these items varied from county to county, with additional fluctuations in price being caused by availability of transport. Corn might be cheaper if purchased by a navigable river, but allowances had to be made in the price if it was transported by carts.

The work was often organized by the local sheriff and his staff. It was their responsibility to provide empty containers, normally tuns; to gather the victuals from one area together in a depot, usually situated by a river; and to provide boats for transportation of victuals to the nearest seaport. Here they might be stored in a large

Froissart, 'The Capture of St. Lo-en-Cotentin by Edward III'. Once more, the armour is of 15th century design. The use of the red Cross of St George by English infantry, and the white Cross of St Denis by French infantry is shown in this painting; again, this may not have been the case in the mid-14th century, although we have a record of some use of the red cross in the reign of Edward III. (Bodleian Library)

warehouse or loaded onto ships immediately. The provision of shipping was then the responsibility of the admiral.

The demands of the army were not constant. When Edward laid siege to Calais he needed to increase his limited supplies quickly. To meet this sudden demand the victuallers directed all supplies to Sandwich to be loaded on ships bound for Calais. At times there were surpluses and food began to rot; to counter this problem food was returned to England and sold off cheaply.

The second major group of army requirements to be supplied was arms. Archers and other infantry carried their personal cutting weapons into battle with them, but new bows and arrows were in constant demand. They were purchased from counties all over England and stored in the Tower of London, bows being purchased in units and arrows in sheaves of twenty-four. Sometimes the arrows possessed heads, but if not these were bought separately from the iron-working regions of England. Once assembled at one point the bows were carefully wrapped in canvas and the arrows

were stowed in tuns. Like victuals, the demand for bows and arrows fluctuated. In 1356, when there was a period of great shortage, Prince Edward sent an agent from Gascony to find 1,000 bows, 2,000 sheaves of arrows and 400 gross of bowstrings.

The Tower of London acted as a clearing house for the movement of arms between England and France. It had four functions: the manufacture of arms; the purchase of arms; the storage of arms collected from other parts of the country; and the provision of arms for the army abroad. It employed men skilled in the various aspects of arms manufacture such as armourers, carpenters, smiths, bowyers, fletchers and artillers.

Not only bows and arrows were required, but also great engines used in the attack and defence of castles. The construction and repair of such weapons was the responsibility of a man called John Crabbe. There is also reference to stones thrown by these engines being loaded at Folkestone and sent to Calais.

Primitive artillery was making its first appearance in the Hundred Years War, and there are reports that in 1345 guns and 'pellets' were repaired and made in the Tower for the King's expedition of that year.

Apart from food and arms there were the vast numbers of miscellaneous items of equipment used on campaign, such as parchment, axes, ropes, blocks, scythes, sickles, spades and miners' tools. The expeditionary force required tents by the hundred; they needed forges and cooking implements, horse shoes, nails, carts, cups, pots and all sorts of simple objects that are so easily taken for granted. Military power was not just the result of courage and skill at arms; it was also dependent on the careful organization and husbanding of resources.

Ships of the 14th century were small and could use many of the tiny harbours around our coast that would not be considered navigable by today's vessels. An average-size ship of those days was of only about 100 tons burden, but it served to transport the horses, carts, pack animals and the associated impedimenta back and forth from England to the Continent. The expedition to France in 1359 involved a sea journey from Sandwich to Calais, such a short distance that the
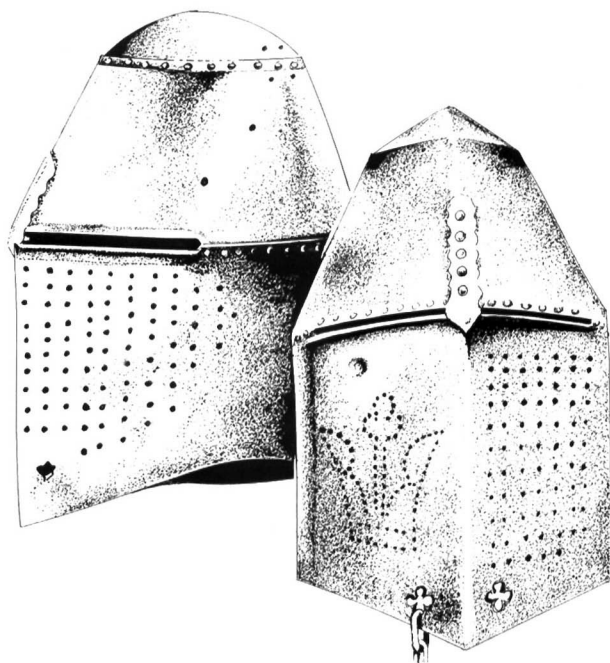
14th century great helms—the two famous surviving examples of the period are (left) the Pembridge helm in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh and (right) the Prince of Wales's helm in Canterbury Cathedral. The helm was worn over a cervelliere, a bascinet, or a mail coif; the interior was lined with leather. The 'Black Prince's' helm retains fragments of leather which show that it had a deep leather band cut in a series of gussets and pulled together by a drawstring.

transports were making at least two crossings in one day.

Horses in particular presented special problems on sea voyages. We know that special gangways were constructed to load the animals, and once on board were probably separated by hurdles and tied to iron rings fitted to the ships' timbers. Horses were also counted and valued before transportation, their individual distinguishing features being recorded.

When men, animals and materials arrived in the port of disembarkation several days elapsed before the army was ready to move off on campaign; this was looked upon as a time to unload and rest before the fighting to come.

In retrospect it is surprising that French shipping made no real attempt to control the seas around her coast. Had this been achieved, even if the various English expeditions had landed in France their strength and effect would have been dissipated by restrictions on the vital lines of supply.

An Analysis of Crécy and Poitiers

Having described the two battles and the various elements of the two opposing armies, we may now look at the reasons for the English victories at Crécy and Poitiers.

The English had the advantage of selecting the ground on which the battle was to be fought, and they allowed themselves time to prepare carefully for the French attack which they knew would eventually come. In their choice of position they achieved a narrow front so their small force could neutralize the effect of superior numbers. Their communications within their battle positions were good, and they controlled the pace of the fighting. We have the example of Edward III coolly using some of his reserves to support Prince Edward in ferocious hand-to-hand fighting around his position.

The French had a major communications problem in their army, since they used troops from countries with whom they had only recently formed an alliance. The language barrier within the French ranks must have been immense, with soldiers coming from as far apart as Bohemia, Spain, Lorraine and northern Italy. There may even have been some Scottish soldiers fighting on their side. The English did not suffer from this difficulty, their army being English and Welsh, with the Welsh-speaking men fighting under English-speaking commanders.

Of the two commanders Edward III had by far the greater military experience, having fought in Scotland, Brittany and Flanders. One of his outstanding talents was his ability to choose subordinate commanders. We hear no reports of quarrels or dissensions. He knew, too, how to inspire his men on a personal level, for example by riding around the ranks of his army the morning of Crécy, and by not sending immediate and disproportionate aid to his son at a crucial moment in the battle. Discipline and morale in his army remained high. The nobles who fought with him on his first campaign—Henry Earl of Derby, the earls of Warwick, Suffolk and Northampton, all excellent commanders in their own right—were

Interesting brass showing 14th century armour at the point when plate had almost, but not yet completely, covered the mail defences. Note staples on the jupon with chains hanging to the weapons; the two on the right may perhaps have engaged with a great helm? The same arrangement can be seen on the brass of Sir Ralph de Knevynton, 1370, at Aveley, Essex.

with him to the last. Though his army was a professional body, it was also hierarchical and mirrored the social structure of his kingdom. Virtually unknown knights were responsible for smaller units, but the larger formations were commanded by nobility of higher station. As the war progressed he promoted low-born captains, Sir Walter Manny being one of these, but only those with acquired wealth and land. His senior commanders not only had military experience but they had a direct knowledge of the tactics he was to apply at Crécy; typical of this characteristic was Northampton, who had commanded at Morlaix in 1342.

One cannot dispute that the French had great courage, but their overall military experience was limited. Their only commander with considerable first-hand knowledge of warfare was the ageing, blind King John of Bohemia. His reputation had been established in Lithuania in the wars of 1328–29, 1337 and 1345, and in Italy in 1330–31. But at Crécy his part amounted to little more than a suicidal frontal attack on the English position. King Philip's only military knowledge was based on a clearly-won victory over the Flemish communal force at Cassel in 1328. Here his knights charged closely-packed infantry and then opened up their encircling forces to allow the infantry to escape, thus placing them at a disadvantage to Philip's cavalry. Perhaps it was this victory that gave Philip confidence in the tactics he employed at Crécy. Whatever the source of his confidence he ignored sound advice to assemble his army and fight the following day; and had he wished to do this, the indiscipline in his army made it impossible. He also made the major error of losing contact with his enemy when they crossed the Somme at Blanchetaque, thus allowing time for the English army to choose its ground and prepare its positions.

Finally, it can only be emphasized again that at Crécy the French knights, the flower of European chivalry, were victims of their own contempt for confident, experienced foot soldiers and their foolish blindness to the devastating power of the longbow. In her impressive study of 14th century French life, *A Distant Mirror*, the historian Barbara Tuchman has some most illuminating comments to make on the effect of social attitudes on battle-
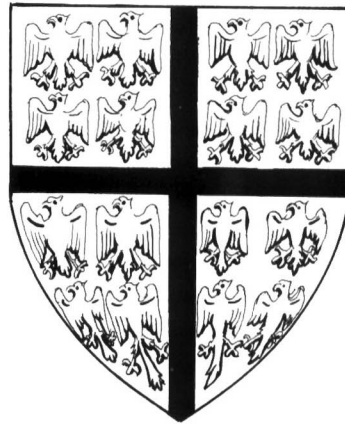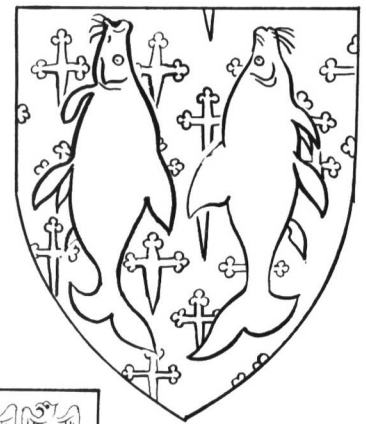
The arms of (top) the Duke of Bar, and (bottom) Charles de Montmorency, two of the principal French knights at Crécy —see Plates D3 and D2.

field tactics. These may be summarised by saying that in France, to a fatally greater extent than in England, the social requirements of the chivalric code were considered of greater importance than sound tactical planning.

At Poitiers the outcome of the engagement is even more surprising. The French force under King Jean was defeated by an English army which only the day before had been prepared to accept what almost amounted to a humiliating surrender. Nevertheless the same general pattern as at Crécy may be discerned. The French still did not appreciate the full potential influence of archers on the course of the battle. They attacked the English in a well-prepared position on higher ground. Their opening attack was ruined by the foolish bravado of Clermont and Audrehem, which seriously damaged what might have been a sound strategy and also cost them two senior commanders. As at Crécy, the French at Poitiers were cursed by poor communications, fatally weak

discipline among the various noble commanders, and a glaring lack of co-ordination.

Of the English it must be said that they were well led by Prince Edward, and that his command structure was good; but their victory was to a large degree the result of seizing the opportunity to exploit the enemy's moment of weakness, and having the tactical flexibility to follow this advantage through.

The Plates

A1: Peasant infantryman

Lightly armed and more or less poorly protected, the peasant populations of medieval Europe provided the largest part of the armies of the period. Primarily they fought in mass formations, appearing as screening forces in various positions on the battlefield. The conventional attitude

Another selection of 14th century sword hilts; there seems to have been a gradual movement towards longer hilts during the century. This was not necessarily to enable a two-handed grip in battle; medieval broadswords were so well balanced that they were much easier to control than their appearance suggests. The lengthening of the hilt may well have been simply to maintain this balance as blades grew longer.
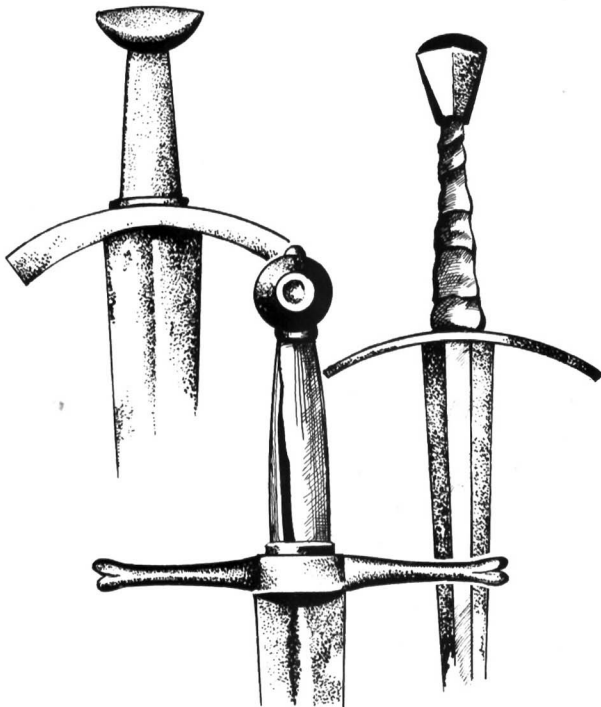
towards them among the chivalry was that they were an unfortunate necessity but shared no part of the glory of war. Nevertheless, once they had gained experience and confidence they were often capable of defeating the best mounted troops.

This soldier, wearing an iron 'kettle hat' and a chain-mail collar and armed with both a halberd and a sword, represents a well-equipped type of infantryman by the standards of the mass of such troops.

A2: Crossbowman

The crossbow was used by William of Normandy in his invasion army of 1066, and by the end of the 11th century was to be seen throughout the armies of Europe. It was popular in England until the late 13th century, Richard I being an expert with this weapon—and eventually falling victim to one, at the siege of Chaluz in 1199. From the beginning of the 14th century the longbow began to replace it in English armies in all but actions involving castles and fortifications. This Continental crossbowman is a paid specialist, and is well equipped with a ridged kettle hat, a mail hauberk and coif, and plate defences at the knee. His weapon is spanned with a simple belt-hook.

There is one detail about the appearance of the crossbowmen at Crécy which gives rise to interesting speculation. The commonest heraldic device then worn by Genoese troops was a red cross, sometimes on a white ground. We know from Edward III's Articles of War that the use of a red St George's cross on a white 'jack' was already ordered throughout the English army as a field sign during the middle years of the 14th century, though we cannot be absolutely certain how widely the badge was worn on the specific campaigns of Crécy and Poitiers. It is surely legitimate to wonder whether the riding-down of the Genoese by the French knights was simple callousness and arrogance, or if there was an element of mistaken identity?

A3: English archer

The longbow was used by the Welsh fighting under Edward I against the Scots at Falkirk in 1298, and became a major military resource in England from that date. Under the Plantagenet kings its importance was emphasized by the legal requirement

of able-bodied males to practise with the bow in their free time, while other sports were officially banned to encourage this habit.

This archer, carrying his bow protected against the weather in a cloth cover, represents the 'plainest' type of archer of the mid-14th century, clad only in civilian costume with a leather jerkin. As time passed more serviceable military equipment began to appear in early manuscript illustrations of archers: padded and/or nailed jerkins of filled leather or buckram, mail shirts, and often helmets of close-fitting shape. A secondary weapon such as a sword, long all-purpose knife, hatchet or even a simple but effective war-club was normally carried for hand-to-hand combat. The use of a red cross badge, with or without a white background, must remain speculative for Crécy and Poitiers.

B: Edward Plantagenet, Prince of Wales ('The Black Prince')

Born at Woodstock on 15 June 1330, Edward has been named 'The Black Prince' only since the appearance of Grafton's *Chronicle of England* in 1569, and we have no earlier evidence for the use of this style, or for the story that he wore blackened armour. At Crécy he commanded the first division of the army, assisted by more experienced commanders. At Poitiers he had overall command of the English army. During an expedition to Spain from his extensive French possessions he won a major victory at Najera in April 1366; but during this campaign he contracted an illness which eventually killed him in June 1376. He was interred at Canterbury Cathedral near the tomb of Becket. Arms: Quarterly, France and England, differenced by a label of three points Argent. Crest: A leopard (lion) statant crowned and gorged with a label of three points Argent.

The primary sources for armour worn by the Prince of Wales are his magnificent copper gilt tomb, and items of his equipment, all at Canterbury Cathedral. The close-fitting suit of complete plate now exposes only very small areas of mail at points of articulation, and the roundels of plate formerly seen at elbow and shoulder are no longer necessary. The short-sleeved jupon is based on Edward's surviving accoutrements; that on the effigy is sleeveless. A portion of the belt survives; it is of a canvas material, about $\frac{1}{8}$in. thick.
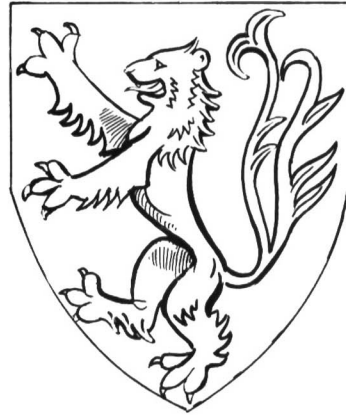
(Top) The arms of Marshal d'Audrehem, captured in the opening phase of the battle of Poitiers: Argent, bendy of three Azure, a bordure Gules. (Bottom) Arms of Bartholomew, Lord Burghershe: Gules, a lion rampant, double queué Or. A founder-member of the Order of the Garter, he fought at Crécy, the siege of Calais, in Gascony, and at Poitiers, where he captured Baudouin d'Ennequinn.

We have chosen to show crested helms being worn in this and several other plates. How widely they were worn in battle in the 14th century we cannot tell with any certainty; manuscript illustrations suggest that the uncrested bascinet, decorated with a coronet where appropriate, was the norm.

C1: Laurence Hastings, Earl of Pembroke

Laurence Hastings succeeded his father John, half-brother of Sir Hugh Hastings, as fourth Lord Hastings and Bergavenny in 1325. As a young man he served under Edward III in Flanders, and in 1339 was created Earl of Pembroke as representative of his great-uncle, Aymer de Valence; the arms of Aymer de Valence, which can still be seen in enamel on his effigy in Westminster Abbey, are quartered with the Hastings arms on the shield and surcoat. In 1340 he accompanied the king on his
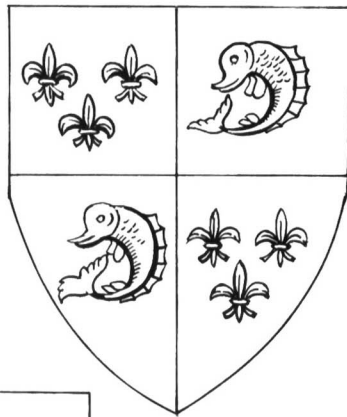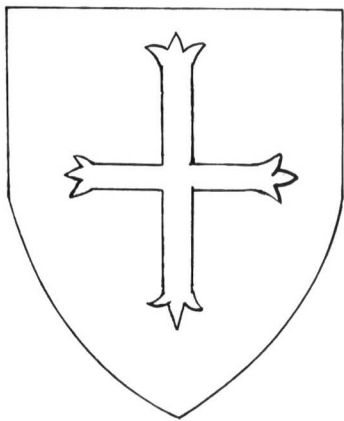
(Top) The arms of the Dauphin, aged 19 at the time of Poitiers and with no previous experience of command: France modern quarterly with Or, a dolphin hauriant and embowed Azure. (Bottom) Arms of Sir Walter Paveley, a knight who fought in France with Edward III in 1346, in Gascony in 1355, and in Brittany in 1358: Azure, a crossy florry Or. Crest: the head of a hind, or perhaps a horse.

expedition into Scotland, and later took a prominent part in Lancaster's campaigns of 1345 in Aquitaine and Gascony, being present at Bergerac —which he garrisoned—at Auberoche and Aiguillon. He was at the siege of Calais, and died in 1348. Arms: Quarterly, Hastings and Valence.

The illustration is based on one of the small figures around the larger brass of Sir Hugh Hastings at Elsing Church, Norfolk. There is also a stone effigy of Laurence at Abergavenny which shows him wearing an unusual bascinet with cusped and foliated decorations, and a skirted jupon with buttons down the front. Note the interesting deep visor on the bascinet, which would protect the throat when lowered—one of many unusual forms of this type of helmet which appeared around 1335. The armour is of an earlier style than that worn by Prince Edward, being still basically of mail with plate additions to the limbs,

and a gorget round the neck. The thigh defences are of padded and studded fabric.

C2: Henry Plantagenet, Earl of Derby, Duke of Lancaster, KG
The only son of Henry, Earl of Lancaster and Leicester, and great-grandson of Henry III, he had his first military experience in Scotland in 1336. Here he became 'Henry de Lancaster Banneret', and captain-general of the king's forces in Scotland. In 1337 the Earl campaigned in Flanders with an army of 500 men-at-arms and 2,000 archers. 1340 saw him named as one of the senior commanders in the naval battle of Sluys, and a year later he was appointed the king's lieutenant in the Scottish border country. In 1342 he accompanied the king on his expedition into Brittany with a retinue of five bannerets, 50 knights and a proportionate number of esquires and archers. He was present at Crécy and the siege of Calais, and on many of the minor campaigns of the years that followed. He died of the Black Death in 1360. Arms: England, differenced by a label of three points Azure, each charged with three fleurs-de-lis Or.

This illustration is based on the Hastings Brass at Elsing, which shows an excellent example of a great helm mounted with a crest; these crests were made of fabric, plaster, boiled and moulded leather, and light wood, painted or gilded with the appropriate colours, and were not as heavy or unwieldy as they appear. The armour is of almost complete plate, apart from the thigh defences. These 'jazerants' were normally of silk, velvet or some other fabric covering a heavier under-layer; the studs normally connected through the cloth to small metal plates mounted on this.

C3: Ralf, Lord Basset of Drayton, KG
This knight is first mentioned in the chronicles as being present with the Prince of Wales in Bordeaux in January 1355–56. Froissart records the part he played in an encounter with the French near Romoratin; and shortly thereafter he fought at Poitiers. He was again in France in 1359, taking part in the campaign which led to the Peace of Bretigny; and 1368 saw him admitted to the Order of the Garter. He died in 1390, his remains being deposited in the choir of Lichfield Cathedral.

Arms: Or, three piles, the points meeting at the base, Gules, a quarter Ermine. Crest: Out of a ducal coronet Or, a boar's head tusked Or.

The helm is taken from this knight's Garter stall plate; the armour is typical of the late 14th century, being of complete plate with gilded brass decoration.

D1: Louis de Nevers, Count of Flanders

One of the Flemish noblemen who fought on the French side at Crécy; he fought in the first division, and was killed in the cavalry charges around the Prince of Wales's position. It is thought that he died alongside the Duke of Alençon, the French king's brother. Arms: Or, a lion rampant Sable.

This illustrates another transitional stage between mail and complete plate; a long hauberk is worn, but with plate defences on the forearms, elbows, and lower legs.

D2: Charles de Montmorency, Constable of France at Crécy

The constable took part in the opening cavalry charges against Prince Edward's division. He was not killed in the battle, but was observed leaving the field with the King of France. Arms: Sixteen eaglets, Azure, between a cross Gules, on a field Or. These arms, slightly modified, were also carried at Agincourt in 1415.

We follow here the style of many French effigies and incised slabs of the period, and show the figure bare-headed. The shield bearing the arms is slung from a belt—guige—across the back.

D3: The Duke of Bar

Although the Duke was one of the principal French knights in the opening cavalry charges on the English position at Crécy, Froissart does not give us any details of his fate in the battle. Arms: Azure, semy of crosses-crosslets fitchy, two barbels, hauriant, addorsed Or. These arms were also carried by Edward, Duke of Bar at Agincourt.

The interesting form of bascinet, with a falling nasal, is frequently found on Continental effigies, particularly in Germany.

E1: Edward, Lord le Despencer, KG

The knight first fought with the Prince of Wales in Gascony in 1355. He served with Sir Nele Lorying
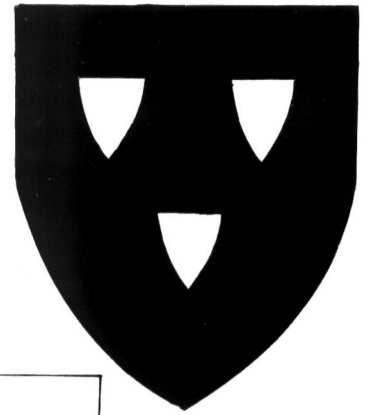
(Top) Arms of Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, bearer of the Oriflamme at Poitiers: Gules, three escutcheons 2, 1, Argent; see Plate F3. (Bottom) Arms of Woodland: Argent, on a pale sable three stags' heads cabossed Or; a knight of this name carried the Prince of Wales's standard at Poitiers.

and Sir Bartholomew Burghershe in the celebrated action near Romoratin, and shortly afterwards played a prominent part in the battle of Poitiers. In 1373 he commanded the rearguard of John of Gaunt's army which ravaged Picardy and Artois, and suffered a severe defeat at the hands of Eustace de Ribeaumont (see F2). Arms: Quarterly, Argent and Gules, second and third quarters a fret Or, over all a bend Sable.

The figure is based on the unique stone effigy which kneels high on the chantry above the altar of Tewkesbury Abbey. His armour is typical of the late 14th century, of complete plate with an open-face bascinet and a deep camail.

E2: King Edward III

Born in 1312, Edward reigned as King of England between 1327 and 1377. The son of Edward II and Isabella, daughter of King Philip the fair of France, he traced a claim to the French throne through his
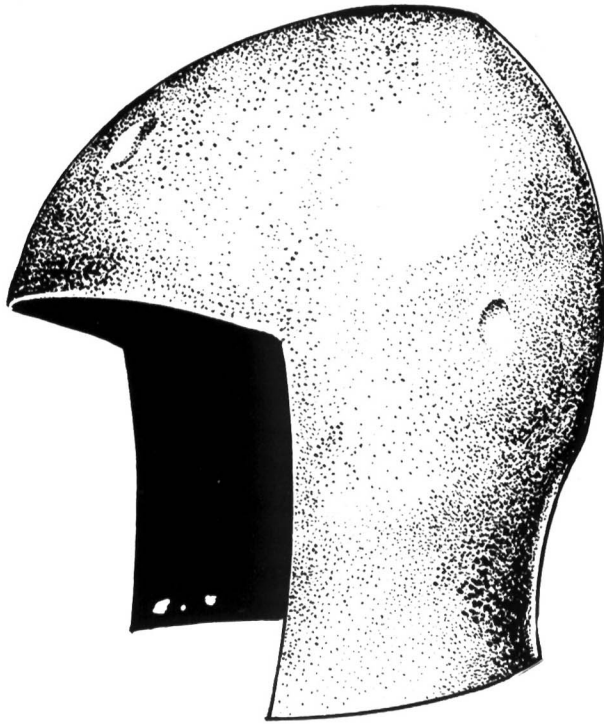
A simple 14th century helmet of open shape. In the 1320s we see helmets like this worn over the mail coif by mounted troops, but not yet with attached camails. This type of helmet was probably still to be seen among men-at-arms in the 1340s.

mother. One of the great warrior kings of England, he resembled his mighty grandfather Edward I much more closely than his weak father. Much of the early part of his reign was taken up with his conquests in Scotland and France. His old age was in sad contrast; after his wife's death he began to decline, and was cynically manipulated by a much younger mistress when in his dotage. He was devastated by the death of his son the Prince of Wales. Arms: France Ancient and England Quarterly. Crest: After Richard I, the kings of England do not seem to have used the lion crest, but Edward followed custom by wearing a lion statant guardant.

This illustration is based on the Hastings brass at Elsing, and the king's effigy in Westminster Abbey. He is dressed as though on campaign but out of battle, with helmet and weapons laid aside.

E3: John de Vere, 7th Earl of Oxford

Oxford first served in Gascony with Derby, taking part in the sieges of Vannes and Nantes, and lead-ing the charge against the French at Auberoche. At Crécy he was one of the principal commanders in the Prince of Wales's division, and at Poitiers he commanded the English archers, playing an important part in turning one of the initial French cavalry attacks. He was killed in the fighting round the walls of Rheims, his remains being brought home and buried at Colne, Essex. Arms: Quarterly, Gules and Or, in the first quarter a mullet Argent.

F1: King Jean II ('the Good') of France

Jean II succeeded his father Philip IV in August 1350. He was 31 when he came to the throne and 44 when he died. As a king he combined the romantic and generous virtues with the foolish and ignorant vices of contemporary chivalry. His people christened him 'Jean le Bon' because he was good in the sense of good fellowship.

Without doubt he had great personal courage, as exemplified by his actions at Poitiers, but as a military commander he was a failure. His intention on becoming the King of France was to repair all the damage done by his father and rid France of the seemingly perpetual irritation of having English troops on her soil. Indeed his first act on becoming king was to tell the nobles of France to prepare themselves to be summoned for military service. Sadly for France, the lessons of Morlaix, Crécy and Calais were not acknowledged by Jean and he foolishly continued to try to defeat the English army with an army and strategy that had already been found wanting. In addition to this he alienated the very lords who were to help him by executing the Constable of France, Comte d'Eu, and granted this most important of all French military offices to his relative and favourite, Charles d'Espagne. Before becoming king his limited military experience consisted of besieging the English at Aiguillon for four months without success. Here he was reported as being obstinate and unable to act on advice from more experienced military officers.

However, it must be added that he attempted to overcome the crippling problem of his feudal barons using their right to leave the campaign whenever they had completed their term of obligation, taking with them, of course, all the personnel under their command. His royal

ordinance of April 1351, put in its most simple terms, declared that being a knight on military service was trade, and required payment. These rates of pay were as follows: forty sous a day for a banneret, twenty sous for a knight, 10 for a squire, 5 for a valet, 3 for an infantryman, 2½ for an armour-bearer or similar attendant. Every man in the army was also required to be subordinate to a commander and to make an oath to him that he would not leave that commander without an order. However, this system quickly broke down, because France was unable to raise enough money to pay her troops.

In an attempt to obtain close personal support from the most important military nobles in the land Jean founded an order of chivalry similar to that of the English Order of the Garter founded by Edward III. This he called the Order of the Star, but unlike its English counterpart, which was only open to 26 members, Jean's order had 500 members.

At Poitiers, Jean commanded the French army and personally led his reserve division into battle. Towards the end of the fighting he was captured in somewhat confusing circumstances and disappeared into captivity, leaving France in a state of virtual anarchy and civil war. His ransom was fixed at 3,000,000 golden crowns.

Arms: France ancient: Azure, semy de lis Or. About 1365 Charles V reduced the number of fleurs-de-lis in the French arms to three; this became known as 'France modern'. The change may have been a way of making the arms different from the arms of England, or just an attempt to make them more distinguishable from a distance.

F2: Sir Eustace de Ribeaumont, standard-bearer to the King of France at Poitiers
The name of this French knight appears continuously throughout the period. One of the first occasions on which his name occurs is recorded in the chronicles of Froissart. He describes an attempt by Sir Geoffrey de Chargny to recapture the town of Calais from the English. In the incident Sir Eustace de Ribeaumont, fighting in Sir Geoffrey's party, twice knocked Edward III to the ground. When Sir Eustace was eventually taken prisoner he was entertained by Edward at a feast. During the proceedings the King of England removed a chaplet of pearls from his own neck and placed them around the neck of Sir Eustace, saying: 'Sir Eustace, I give you this chaplet as the best warrior of the day, and I beg you to wear it for the love of me, and seeing you are my prisoner, I give you back your liberty. Tomorrow you are free to go whither you will.' This was a noble and generous gesture on Edward's part, because knights of Sir Eustace's importance would command a high ransom. Sir Eustace is mentioned in the preparations for the attack on the English position at Poitiers. Having been in the reconnoitring party that watched the English army being drawn up in its battle order, Sir Eustace, along with Douglas the Scot, advised King Jean that he should launch his attack on foot. Arms: Gules, fretty Or, on a quarter Or a lion passant Sable.

Sir Eustace wears a loose-fitting mail hauberk beneath his jupon, its upper sleeves reinforced with 'brigandine work'—quilted and studded fabric defences—and with similar defences visible on the forearms beneath the hauberk. The front and rear of the hauberk are cut in a 'V' shape.

F3: Sir Geoffrey de Chargny, bearer of the Oriflamme at Poitiers
Like Sir Eustace de Ribeaumont, this knight is continually mentioned in the chronicles of the

Froissart, 'Jousts held in honour of the Countess of Salisbury'. Edward III, on the dais, watches two knights in 15th century armour jousting amid a litter of broken lances. The joust was in many senses a training for war. (Bodleian Library)
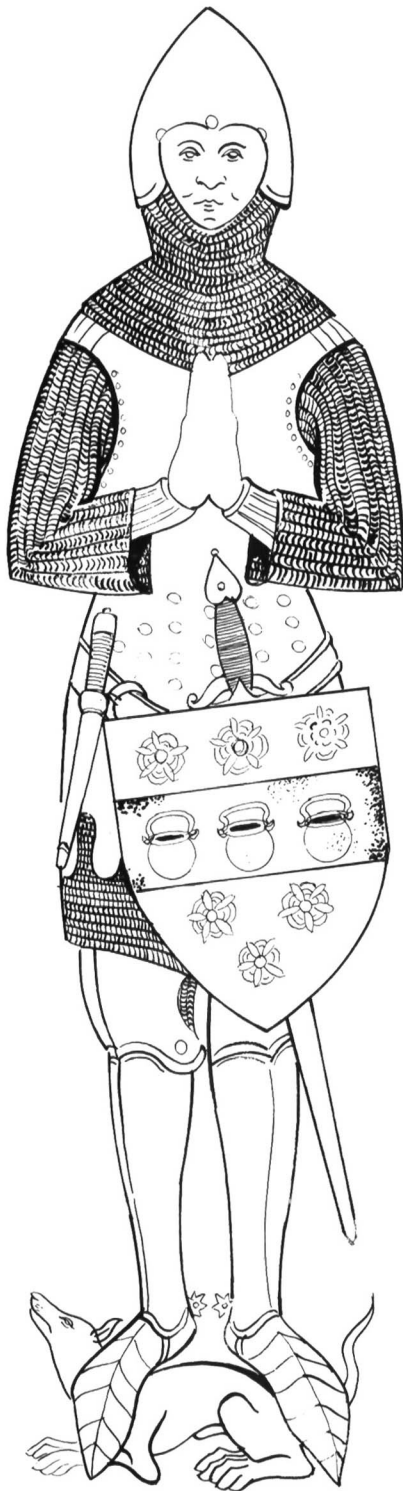
The brass of Guillaume Tirel, serjeant-at-arms, cook to King Philip VI; from Yvelines, France. Note the rather charming heraldic reference to his appointment! The suit of mixed plate and mail has interesting forearm defences under the loose hauberk sleeves, possibly splinted metal, *cuir-bouilli*, or brigandine-work.

period. Froissart describes one particular incident involving an attempt to recapture Calais by leading a force against the town after negotiating a bribed secret entrance with Aymer de Pavia, the guardian of Calais under the English. Edward III found out about the attack and waited in disguise as a common knight fighting under the banner of Sir Walter Manny. When Sir Geoffrey's force arrived, Edward and the Prince of Wales attacked with sword and battle-axe, overwhelming the French knights.

Sir Geoffrey is later mentioned in the negotiations before Poitiers. Rather than allow the two armies to come to grips with each other, Sir Geoffrey suggested that there should be an arranged combat to the death of 100 champions from each side. The French rejected this idea because there would not be enough glory to share amongst all the knights in the French army. When the battle finally took place Sir Geoffrey was killed. He met his end in the afternoon, still bearing the *Oriflamme* and defending the King of France. Afterwards he was buried with other nobles in the grounds of the Dominican convent at Poitiers; later his body was transferred to Paris. Arms: Gules, three escutcheons 2, 1, Argent.

Sir Geoffrey wears a bascinet with a 'pig-faced' or 'snout-faced' visor pivoting at the sides; other versions were hinged at the brow. Under his jupon he wears a loose mail hauberk; it is quite probable that extra defences in the form of metal hoops fixed to a leather harness or 'poncho'-shaped garment were worn between mail and jupon.

G1: Sir John Chandos, KG

One of the most respected English commanders of the 14th century, Sir John first distinguished himself in the campaign of 1339, winning his knighthood for his prowess. Later he served with great distinction at Crécy, Poitiers and Najara. Froissart records his close friendship with the Prince of Wales, and the fact that he twice captured the great French commander, Bertrand du Guesclin. For his services he was appointed seneschal of Poitou and marshal of Aquitaine. He died of wounds suffered in an unimportant skirmish near the French village of Chauvigny, and was greatly mourned. Arms: Argent, a pile Gules. Crest: A man's head proper, wreathed

about the temples Argent. We show him in his crested and mantled helm, more typical of the tourney than of warfare.

G2: Sir Thomas Holand, KG

One of the senior commanders in Prince Edward's division at Crécy, Sir Thomas was the second son of Robert, Lord Holand. His first military service had been in Flanders in 1340; in 1342 he went to Bayonne to defend the Gascon frontier against the French, and in 1343 was admitted to the Order of the Garter. In 1346 he served in the retinue of the Earl of Warwick, and at the taking of Caen he captured the Comte d'Eu, Constable of France, and the Comte de Tankerville. After Crécy he served at the siege of Calais. Arms: Azure, semy of fleurs-de-lis, a lion rampant Argent.

The gaps in Sir Thomas's plate armour show either areas of mail, mounted on the padded aketon at vulnerable points, or simply exposed parts of a full hauberk.

G3: William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton, KG

The fifth son of Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Essex, Constable of England, this knight was marshal in the third division at Vironfosse in 1332, and the following year took part in the naval engagement at Sluys. In 1342 he became the king's lieutenant and captain-general in Brittany, and in this capacity defeated the French at Morlaix. At Crécy he led the second division; a year later he served at the siege of Calais. Arms: Azure, on a bend Argent cottised Or between six lioncels rampant of the last, three mullets Gules. Crest: A lion statant guardant Or, ducally crowned Gules.

Again we show the crested and mantled helm. The shield is slung on the back by its guige. The rowelled spurs began to appear on effigies and brasses in c.1325–35, but doubtless the older prick-spur was still to be seen at Crécy and Poitiers.

H1 and H3: Infantrymen

The equipment of the foot soldier varied enormously in the 14th–15th centuries, depending on the wealth of the commander or community and on the individual's talent or luck at scavenging on the field. Odd items of armour made at widely varying times would probably be seen worn among
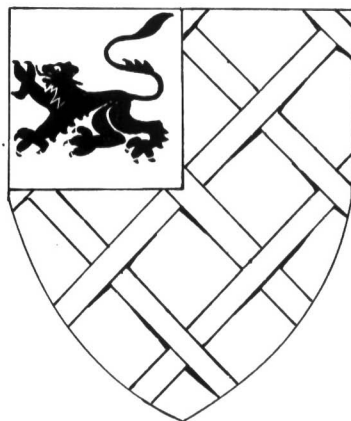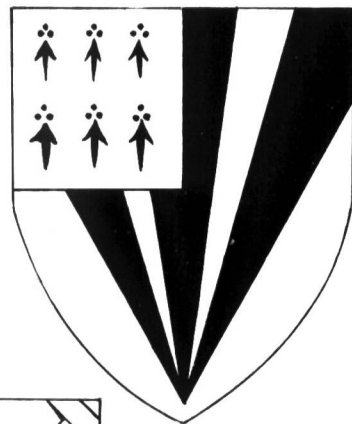
(Top) The arms of Basset: Or, three piles conjoined at base Gules, a quarter Ermine; see Plate C3. (Bottom) The arms of Ribeaumont: Gules, fretty Or, on a quarter Or a lion passant Sable; see Plate F2.

any group of men. H1 is shown in a kettle hat entirely of iron, worn over a caped hood of leather, probably padded. His notably complete body defences comprise a mail hauberk worn over some kind of quilted aketon, and he has acquired greaves of plate. Bills of various shapes became a characteristic weapon of the English infantry. H3 wears a longer and probably older mail hauberk, and has acquired plate defences for the knees. His kettle hat is iron framed with inserts of horn or hardened leather.

H2: Crossbowman, mid- to late 14th century

We are told that the Genoese crossbowmen employed by the French were well equipped with metal helmets and items of plate armour; it was probably rare for a bowman to wear plate other than knee-pieces below the waist, however. This well-protected soldier has a brigandine of fabric or leather with small metal plates rivetted inside it;

a mail hauberk; and a bascinet with camail. He carries his bolts in a short, wide-mouthed quiver at the waist, and a double spanning-hook is slung at the front of the body ready for use. (The foot was placed in the stirrup at the end of the bow, and the hooks engaged with the string; straightening up the body spanned the bow.) The alternative name for the bolts, 'quarrels', came from the French *carré*, 'square'; a square-headed bolt was apparently considered most effective for punching holes in plate armour.

We show the pavise slung on the bowman's back; it would probably be carried thus only for short marches. This large shield was fitted with a prop, and was erected in front of the bowman's position to protect him during his lengthy and necessarily static reloading procedure: it was often painted with colourful heraldic motifs. One account suggests that the Genoese crossbowmen suffered so badly at Crécy because their pavises were still loaded on baggage carts when they were unexpectedly sent straight into action.

Notes sur les planches en couleur

A1 Méprisée par la chevalerie, la milice paysanne n'était généralement pas aussi bien équipée que ce soldat, qui a un 'chapeau de guerre' en fer, une hallebarde et une épée. **A2** Les arbalétiers étaient des soldats professionnels, bien équipés. Ce niveau d'armure de protection est probablement typique des arbalétiers génois engagés par la France. **A3** L'archer portait ses habits habituels, avec simplement un justaucorps de cuir comme protection supplémentaire. Son arc est enveloppé du tissu pour le protéger contre les intempéries. Peut-être portait-il l'insigne à croix rouge.

B Le surnom 'Prince Noir' n'apparaît pas dans les écrits d'avant 1569. Nous voyons ici le Prince de Galles en armure complète avec son heaume à cimier; pendant la bataille il portait peut être le bascinet, plus pratique, avec une simple couronne.

C1 Ce chevalier se battit en Aquitaine et en Gasgogne en 1345, sous le duc de Lancastre, et à Calais. Il porte une armure d'un style plus ancien que sur la planche B, avec une cotte de maille encore partiellement couverte par des plaques d'armure; et un bascinet inhabituel avec une visière profonde. **C2** De nouveau, le heaume à cimier n'était pas souvent porté en bataille. Noter les cuissards en tissu clouté, plutôt qu'en métal. Commandant aguerri, il se battit à Crécy et à Calais, et mourut de la peste en 1360. **C3** Ce chevalier se battit à Poitiers. Il porte une armure typique de la fin du XIVème siècle, composée entièrement de plaques.

D1 Tué à Crécy dans la charge de cavalerie contre les positions du Prince de Galles, il porte une armure à l'ancienne mode, composée principalement d'une cotte de mailles avec des plaques de protection sur les membres. **D2** Le Connétable revint vivant de Crécy. Nous le voyons ici en harnois de plaques, son bouclier rejetté sur le dos. **D3** Ce gentilhomme se battit avec courage à Crécy, mais nous ne savons pas ce qu'il advint de lui. Noter le bascinet intéressant, avec une barre à charnière pour protéger le nez.

E1 Ayant combattu avec distinction à Romorantin et à Poitiers, il prit part à beaucoup de campagnes entre 1355 et les années 1370. Sa effigie tombale le représente — uniquement — agenouillé. Son armure est de style fin XIVème siècle harnois de plaques complet avec un bascinet ouvert sur le visage. **E2** Nous nous sommes inspirés pour cette figure d'effigies tombales; l'un des plus grands rois guerriers d'Angleterre, Edouard est représenté ici comme il aurait pu apparaître au camp pendant une campagne. **E3** Un commandant en chef à Crécy ainsi qu'à Poitiers, de Vere fut tué devant Rheims.

F1 Le roi Jean est dépeint comme il apparut à Poitiers, défendant son jaune fils avec une hache d'armes; mauvais commandant, il ne manquait cependant pas de courage personel. **F2** Chevalier brave et sage, de Ribeaumont joua un rôle important à Poitiers, et était respecté également de ses amis et ennemis. Il porte ici un mélange intéressant d'armure de maille et de plaque. **F3** Un autre commandant proéminent du temps, il porta l'oriflamme à Poitiers, et mourut en le défendant.

G1 Commandant expérimenté et aguerri, Chandos se battit avec honneur à Crécy, Poitiers et Najara; deux fois dans sa vie il eu l'occasion de capturer Bertrand du Guesclin. **G2** Holand se battit dans beaucoup de campagnes, pendant les années 1340, à Crécy, et à Caen, où il captura le connétable D'Eu, et également à Calais. **G3** Un commandant en chef à Crécy, et à beaucoup d'autres campagnes des années 1330 et 1340, ainsi qu'à la bataille navale de Sluys.

H Une autre sélection de fantassins, portant des cottes de mailles partielles et 'chapeaux de guerre' en fer. L'arbalétier arbore l'équipement plus complet de la fin du XVème siècle avec brigandine et cotte de maille. Celui-ci a un pavise rejetté sur le dos pour faciliter la marche. A Crécy, les arbalétiers génois souffrirent sévèrement du fait que leur pavises étaient restés sur les chariots à bagages.

Farbtafeln

A1 Da vom Rittertum verachtet, war das Fussvolk normalerweise nicht so gut ausgerüstet, wie dieser Soldat hier, der eine eisernen 'Kriegshut' und eine Hellebarde und ein Schwert trägt. **A2** Die Armbrustschützen waren gut ausgerüstete Berufssoldaten, und diese Art des Rüstungsschutzes ist wahrscheinlich typisch der der genuesischen Armbrustschützen, die von Frankreich angeworben wurden. **A3** Der Bogenschütze trägt seine Alltagskleidung mit nur einem Lederwams als extra Schutz. Sein Bogen ist in ein Tuch gewickelt, um ihn vor dem Wetter zu schützen. Das rote Kreuz-Abzeichen mag getragen worden sein.

B Der Spitzname 'Schwarzer Prinz' wurde in niedergeschriebenen Aufzeichnungen nicht vor 1569 gesehen. Wir zeigen den Prinz von Wales in voller Rüstung mit seinem 'grossen Helm', dem das heraldische Wappen oben aufgesetzt wurde; während der Schlacht mag er den praktischeren bascinet mit einer einfachen Adelskrone darumherum getragen haben.

C1 Dieser Ritter kämpfte in Aquitaine und Gascony im Jahr 1345 unter dem Herzog von Lancaster, und bei Calais. Er trägt einen früheren Rüstungsstil als in Abbildung B, bei der die Kettenpanzerrüstung nur teilweise durch feste Panzerung bedeckt ist; und einen ungewöhnlichen bascinet mit einem tiefen Visier. **C2** Wiederum, der mit dem Wappen gekrönte Helm wurde nicht oft während der Schlacht getragen. Bemerke den Oberschenkelschutz aus nagelbestücktem Stoff und nicht aus Metall. Ein erfahrener Kommandeur in vielen Feldzügen dieser Periode, er kämpfte bei Crecy und Calais, und starb an der Pest im Jahre 1360. **C3** Dieser Ritter kämpfte bei Poitiers. Er trägt die typische Rüstung des späten 14. Jahrhunderts, voll gepanzert.

D1 Gefallen bei Crecy während der Reitereiangriffe auf die Position des Prinzen von Wales, er trägt einen altmodischen Rüstungsstil, hauptsächlich Kettenrüstung mit gepanzertem Schutz an den Körpergliedern. **D2** Der Constable überlebte Crecy. Wir zeigen ihn in Panzerrüstung, sein Schild über seinen Rücken geschlungen. **D3** Dieser Edelmann kämpfte mit Auszeichnung bei Crecy, sein Schicksal ist jedoch unbekannt. Bemerke den interessanten bascinet, mit einem Scharnierbügel um seine Nase zu schützen.

E1 Ausgezeichnet im Gefecht bei Romorantin und bei Poitiers, kämpfte er in vielen Feldzügen zwischen 1355 und den 1370ern. Sein einmaliges Grabbildnis ist in kniender Position. Sein Rüstung ist im Stil des späten 14. Jahrhunderts, komplett gepanzert mit gesichtsoffenem bascinet. **E2** Wir nahmen diese Figur von Grabbildern; einer der grössten Kriegskönige Englands, Edward ist gezeigt, wie er während der Schlacht im Lager erschienen sein mag. **E3** Ein höherer Kommandeur sowohl in Crecy als auch in Poitiers, de Vere wurde ausserhalb von Rheims getötet.

F1 König Jean ist gezeigt, wie er in Poitiers erschien, seinen jungen Sohn mit einer Streitaxt verteidigend; ein schlechter Kommandeur, es fehlte ihm nicht an persönlichem Mut. **F2** Ein tapferer und kluger Ritter, de Ribeaumont trat hervor bei Poitiers, und wurde von Freund und Feind gleichermassen verehrt. Er trägt hier eine interessante Mischung einer aus Kettengliedern bestehenden und fest gepanzerten Rüstung. **F3** Ein anderer berühmter französischer Kommandeur dieser Periode, er trug die Oriflamme bei Poitiers und starb sie verteidigend.

G1 Ein alterfahrener Kommandeur, Chandos kämpfte mit Ehren bei Crecy, Poitiers und Najara; zweimal in seinem Leben nahm er Bertrand du Guesclin gefangen. **G2** Holand kämpfte in vielen Schlachten der 1340ern, bei Crecy, Caen — wo er Constable d'Eu gefangen nahm — und Calais. **G3** Ein höherer Kommandeur bei Crecy und in vielen anderen Feldzügen der 1330er und 1340er, einschliesslich der Seeschlacht von Sluys.

H Eine andere Auswahl von Infanteristen, Teilkettenrüstung und eiserne 'Kriegshüte' tragend. Die Armbrustschützen trugen die etwas komplettere Ausrüstung des späten 14. Jahrhunderts, mit brigandine und Kettenhemd. Er hat ein pavise für den Marsch über seinen Rücken geschlungen; die genuesischen Armbrustschützen litten schwer bei Crecy, dadurch da ihre pavises noch auf den Gepäckwagen verstaut waren.

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