

“War without fire is like sausages without mustard”:
The Legacy of the Tactic of *Chevauchee* in the
Hundred Years’ War, and How It Can Inform Military
Operational Planners of Today.

A Monograph

by

Major Michael B Goodman R SIGNALS
British Army



School of Advanced Military Studies
US Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS

2021

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.				
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23 05 2019		2. REPORT TYPE MASTER'S THESIS		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) JUNE 18-MAY 19
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE "War without fire is like sausages without mustard": The Legacy of the Tactic of <i>Chevauchee</i> in the Hundred Years' War, and How It Can Inform Military Operational Planners of Today.			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
			5b. GRANT NUMBER	
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
			5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) MAJ Michael B. Goodman			5e. TASK NUMBER	
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited				
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES				
14. ABSTRACT The historical legacy of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) is often personified by the great battles of the conflict: Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), Agincourt (1415), and Orleans (1428) dominate both the literature and the public memory of the war between the kingdoms of France and England. However, rather than the singular, sustained period of conflict its name implies, the Hundred Years' War was largely conducted by a series of seasonal campaigns that ebbed and flowed in both frequency and violence. In the first fifty years of the conflict, one such method of fighting was the <i>chevauchee</i> . Literally translated as a "ride," a modern understanding of <i>chevauchee</i> , put simply, would be that of raiding an opponent's territory. Yet, <i>chevauchee</i> was not just the occupation of small bands of soldiers; moreover, in practice they were often large, highly orchestrated affairs which sought to undermine their opponents by weakening their states, reducing income through plunder and militarily challenging the ability of the attacked area to respond. Some <i>chevauchees</i> ended in large engagements, as was seen in the Battle of Poitiers, but they also ended too with the attacker culminating when their resources had been consumed. It is this dichotomy which has relevance to aspects of warfare today; how did <i>chevauchees</i> end and under what circumstances did hostilities cease or pause? Furthermore, does <i>chevauchee</i> have a lasting legacy for military planners? As violence continues to be used by various state and non-state actors to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of many governments around the globe there is arguably considerable relevance as to what knowledge a study of the early campaigns of the Hundred Years' War may illuminate for our current generation.				
15. SUBJECT TERMS Raiding, Chevauchee, Hundred Years' War				
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: Unclassified			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 40
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)		
			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code) 913 758-3300	

Acknowledgements

This monograph marks the near culmination of two happy and interesting years in the United States. Throughout, I have had the privilege to study alongside some of the best military officers that I have ever worked with, whom all have been welcoming and interested to hear the views of the “Brit.” Since 2006, when I first read Froissart’s *Chronicles* I have been captivated by medieval history. Although not seemingly as hot a topic as Multi-Domain Operations or modern Command and Control, I owe many thanks to Dr Ricardo Herrera and Lt Col Robinson for their sage advice in choosing to research a topic I still fondly enjoy. I must also thank my brother, Dr. Samuel Goodman, for his support throughout the process. Lastly, my unreserved appreciation goes to my wife, Emily, for her support and pressure to get this work finished in order to spend more time with the boys.

Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Contents.....	iv
Abstract	v
Maps	vi
Introduction	1
Background	4
Primary Research Question	5
Historiographic Review.....	6
The Crécy Campaign (1346)	12
The Black Prince's <i>Chevauchees</i> (1355-56)	20
Conclusion.....	35
Bibliography.....	39

Abstract

“War without fire is like sausages without mustard”: The Legacy of the Tactic of *Chevauchee* in the Hundred Years’ War, and How It Can Inform Military Operational Planners of Today, by Major Michael B. Goodman, British Army, 38 pages.

The historical legacy of the Hundred Years’ War (1337-1453) is often personified by the great battles of the conflict: Crécy (1346), Poitiers (1356), Agincourt (1415), and Orleans (1428) dominate both the literature and the public memory of the war between the kingdoms of France and England. However, rather than the singular, sustained period of conflict its name implies, the Hundred Years’ War was largely conducted by a series of seasonal campaigns that ebbed and flowed in both frequency and violence. In the first fifty years of the conflict, one such method of fighting was the *chevauchee*. Literally translated as a “ride,” a modern understanding of *chevauchee*, put simply, would be that of raiding an opponent’s territory. Yet, *chevauchee* was not just the occupation of small bands of soldiers; moreover, in practice they were often large, highly orchestrated affairs which sought to undermine their opponents by weakening their states, reducing income through plunder and militarily challenging the ability of the attacked area to respond. Some *chevauchees* ended in large engagements, as was seen in the Battle of Poitiers, but they also ended too with the attacker culminating when their resources had been consumed. It is this dichotomy which has relevance to aspects of warfare today; how did *chevauchees* end and under what circumstances did hostilities cease or pause? Furthermore, does *chevauchee* have a lasting legacy for military planners? As violence continues to be used by various state and non-state actors to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of many governments around the globe there is arguably considerable relevance as to what knowledge a study of the early campaigns of the Hundred Years’ War may illuminate for our current generation.

Maps

Figure 1. The Crécy Campaign, 1346..	13
Figure 2. The Prince of Wales's 1355 campaign.....	25
Figure 3. The Poitiers Campaign.....	31

Introduction

William Shakespeare's history, *Henry V* (1600), has long reduced the popular legacy of the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) to little more than a celebration of the heroics of English troops triumphing against seemingly impossible odds at the Battle of Agincourt (1415). Whilst it may be true that the legacy of the war is often encapsulated for the English at Agincourt, and sometimes the victories at Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356), the conflict ebbed and flowed in many rounds of violence. Chiefly in the early period of the war, the tactic of *chevauchee* became a distinct way in which Edward III (1312-1377) planned to bring war to the Kingdom of France. Derived, along with that of the concept of chivalry, from the French "cheval," or horse, the *chevauchee* does not just concern horse-riding by noblemen but is "a raid, typified by pillage, burning, rape and murder."¹ Although to a modern audience such tactics are abhorrent and illegal under international law, twenty-first century observers must firstly be mindful of its purpose: to weaken the opposing state reputationally, politically, militarily, and economically. Whilst any modern interpretation or regeneration of *chevauchee* would be different from that of the Middle Ages, the basis for adopting such a strategy remains largely unchanged. Its use allows a numerically inferior force to compensate their lack of resources with the ability to strike fear amongst its enemy and gain tangible benefits throughout its employment.

Any analysis of the legacy of *chevauchee* to the operational planner of today must firstly consider its place within the wider context of warfare in the medieval warfare. The technological advancements in the intervening years delineate the ways that modern armies engage an opponent. Yet, how and why operations are orchestrated, planned, and sustained remain a constant feature within conflict. It is in this space that the broader legacy of the *chevauchee* and raiding was found as a means by which political aims could be achieved through the use of force.

¹ John A. Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2003), 85.

Decisive battle engagements also played a part, but only arguably when the *chevauchee* had ended, when a belligerent directly sought battle or when those conducting a *chevauchee* had their means of extraction diminished by enemy interference. Even in periods of relative peace throughout the conflict, the *chevauchee* was still a tactic commonly used by the English, albeit smaller and more localized. Its flexibility and scalability in continuing a fight as an adjunct to other endeavors, such as diplomacy or whilst reading forces for future forays, made it a way to build combat power away from direct confrontation but without relieving the pressure upon an opponent.²

A study of the Hundred Years' War in general, with the period 1346-1360 in particular, is of significant worth to modern planners as the use of *chevauchee* identifies how relatively small, highly mobile, and tactically astute armies can have a disproportionate effect against the ability of a nation to protect its land, subjects and reputation. In what may now be identified as asymmetric warfare, with a peculiarity of being similarly if not symmetrically armed, the English campaigns sought to inflict significant damage, particularly physical, and thereby economic harm, to Valois France. Although not a primary focus of this study, the economic aspect of warfare in this period cannot be ignored. Both plunder and the ransoming of prisoners were a distinct byproduct of the *chevauchee*. C.T. Allmand aptly describes that "He who took a risk in war, whether by paying an army or by hazarding his person in battle, stood to gain part of the benefits which an army was expected to derive from war."³ Allmand's assertion sets *chevauchee's* place in the wider context of medieval warfare in general. To finance and sustain conflict, profit and ransom became key ways that campaigns were resourced and maintained and therefore were likely motivating factors in choosing when and where to conduct operations.

² Alfred H. Burne, *The Agincourt War* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1980), 20.

³ Christopher T. Allmand, *Society at War: The Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years War* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1973), 77.

Although ransoming wealthy prisoners was a benefit of campaigning, taking prisoners largely came as a result of a successful siege or battle. To fully appreciate *chevauchee* as a way of conducting warfare, students must also note its relationship to battles as well as its being instrumental in setting the conditions for battle to occur. Whilst decisive battle was often instrumental in affording campaigns a means to conclude in one sense, the absence of battle does not diminish the importance of the *chevauchee*. Indeed, should an opponent avoid battle, the unhindered raid would severely undermine the perception of governmental control and security in that region as well as compounding the economic havoc the raid would cause. It would appear, therefore, that such a tactic was inherently opportunistic but enjoyed the benefit of sustaining energy and impact by its destructive method. The strengths of the *chevauchee* included its ability to constantly give the attacker the initiative. Those being attacked could either submit to the devastation of the raid or seek to confront the attacker directly. The latter approach was a gamble, particularly at the tactical level owing to the defensive capabilities of the English archer and longbow, who made up a significant proportion of any invading force.⁴ For the former, such a strategy would only weaken the prestige of the regime and foment unrest which could be exploited further by the attacker. These points are of relevance to modern military planners as historical study of the period reveals that English activities in the Hundred Years' War varied in the tempo of operations, often seeking a balance between the optimal time to strike and the required level of preparation. This had the impact of subsequently aligning objectives with their ability to sustain and maintain their campaigns. Additionally, warfare in the Hundred Years' War was punctuated by diplomatic efforts between the belligerents. Efforts by the Papacy and the broader institution of the Catholic Church in encouraging peace and settlement were of note, but how diplomatic efforts by third parties were perceived by the combatants was crucial.⁵ Choosing

⁴ Mollie M. Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grand Chevauchee of 1355* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2018), 44.

⁵ Alfred H. Burne, *The Art of War on the Land* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing, 1947), 83.

an unacceptable mediator would obfuscate the purpose of such mediation in addition to wider lessons of where diplomatic efforts were manipulated to enhance the tactical situation of the campaign. In as much as diplomacy falls largely outside of the remit of the operational planner of today, anticipation of how diplomatic efforts may impinge or accentuate the military situation is an area that should not be ignored.

Background

The Hundred Years' War was fought primarily between the Plantagenet kings of England against the Valois royal family of France. Since the marriage of King Henry II of England (1133-1189) to Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152, the King of England had become of vassal of the French monarchy for the Duchy of Aquitaine itself. As lords of the fiefdom, located in south-western France, English kings would periodically have to pay homage for the lands to the French king as well as being subservient to their lord. As the chronicler Jean Froissart vividly describes, such occasions were the cause of confusion and underlying discord, with competing kingdoms seemingly constrained by custom and tradition.⁶ Moreover, England was engaged in an ongoing conflict with the Scots with the aim of ensuring English hegemony on the island of Britain. For the English, therefore, the decision to launch hostilities against the French in the 1330s was derived in part from the strategic situation: the English wanted to be dominant in Aquitaine and Scotland but were acutely aware of their vulnerabilities should the Scots and French aid one another militarily as well as politically against England within the wider European context.⁷

Whilst international relations certainly contributed to the war's commencement, the additional impact of the feudal system at the localized or regional level must be noted in setting the conditions for the war to occur. Jonathan Sumption assesses that feudal disputes significantly

⁶ Geoffrey Brereton, ed., *Froissart: Chronicles* (Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1979), 54.

⁷ Clifford D. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III 1327 – 1360* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2001), 126-129.

contributed to a gradual slip into war as “Inevitably one of the cases would lead to a judgement which Edward would find it politically impossible to comply with”⁸ Such an opinion is invaluable when assessing the role and legacy of *chevauchee* as it implies localized political situations being tantamount to key strategic and operational decision making. In the case of Edward III, the confiscation of his lands by Phillip VI precipitated his military response. Perversely, Edward III’s sheltering of Robert of Artois (1287-1342), an opponent of Phillip’s, entrenched the opinion of the house of Valois, thereby demonstrating the significance of regional personalities and issues in determining political action.⁹ Any subsequent military endeavor would and should seek to empower or isolate feudal factions in order to achieve loyalty or promote disunity in the area of operations. For the legacy of *chevauchee* this point cannot be understated. Throughout the course of the Hundred Years’ War, raiding became a means in which both loyalty and disunity could be fomented, furthering its use as a tool to achieve political and military aims through the use of direct and indirect violence against a country, its populous, and its government.

Primary Research Question

The English use of *chevauchee* and raiding against the kingdom of France during the Hundred Years’ War has lasting relevance to asymmetric warfare today and such relevance has application for the modern military planner. The campaigns of Edward III and Edward the Black Prince suggest that a modern military planner should be wary of a raiding strategy in general, regardless of its duration, and a modern version of *chevauchee* as its most extreme form. Its application to the operational environments that many governments find themselves in today cannot be understated. Recent examples, such as the rise of groups as Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have demonstrated how swift, violent raids generate significant momentum and can be maintained and sustained by the economic benefits of

⁸ Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years’ War*, vol. 1, *Trial by Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1991), 169.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

conducting such a way of war. Although raiding, *chevauchee* and campaigning were considered effectively the same for the English, modern observers should not be fixated on the duration of a military endeavor in order to fit with the modern definition of a raid. They should, moreover, concern themselves with the manner in which it is conducted. For a nation or group being attacked, a study of the early English campaigns during the Hundred Years' War exposes the vulnerabilities of *chevauchee* as a tactic as well as the requirement to counter it sufficiently in some manner in order to reduce its impact, stiffen the resolve of your own supporters and either encourage other actors to support your cause or deter them from becoming entangled. Furthermore, how *chevauchees* were concluded can illuminate both how important it is to be able to defeat an opponent when required in addition to the key roles that intermediaries and third parties can have in determining a settlement. Inasmuch as battles have, and continue, to dominate how the Hundred Years' War is remembered, *chevauchees* can be viewed as a more risk-averse strategy, affording a king or commander options on how, where and when they could best achieve their aims by varying when and under what conditions to engage the enemy.¹⁰ An observer would only have to look at the Battle of Poitiers to see that the English and Gascon armies were in a grand retreat at the commencement of the battle and therefore seeking to avoid a direct confrontation.¹¹ *Chevauchee* then, for the English could certainly encourage battle when it was wanted but when the tactic was exhausted or disabled, battle may have been highly undesirable. A modern commander, therefore, may seek to adopt a *chevauchee*-like tactic in order to achieve an effect without over-committing the finite resources that they possess.

Historiographic Review

¹⁰ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 222.

¹¹ Burne, *The Art of War*, 83.

The Hundred Years' War has been subject to numerous and varied histories by authors from considerably disparate times. Both the conflict in general and the key engagements of the period have received numerous critiques and investigations. From an overarching perspective, the English historian Jonathan Sumption has completed a three-volume work on the conflict.¹² Whilst assessing the conflict in holistic terms, Sumption's focus is not solely on the ways in which campaigning took place or how armies and fighting men were trained, equipped, organized and deployed. These aspects have been studied both collectively and individually and have provided significant foundational awareness and analysis for this study. As this study focuses on the conflict from an English perspective, Christopher Allmand's *Society at War* provides a succinct description of how a raiding strategy, with *chevauchee* as a constituent part, was the accumulative result of a society organized and committed to pursuing political and military aims on the continent of Europe.¹³ His methodical deconstruction of the English army and the organizational bureaucracy upon which it was built leave no doubt that medieval warfare was not a simplistic affair. Moreover, it is suggestive that frequency and tempo of campaigns were highly controlled and synchronized in order to cause the maximum number of problems for the opponent across what modern military practitioners may label multiple domains.¹⁴

Clifford Rogers' *War, Cruel and Sharp* takes a detailed chronological view of English strategy in France in the period 1327-1360, focusing from the commencement of hostilities until the agreement of the Treaty of Brétigny in 1360.¹⁵ His focus straddles both examination of Edward III's strategy as well as the ways and means his aims were achieved. Specifically, Rogers contributes to the wider discussion of whether the Crécy campaign was actually devoid of an

¹² Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years' War*, vols. 1, 2, & 3 (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1991-2009).

¹³ Allmand, *Society at War*, 135-137.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*.

overall strategy and the tactic of *chevauchee* was nothing more than a “purposeless parade” as some other commentators, notably including the English theorist Basil Liddell-Hart, had previously asserted.¹⁶ Contrary to these views, Rogers identifies both the flexibility and utility of such a way of war in achieving Edward III’s objectives. He asserts that *chevauchees* sought to provoke a defender to confront the attacker militarily, perhaps in battle, but significantly at an opportune moment for the attacker.¹⁷ If such an opportunity did not emerge then the devastation wrought by *chevauchee* would certainly weaken the area and make it far more difficult for the defender to retain authority, with the possibility for banditry ever-present. Rogers’ assertion that *chevauchee* must precipitate some response finds considerable crossover to both primary and secondary sources. The medieval chronicler, Froissart, identifies colloquially the requirement for increased security in order to not be attacked whilst conducting routine trade and business, thereby affecting the ability to gather tax revenues.¹⁸ Mollie Madden reaffirms this belief in her summation of the Grand Chevauchee of 1355, where she asserts that English actions in France called into question the authority and power of the French king in areas that had been previously untouched by violence.¹⁹ As a result, although *chevauchees* may not have had strategic consequences on their own, they certainly formed a crucial part of English strategy during the Hundred Years’ War as well as providing a defender of such a tactic multiple dilemmas in where and how to counter it.

As previously noted, whilst battles may embody the lasting legacy of the conflict, historical analysis of how campaigns were conducted and concluded are just as important for today’s military planner. For the latter, the historiography agrees that diplomatic efforts existed

¹⁶ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 7.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁸ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 161.

¹⁹ Madden, *The Black Prince*, 195.

throughout the campaigns, varying in frequency and effort in accordance with the operational situation. Allmand identifies that both the belligerents and representatives from the Catholic Church played a not unimportant role in shaping peace negotiations in addition to being intermediaries.²⁰ Indeed, primary sources such as Froissart's and Geoffrey Le Baker's chronicles indicate the importance of respected third parties being intimately involved in deterring battles from within a conflict. For Le Baker, he identifies that entering into peace negotiations made Prince Edward The Black Prince's military situation more precarious immediately prior to the Battle of Poitiers.²¹ Such an interpretation is supported by some historians, such as Alfred H. Burne, who argues that the "French were evidently using this unofficial armistice to bring up reinforcements and to collect stragglers from their hasty march."²² Such observations highlight how peace negotiations could be opportunistic as well as potentially necessary for the successful coordination and concentration of one's own forces. Furthermore, using the negotiations before Poitiers as an example, having sufficient credibility becomes a recurring theme in belligerents recognizing the authority of third parties to act on behalf of their interests.²³

Although much of the established historiographic work has focused on the broader strategic and operational elements of *chevauchee* and raiding in general, analysis of the tactical level is illuminating for a modern audience too. In areas of sustainment, supply and movement of forces, how *chevauchee* was conducted in a tactical sense finds significant resonance for the planner of today. Whilst the means to move personnel and materiel have markedly changed, broadly speaking armies have the same two options for supplying forces: either the resources are

²⁰ Allmand, *Society at War*, 167.

²¹ Richard Barber, ed., *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince* (New York: St. Martin's, 1986), 73.

²² Alfred H. Burne, *The Crecy War: A military history of the Hundred Years War from 1337 to the peace of Bretigny 1360* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955), 291.

²³ Herbert J. Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition 1355-1357* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 142.

procured locally, whether through agreement, foraging and plundering, or they are transported from friendly territory. Such views have achieved considerable consensus. One of the foremost advocates for this view, Michael Prestwich, notes how a combination of the two often existed, with local variables such as whether the army had to move on interior or exterior lines a determinate factor as well as the passivity of the population.²⁴ For Prestwich, purveying supplies from local sources became synonymous with large scale raiding and whether to plunder was contingent on the hostility of the population towards the attacker. Yuval Noah Harari, however, takes a different view concerning the supplying of armies in the Middle Ages. Whilst largely agreeing that armies supplied themselves with stores amassed prior to embarkation or through plunder, he argues that the quantity of supplies varied as to the strategic approach taken by a combatant. Harari suggests that raiding strategies could be both moderate or radical and whether the attacker wished to retain a persistent presence in the attacked area also dictated how supplies were found and managed.²⁵ A radical strategy in contrast to a moderate one focused on movement and tempo. The former was arguably more pragmatic, where periodic halts would be called in order to resupply or lay siege to key objectives compared to a more risk tolerant approach of increased vigor at the expense of safety, in terms of the amount of supplies that could be carried or found, in addition to the distance the force inevitably moved from safety. In terms of relevance for the military professional of the modern era, understanding the amount of supplies an opposing force possesses or how they intend to resupply their armies may illuminate the likely way in which their campaign may be conducted. If an allied force can correctly interpret the possible tempo of an enemy's campaign, it may be able to decide quicker on where best to counter it.

²⁴Michael Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience* (London: Yale University Press, 1996), 253.

²⁵Yuval Noah Harari, "Strategy and Supply in Fourteenth-Century Western European Invasion Campaigns," *The Journal of Military History* 64, no. 2 (2000): 301.

The historiographic review identifies that the *chevauchee* formed a major constituent part of English strategy and campaigning within France during the early stages of the Hundred Years' War.²⁶ Throughout the major campaigns of the war, the English pursued *chevauchee* to varying levels of degree in order to achieve their aims, its employment perhaps becoming indistinguishable from what would be considered a normal campaign. Most interestingly, Harari's identification of sub-categories of a larger raiding strategy is most interesting as it suggests that a distinct benefit of raiding in general, and *chevauchee* in particular, is that of its flexibility.²⁷ Should an objective be the capture of territory or the permanent garrisoning of a town or fortification, the attacking force is likely to be more pragmatic in their logistical support for a campaign. Alternatively, should they wish to subvert the authority of the established lord in a specific region then they may have adopted more a radical non-persistent strategy. The *chevauchee* too could be used to varying degrees of destruction in order to achieve a specific outcome as well altering in frequency and duration during peace initiatives. On an occasion when peace initiatives were ongoing, a violent raid could demonstrate considerable military strength for a relatively meager use of force and comparatively little cost. Lastly, numerous concurrent *chevauchees* launched in different areas could have a combined effect of being considered a permanent invasion force.

Whilst the *chevauchee* of the medieval period is not something readily translatable into today's operational environment, Lisa Brady has suggested that many similarities exist between the English activities in the Hundred Years' War and those of the Union Army operating in the southern American states during the American Civil War (1861-1865). Brady suggests that the Union's failure to achieve their war aims led directly in 1863 to a decision to attack not just Confederate soldiers in the field but to attack the Confederacy's agricultural foundations during

²⁶ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 6.

²⁷ Harari, "Strategy and Supply," 300-301.

the siege of Vicksburg.²⁸ What Brady describes is perhaps the genesis of a modern *chevauchee*: when traditional styled military engagements are unable to bring about a desired end, or are unable to be conducted, armies may naturally transgress into a wider reaching and less discriminate campaign. Although for the English in the fourteenth century no such notion was immediately comprehensible, a modern planner should seek to understand what elements of society may be susceptible to attack.

The Crécy Campaign (1346)

The Summer of 1346 marked the start of predominantly English-led raids and campaigns into France. The Crécy Campaign began with a landing in Normandy on 12 July 1346 and ended in early September with the beginnings of the Siege of Calais (1346-1347).²⁹ Calais eventually succumbed to English forces in July 1347 and remained in English hands until 1558. Figure 1 depicts the Campaign's progress throughout the Summer of 1346. The English experience in this campaign marked the beginning of large-scale involvement on the continent and a departure from previous efforts, which sought to use the king's allies of the Bretons, the Germans, and the Flemings as ways to limit fiscal expenditure and the need to transport sizeable contingents of fighting troops from England to France.

²⁸ Lisa M. Brady, *War upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformations of Southern Landscapes during the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 22-23.

²⁹ Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 489.

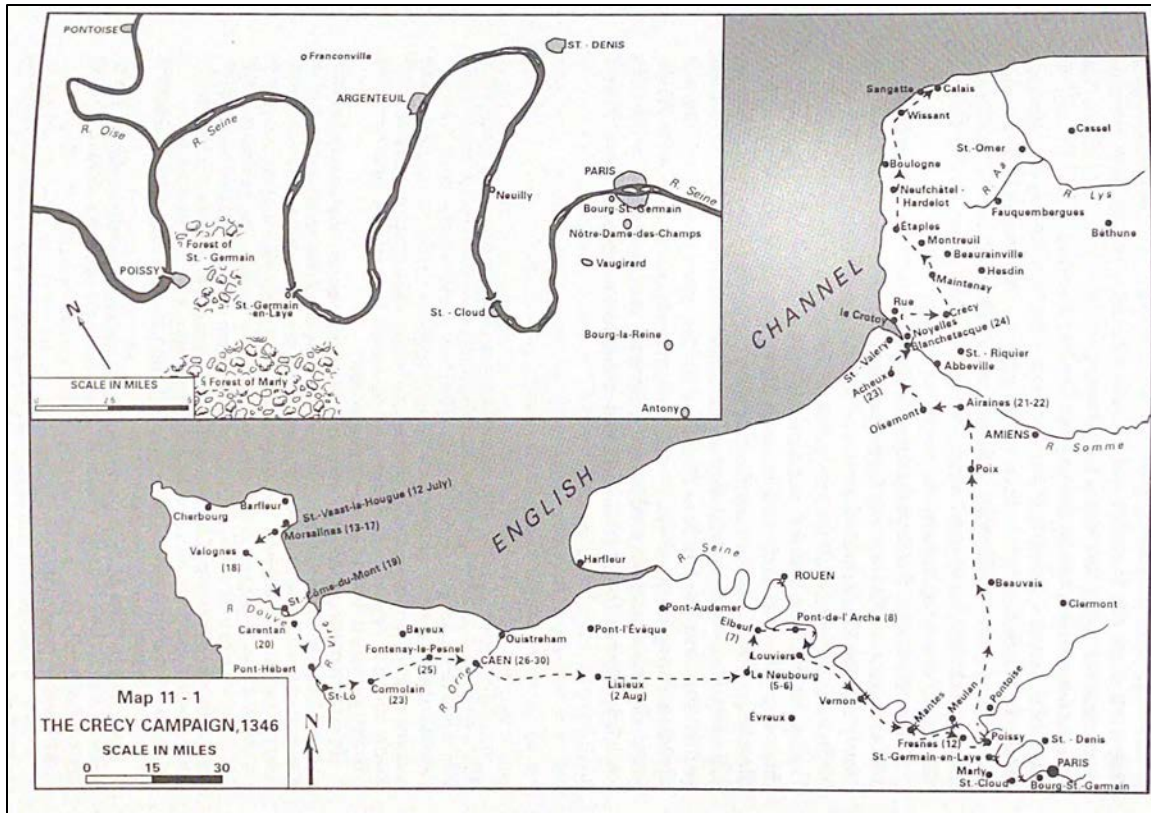


Figure 1. The Crécy Campaign, 1346. Clifford D. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III 1327 - 1360* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2001), 239.

The victory at the Battle of Crécy on 26 August marked the pinnacle of the campaign, yet its occurrence was not necessarily the objective of the campaign.³⁰ The storming of a series of towns in Northern France throughout July, and in particular the assault of Caen on 26 July, has confused the ultimate view of the campaign in that deciphering Edward III's strategic end depends on the weight of analysis given to certain events. The debate concerning whether Edward III actually sought a decisive battle against the French is one that clouds the purpose and effectiveness of the campaign in that its success can be interpreted by a single, climatic event as opposed a series of actions in aid of numerous objectives. Clifford Rogers' previous assertion that the Crécy Campaign sought to do inflict some damage to a piece of the larger French Army, as

³⁰ Michael Prestwich, *The Hundred Years War* (London: Taurus, 2018), 22-23.

opposed fighting its full complement is one that cannot be ignored as he subsequently highlights the use of *chevauchee* as the means to which this was achieved.³¹

Rogers' use of an extract from Froissart's *Oeuvres* demonstrates much about the utility of *chevauchee*. Quoting a letter from Godfrey of Harcourt to Edward III, he articulates the destruction wrought by a *chevauchee*, yet notes taking time and resources to plunder and destroy villages risked weakening the force to such an extent that they would be unable to match an opposing army in battle as well as ensuring their egress back to safer territory.³² Harcourt's letter demonstrates the strategic and tactical strengths and weaknesses of an aggressive raiding strategy. For the former, Harcourt's depiction of destruction alludes to the psychological effect such a campaign has upon the defender and within the non-combatant populous. For in the defender's inability to identify the military objective is found a significant advantage to the attacker. The flexibility of the tactic also increases the sense of unrest and unease within the community of the defender. Determining what to do, with what means, and how then preoccupies the decision-making ability of the defender, thereby affording the attacker an opportunity in which to proceed with their initiative ahead of the decision-making ability of their opponent. Yet, Harcourt's letter also proves most telling as to *chevauchee*'s limits and weaknesses. Whilst immense plunder could be obtained through a radical raiding strategy consisting of the systematic destruction of property along a specific route, conducting a campaign in such a way is inevitably more time consuming than that of a swift endeavor with a few limited military objectives. In reducing the *chevauchee*'s tempo Edward III had arguably reduced its potency: a reduction in movement had, in enemy territory, caused the English troops to have effectively fixed themselves to the areas that they had begun to occupy. In doing so they had lost the initial "breathing space"³³ that had been gained by the assault into Normandy and subsequently provided an opportunity to the numerically-superior

³¹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 232-233.

³² *Ibid.*, 247-248.

³³ Andrew Ayton and Philip Preston, *The Battle of Crécy, 1346* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2005), 57.

French to isolate Edward III's army from its support and destroy it. Despite, as Froissart suggests, the good husbandry of Edward III's men and artillery throughout the campaign, becoming decisively engaged in a space where battle was not ideal becomes a recurring vulnerability of raiding and *chevauchee*.³⁴ Wary of being irrevocably entangled, following the capture of Caen no serious attempt was made to garrison the town for future use.³⁵

Whilst clearly important to note how the Crécy Campaign was conducted, it is critical to analyze Edward III's choice of Normandy as the territory in which to conduct a campaign on the continent. Although Froissart suggests that the decision to land in Normandy was opportunistic, owing to the sea conditions of the English Channel, when a strategic view is taken the attack in Normandy seems incredibly astute.³⁶ When the Crécy Campaign was launched, smaller campaigns were ongoing in other areas of France. Sir Thomas Dagworth (1276-1350) led a small English force in the Breton War of Succession and Henry, Earl of Derby (1310-1361), led another force in English territory in Aquitaine. With two forces already within France, the decision to come ashore in a duchy that had its own internal problems enhanced the effectiveness of the campaign as some local support may have existed. An area beset with internal strife was also unable to effectively respond to any external threat without substantial assistance from other feudal regions within France, coordinated by King Philip VI (1293-1350) and his administrators. Normandy then, proved to be an opportune landing point as it afforded sufficient time in which to land and disembark troops prior to their march as well as potentially offering some prospect of prolonged shelter should the troops have required it. Indeed, *chevauchee* requires a permissive line of departure; an area that one can launch from without undue interference. Although the requirement for at least a semi-permissive environment in which to launch operations is self-

³⁴ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 77.

³⁵ Ayton and Preston, *The Battle of Crécy*, 60.

³⁶ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 70.

evident for the modern planner, analysis of Edward III's choice of Normandy reflects a part designed campaign and one that was semi-reactive to the conditions on the ground. Should the strategic ends of a campaign be flexible, then the ways they can be achieved may also be tailored as the campaign develops.³⁷ Furthermore, Edward III's campaign in a hitherto unengaged area created a further dilemma for the French, whose forces were already dispersed elsewhere. The subsequent attack at a weak point at worst prohibited, or at best delayed, a military response.

The decision not to reinforce Dagworth or Derby is also important in terms of defining the campaign in reference to understanding this campaign's place within the wider English strategy. Whilst Sumption suggests that Edward III may have wanted a permanent foothold in Normandy after his campaign, this end result proved unobtainable for several reasons, including that of manpower shortages.³⁸ First amongst these prohibitions included the problem English commanders had with restraining their troops when in a fast-moving raiding campaign. Although large parts of the Norman civilian population may have been antipathic towards the English, constant indiscriminate attacks on them rather than those in service to the Valois King of France reduced Edward III's options for the garrisoning of the duchy. In spite of Edward's public support of Godfrey of Harcourt and, by default, the Norman people, the inability to restrain the army meant that the conquest of Normandy, perhaps with the creation of a permanent garrison in an area of local support, proved to be beyond reach. Thus, as Sumption describes, "what began as a campaign of conquest became a chevauchee."³⁹ For a modern audience, it becomes apparent that *chevauchee* is synonymous with medieval warfare regardless of whether wanton destruction was the proposed way to bring about strategic ends. Sumption's acknowledgement also determines that even within a violent campaign, good order and discipline remains a constant desire of any commander and failure to enforce it can have a disproportionate effect on how a campaign can be

³⁷ Prestwich, *Hundred Years War*, 23.

³⁸ Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 532-3.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 532.

conducted. Although no records of the rules that the English army operated under during the Crécy Campaign remain, the Durham Ordinances for War, drawn up under Richard II in 1385, do suggest that within the Hundred Years' War period, even campaigns of significant violence were subject to regulation by custom and law in order that they not lose their cohesiveness or potency. Anne Curry's translation of the twenty-six rules outlined in the Durham Ordinances indicates the lengths that campaigns were organized and the combatants controlled.⁴⁰ As a result, any departure from accepted or normal behavior can limit operations for both the attacker and defender. In this instance, any practice outside the permissible levels of violence could provoke an unintended response, potentially isolating a combatant from support.

Irrespective of the debate concerning whether Edward III sought to deliberately provoke a pitched battle with a French Army, after the capture of Caen the English campaign certainly followed a more traditional form of *chevauchee*. Once the English Army had left the Contentin Peninsula its rate of destruction increased. Andrew Ayton highlights that the systemic ravaging of the countryside "was a strategic device, intended to intimidate the local population and provoke those in political and military authority."⁴¹ Ayton's view of the campaign represents a broader consensus concerning a true purpose of *chevauchee* – that of an opportunistic endeavor. Commenting on the Crécy Campaign, Prestwich claims that the English war aims "changed as circumstances altered...that strategy of the campaign developed as the English gained in confidence."⁴² For Edward III, his instructions to send English reinforcements from England to Le Cretoy, a coastal village in the Somme region and on a north-easterly line of march from Caen, validates Prestwich's claim as well as highlighting some of the tactical problems when on *chevauchee*. For an opportunistic strategy, suggesting Le Cretoy as a place to resupply his forces

⁴⁰ Anne Curry, "Disciplinary ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish armies in 1385: An international code?", *Journal of Medieval History*, 37, no. 3 (2011): 288-290.

⁴¹ Ayton and Preston, *The Battle of Crécy*, 65.

⁴² Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare*, 202-3.

was ambitious given the distance to Caen but emphasizes the pace that his forces could travel at. However, not resupplying from their initial landing point in Normandy highlights the areas of vulnerability when conducting a prolonged and wide-ranging raid. Although food for men and horses could be derived from localized plundering, arrows for the English archers could not be sourced locally and required significant organization for their procurement back in England. What could now be termed as specialized equipment could be viewed as a severe weakness for anyone wishing to emulate a campaign with significant speed and ferocity. Even though the English archers could also be employed as a lightly armed and armored men-at-arms, the broader vulnerability of specialized equipment is palpable. Should supplies of arrows have been targeted or their shipments denied to the English, one can only speculate about the impact to the effectiveness of their campaign and in the Battle of Crécy. Though much of determining key components of fighting power would, in modern doctrine, be found by the completion of a Center of Gravity (CoG) analysis, its applicability to the Crécy Campaign would debunk any suggestion that a CoG analysis is only applicable to modern warfare.⁴³ Indeed, even in a relatively primitive campaign, even the most innocuous items of equipment can be incredibly important, and their identification should be a priority.

If rapid movement was a key component of the *chevauchee* then natural obstacles would undoubtedly prove important as lines of defense for a defender in restricting and channeling movement of the attacker. Since landing in Normandy, the English army had advanced eastwards, had crossed the River Seine, and had almost reached Paris before heading north east towards the Somme valley and Calais. They had averaged seventeen kilometers per day before stopping at Poissy on 13 August.⁴⁴ With the smoke of the English campfires visible to the inhabitants of

⁴³ British Army Land Warfare Development Centre, *Army Doctrine Publication AC71940: Land Operations* (Warminster: UK Government Publishing, 2017), 88.

⁴⁴ Michael Livingston and Kelly DeVries, *The Battle of Crecy: A Casebook* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 11.

Paris, the French response determined that Edward III's forces would proceed North East towards the relative safety of the Low Countries. Having been jolted into action by the destructive nature of the campaign, the French response had been to assemble an army and prevent, through fear of direct confrontation, an English advance further east towards the capital. The French army then preceded to shadow the main force as well seeking to conduct an encirclement. The deployment of Genoese crossbowmen to Rouen as well as the systematic destruction and guarding of bridges and crossings over the River Somme effectively turned the "English *chevauchee* into a chase."⁴⁵ The chronicle of Saint Omer gives a clear description of French activities in defending the natural obstacle of the River Somme. They "had burned all the bridges over the Somme and...had sent Sir Godemar du Fay to guard the bank...with a large number of men at arms."⁴⁶ In denying the English freedom of movement as well as guarding key terrain, the French forces had revealed a significant weakness of the *chevauchee*: its strength lay in its unpredictability. Despite Edward's forces increasing their rate of march by 30% to twenty-four kilometers per day in a bid to out-run the pursuit, the tactics employed by the French weakened the English by increasing the physical demands upon men and horses, thereby setting the conditions for their defeat in a series of skirmishes, a pitched battle, or more favorably by determining an ignominious English withdrawal.

Given the advantageous situation the French now found themselves in, the English crossing of the Somme at Blanchetaque and the subsequent victory at the Battle of Crécy make clear that tactical success is crucial within an operational level appreciation of *chevauchee* and raiding. Froissart maintains that the French at Blanchetaque "decided not to wait on the bank but to ride into the ford to win great distinction."⁴⁷ At Crécy the decision by Phillip to launch an assault at a strong English defensive position on a hill was arguably too aggressive given the

⁴⁵ Livingston and DeVries, *The Battle of Crecy*, 10.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁷ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 81.

advantages posed by the English archers. In spite of their physical condition and numerical inferiority at this point, the English force still managed to array itself to successfully repulse the French attack. A clear lesson from the culmination of the *chevauchee* is the requirement to still be able to tactically defeat the enemy in the subsequent engagement. Although at the operational level the French may have succeeded in nullifying the advantage of Edward III's *chevauchee*, the loss at the tactical level only emboldened the English and the victory set the conditions for the Siege of Calais to commence. Whilst determining a victor is always subjective, relative to the aims of the combatants, it is arguable that a successful operational response by the French has been lost amidst their failure to show tactical patience and restraint. Should they have chosen not to accept battle on unfavorable terrain it is easy to imagine an alternate timeline based upon a French victory. More importantly however, such an example may determine that whilst operationally vulnerable, *chevauchee* still had the ability to set the conditions for a tactical engagement in a place of an attacker's choosing. Although defined geographically in this instance, its application to the modern operating environment could manifest itself in the attacker's wider information campaign. As a defender, *chevauchee* should bring into focus the necessity of deciphering the operational aims of the enemy and then choosing to counter it in a methodical and dispassionate manner. Failure to do so could have significant unintended consequences.

The Black Prince's *Chevauchees* (1355-56)

Edward III's eldest son, Edward the Black Prince (1330-1376), had fought at the Battle of Crécy as the then sixteen-year-old heir apparent to the English throne. In 1355 Edward III appointed the Black Prince the King's Lieutenant of Gascony, granting responsibility for the English cause in south-western France to his son. Although the Battle of Crécy had been a crushing defeat for the French Army, it was not sufficient to force the French to recognize Edward III as a rightful claimant to the crown of France or resolve the problem of England being

too small a power to consolidate military gains into lasting political settlement.⁴⁸ King Philip VI died in 1350 and his son John (1319-1364) inherited the throne and ruled as King John II of France. In the ten years before Edward III appointed his son as the King's Lieutenant the English situation within Gascony had deteriorated. Overshadowed by Edward III's campaign in Normandy, Henry of Grosmont, Earl of Lancaster (1310-1361) had led a destructive *chevauchee* in Gascony, which had resulted in expanding English influence within the region, moving fighting between pro English and French vassals to the peripheries of the duchy. In contrast to Edward III's campaign, Grosmont proceeded to garrison defensible towns and castles within the region, thereby solidifying the interests of England at a grassroots level.⁴⁹ The onset of the Black Death pandemic in the years 1347-1350, however, afforded the opponents of England an opportunity to reimpose their own will on a region which saw a decline in English military investment as tax revenues decreased amidst the fallout of the pandemic. Despite a promising outlook in 1346 the Black Death accentuated the wider financial and logistical problems of the time and confirmed "the essential unimportance of battles of achieving anything of long-term significance."⁵⁰

Although Edward III's victory at Crécy had led arguably to little of strategic value between the years of 1346-1355, apart from Calais as an entry point into Europe, diplomatic efforts in the intervening years determine again the role of the *chevauchee* within the context of medieval warfare. Herbert Hewitt argued that Edward III's position was anomalous: as King of England, he was King John's equal, as Duke of Aquitaine he was his vassal. At times Edward was prepared to drop his claim for the crown of France in exchange for the independence of

⁴⁸ Sumption, *Trial by Battle*, 532.

⁴⁹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 294.

⁵⁰ Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years' War*, vol. 2, *Trial by Fire* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1999), 11.

Gascony from the French kingdom.⁵¹ The means by which these negotiations were conducted was primarily through the Catholic Church. Indeed, despite an agreement at Guînes between representatives of both nations and two senior cardinals almost being ratified, what emerges at a strategic level is periodic rounds of violence punctuated by diplomatic efforts via/through a relatively neutral third party. The abortive Treaty of Guînes (1355) provided Edward III an opportunity to respond militarily to Jean, Duke of Armagnac (1311-1373). Interestingly however, the decision to intervene seems likely contrived by Gascons themselves. Michael Jones in *The Black Prince* determines the role of Jean de Grailley, Captal de Buch (d.1373) in convincing Edward III to assist the Gascons as well as determining the choice of the Black Prince to lead the expedition.⁵² Froissart, whose admiration for the Captal de Buch as a shining example of chivalric ideals may ultimately cloud his judgement, states that the object of operations in Gascony “were to terrorize the districts that were inclining towards the French and perhaps bring to battle King John’s lieutenant in Languedoc.”⁵³

Rather than seeking to use the consequences of an internal dispute, as was seen with the choice of Normandy as a starting off point for the campaign of 1346, the decision to send the Black Prince to Gascony in 1355 offers an interesting view on determining how and why *chevauchees* began and their applicability to modern conflict. Whilst Froissart and Jones both identify the significant contributions of the Captal de Buch, in a grander sense the campaign planning in 1355 sought to use violence and conquest to aid and abet an ally, and concurrently weaken their collective enemy. In sending the heir of the English throne to lead the campaign, Edward III had inevitably tied English strategic objectives, namely seeking greater English influence within France, to a regionalized conflict. Arguably, short of his son being killed or

⁵¹ Hewitt, *The Black Prince’s Expedition*, 3.

⁵² Michael Jones, *The Black Prince: England’s Greatest Medieval Warrior* (London: Pegasus, 2018), 118.

⁵³ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 120.

taken prisoner, the result of the latter inevitably demanding an exorbitant ransom, a military campaign at the outer limits of his realm could be viewed as a relatively low risk option. Furthermore, in an age where military prowess was a key constituent part of kingship, the threat of Edward III leading a subsequent campaign may have added to a perceived complexity of the situation for the French, owing to their mental weighting and biases towards the monarch leading the decisive operation.⁵⁴ In identifying that such an operation was low risk, it is not unreasonable to suggest that such a proxy conflict does not have application for today, nor does a peripheral campaign arguably become synonymous with a state or group employing an emergent strategy.

The 1950s historian Herbert Hewitt in his *Black Prince's Expedition* argues that medieval campaigns were largely without an overarching strategy, but he proposes that such a factor does not diminish those campaigns' potency. Acknowledging that there "was no General Staff, no maps and no adequate awareness of resources" he nevertheless advocates that "[campaigns] consisted in devastation – combining insult with injury – along a line of march which might lead to a capital or no clearly defined objective."⁵⁵ Modern doctrine stresses the importance of the objective and more recent military figures such as Field Marshal William Slim (1891-1970) have stressed that objectives have a unifying effect on forces, adding that failure to communicate one can have a negative impact on operations.⁵⁶ ⁵⁷ These observations are invaluable as they alter the degree in which we observe current military observations. Whilst practitioners may seek to interpret an opponent's end state in order to respond militarily, one can infer the possibility that a

⁵⁴ Maurice H. Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 105.

⁵⁵ Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*, 13.

⁵⁶ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2020), VI-4.

⁵⁷ Field Marshal Viscount William Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square, 2000), 182.

campaign without a defining objective can have significant impact and one that requires an immediate response.

As with Edward III's campaign of 1346, preparations for the Black Prince's expedition lasted several months. Despite such a campaign affording a relatively low-risk undertaking, the logistical preparation was still considerable: "Money had to be raised, food had to be purveyed; horses had to be purchased; ships had to be manned."⁵⁸ Yet, when the Black Prince's army left Bordeaux on 10 October it did so with a tempo that belied such methodical preparations and his expedition reached Narbonne by 8 November, as detailed in Figure 2. His force had covered 245 miles in less than a month and a swath of Southern France had felt the brunt of English brutality and destruction without a direct challenge by the French army. In the intervening period much can be learned about how this *chevauchee* was conducted and its continued relevance. In Sir John Wingfield's letter to the Bishop of Winchester of 23 December 1355, he recounts a balanced approach taken by the Black Prince to the securing of towns and fortresses with the time invested in their capture. The letter describes how the Armies of the Prince of Wales "raided the county of Armagnac and taken several walled towns there, burning and destroying them, except for certain towns which he garrisoned."⁵⁹ Wingfield continues by stating that the Black Prince had only eleven rest days in a campaign of over eight weeks duration, during which they had caused considerable damage to the ability of the French King to finance a response. The loss in tax revenues from the capture of Limoux, a town near Carcassonne, was estimated to be of an amount equivalent to the yearly wages of a thousand men-at-arms.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Madden, *The Black Prince*, 15.

⁵⁹ Barber, ed., *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, 50.

⁶⁰ Barber, ed., *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, 52.

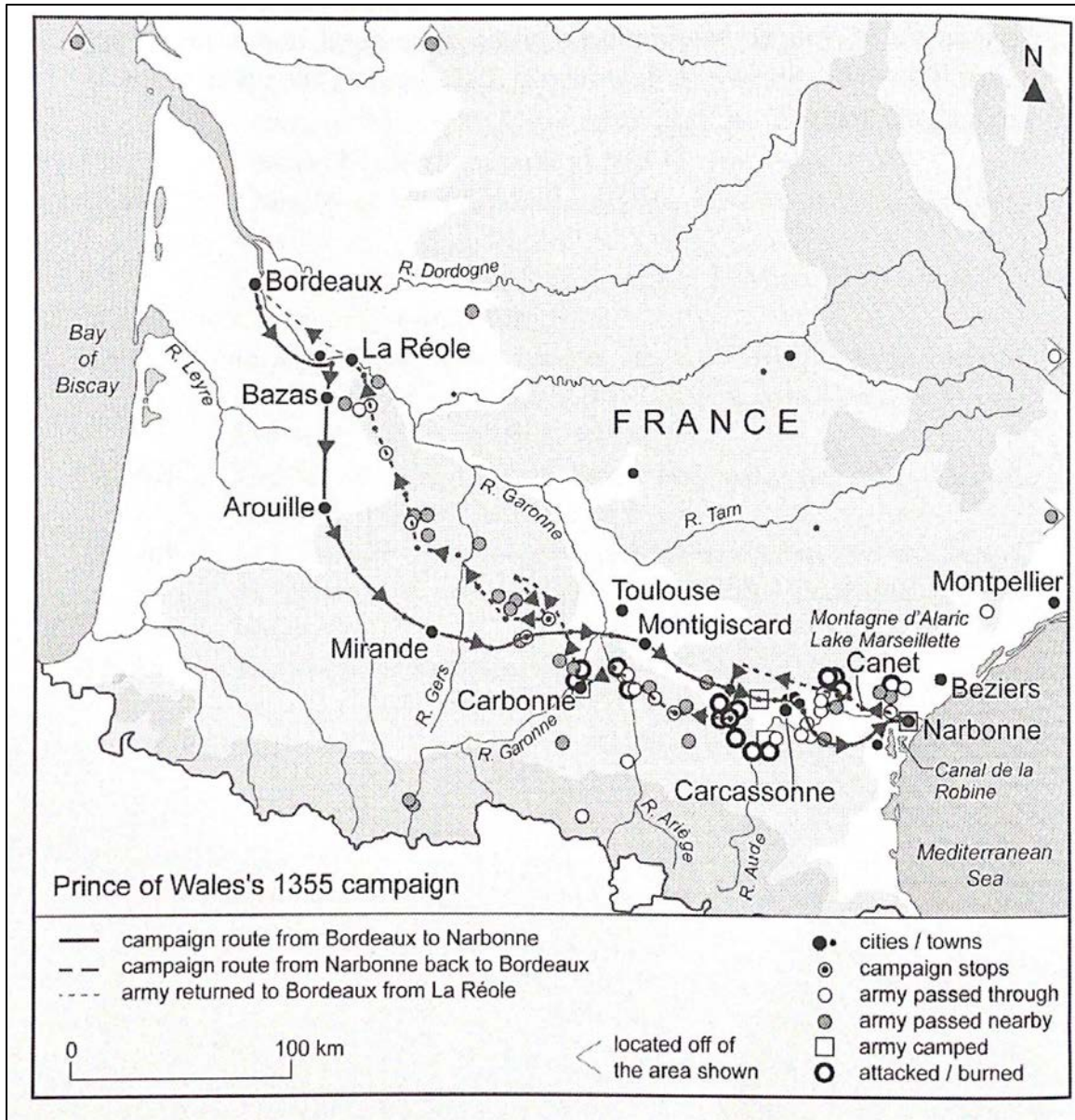


Figure 2. The Prince of Wales's 1355 campaign. Mollie M. Madden, *The Black Prince and the Grand Chevauchée of 1355* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2018), 1.

Wingfield's letter is of significance as it suggests that the *chevauchée* was not terrain focused; moreover, the selection of which towns were to be garrisoned and which were to be burnt were largely discretionary decisions for the troops assaulting the town for purely tactical reasons. For a defender, should their garrison be along the route of march of the attacker, their decisions are limited. To either bastion their positions may incur an assault or, more likely, fix them in position, where they can have little or no effect. Furthermore, localized destruction and

plundering only exacerbate the situation as support from contiguous regions may not be forthcoming, with these regions either preparing their own defenses or having been subject to plunder already, and therefore possessing no means by which to respond. What emerges is a requirement for a relief force to act as both a deterrent for further acts of hostility and as a means through which to counterattack.

Noting that both France and England in the fourteenth century were ruled at the regional level by great magnates, it would be inaccurate to suggest a direct comparison between the operational environments of today and of that of 1355. Yet, similarities exist in terms of regional power-brokers whose loyalty and influence are highly important and beneficial to both the legitimate government and/or a third party. In light of the fact that Edward III had sent the Black Prince and an army in aid of the Gascons, it can be suggested that the French monarchy should have sought to immediately encourage the local magnates to resist in the short term whilst an army could be prepared to counter the raid. Yet, whilst no response was forthcoming from a French Army, other than to be brought to arms and to shadow the raid at various points, both Jean de Armagnac and the Count of Foix's actions, or indeed inactivity, are most telling. The former's failure to bring significant forces to bear on the Prince's army, especially at its most vulnerable point when at the extent of its lines of communication, represents a clear operational failure in countering a *chevauchee*. Yet, the onus for a central government must be on compelling its regional power-base to act independently for an interim period while also facilitating a collective response. The former may oft require regional leaders to respond at a tactical disadvantage, but any response could upset a *chevauchee*, reducing its tempo and providing opportunities for subsequent engagements.

As for the Count of Foix, he is best described as an ostensibly neutral party whose support could have greatly assisted the French cause. Such was his influence within the region, and knowledge of it, it is no surprise that commentators such as Hewitt have identified the

significance of Prince Edward contriving an audience with the count.⁶¹ Yet the Houses of Armagnac and Foix were engaged in a local feud in 1356 and their relations contributed to a fractured French response. Regional or feudal cooperation would have presented a raiding force with a paucity of safe havens in which to rest, reconstitute, and resupply, in so doing weakening both the longevity of a *chevauchee* as well as its efficiency as a military tactic. Such an example demonstrates the requirement for the central government to communicate what is best described as a communal message and sense of purpose. In this instance, a stressing of the national narrative as a way of binding the collective feudal actors would have at least had a galvanizing effect to the forces that were resisting the English. Although France's war banner, the *Ori Flamme*, was readily displayed in battle, the nationalistic pride associated with it did not trickle down to the widest corners of France when not confronting the English on a large scale. In an operational sense, although resourcing the peripheries of a nation with men and materiel may seem of secondary importance in a feudal society, one that faces threats of raiding as opposed to sustained conquest might benefit from a policy of deterrence focused at its borders. Furthermore, although Andrew Ayton has outlined four potential reasons for the Count of Armagnac's lackluster response to the *chevauchee*, including that of conspiring with the English, attention too should be given to the development or encouragement of fighting spirit from within a state as opposed to purely relying on its existence.⁶²

Despite its provocative effect, the *chevauchee* of 1355 failed to draw out the French Army into a decisive engagement. Although it has been described as nothing "but the razzia of ravenous pirate"⁶³, the raid had, however, cleverly focused on people as opposed to places and as a result had a large impact on French prestige.⁶⁴ Whilst the Black Prince's army would have been

⁶¹ Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*, 45.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 76.

⁶³ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 348.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 307.

vastly outnumbered by a collective French response, the psychological impact that this *chevauchee* had is of significance. When the English and Gascon force arrayed for battle outside of Toulouse, they also had men setting fire to the surrounding farms and villages. The recrimination from the townspeople who wanted to confront the English but were impotent to do so was squarely levelled against the Count of Armagnac and the Marshal of France, Clermont. Indeed, The Black Prince's decision to burn the Bourg of Carcassonne symbiotically linked its physical destruction to the psychological effect it had to a wider French audience. With a strategic aim to comfort faithful friends as well as to punish rebels, the actions at Carcassonne confirmed that those who refused to recognize sovereignty of the English could not purchase their safety.⁶⁵ They had a choice to submit and so risk retribution from the French or accept suzerainty. When proffered such options it becomes all too obvious that a lack of firm resistance has a distinct effect on the populous, who, in Sir John Wingfield's estimations were in a "state of shock" at what had befallen southern France.⁶⁶

If a residual relevancy of *chevauchee* is in its ability to have disproportionate effects for the resources that it requires, then the actions of the Black Prince during the winter and spring of 1355-1356 offer an example of how raiding is a tactic that can be reduced in scale without loss of efficacy. Although fatigued from the *Grande Chevauchee*, the Black Prince did not centrally-house and garrison his army on the return to Bordeaux. Rather, he garrisoned the frontiers of Gascony, positioning independent commands of circa 1000-1500 men to execute small *chevauchees* so as to continue to exert pressure throughout the traditional non-campaigning season.⁶⁷ Having accrued considerable wealth in the campaign of the preceding autumn, fiscal strength enabled the continuation of fighting, concentrating on a line of operation that encouraged

⁶⁵ E.M. Thompson, ed., *De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii* (London: London Rolls Series, 1889), 430.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 432.

⁶⁷ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 330.

French vassals to renounce loyalty to King John.⁶⁸ Emboldened by large scale French inactivity these independent commands maintained pressure on already weakened areas, achieving successes. Paradoxically too, a shift to smaller scale raiding provided the French time in which to reconstitute and prepare for a follow-on raid. Yet, whereas the English were able to prosper, the French authorities met resistance from their own people and faced recrimination for their failure to prevent the devastation wrought by the *chevauchee*.⁶⁹

The options available to King John II and his magnates in the area were limited; they knew that they needed to prevent, or at least deter, further English attacks, but the means through which this could be achieved were to be both funded and labored by those who had already suffered the most. Further taxation to build and repair defenses only weakened the validity of wider royal authority in the area as well further distancing regional magnates from garnering significant support.⁷⁰ Seemingly for the French, later responses were often restricted because of their initial reaction to a *chevauchee*. The relevance of this to the modern operational environment is two-fold: firstly, the recurrence of a suggestion that impetus is important to responding to a raid and secondly, the requirement to hold centrally allocated reserves and resources in which to exploit any break in the fighting and to reinvigorate the damaged area. Scant resources may determine whether such an approach is feasible, but a consolidation phase is definitely required, only if it is effective at reassuring the wider populous of a commitment to them.

The second *chevauchee* conducted by the Black Prince began in August 1356, a map of the campaign is displayed at Figure 3. After mustering soldiers at Bergerac as well as leaving a strong force to sufficiently garrison Gascony, the Prince's Army proceeded north towards Bourges in central France. The overarching strategy for this *chevauchee* was to act in concert

⁶⁸ Madden, *The Black Prince*, 182-3.

⁶⁹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 331.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 330-332.

with a force from England led by King Edward and an army from Brittany led by Henry of Grosmont, Earl of Lancaster (1310-1361). The collective aim of this three-pronged foray into French territory was to challenge the French monarchy directly, further diminishing King John II's prestige and revenue.⁷¹ The Black Prince's army was seeking to effectively engage the French in their rear, as assaults from Normandy and Brittany would be the most serious problem for John II.⁷² The prince's *chevauchee* proceeded north until his army failed to find a suitable crossing across the River Loire, the crossings having been destroyed by the French or made impassable by significant rainfall.⁷³ Heading westwards towards Tours, his army was adversely affected by the weather which reduced the ferocity of his army as well its speed. The French response to news of the second *chevauchee* was arguably more successful than the first. Immediately issuing an *arriere-ban*, an order summoning able bodied men to muster by 1 August, as well as stipulating that movable goods and possessions were to be placed within walled cities, arguably forced a reduction in military options for the Black Prince. Though daring the French to confront him in battle was, as always, an option for the Black Prince when adopting a destructive raiding strategy, removing the benefits of such an endeavor severely inhibited his flexibility. Whereas in 1346 the French had only channeled the movement of the English Army, John II's forces additionally struck at the *raison d'etre* of a *chevauchee*. In preventing further destruction of property by creating effective strong points, the English could still burn buildings but their resources to carry on would continue to be diminished.

⁷¹ Hewitt, *The Black Prince's Expedition*, 100.

⁷² Sumption, *Trial by Fire*, 222-223.

⁷³ Barber, ed., *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, 72.

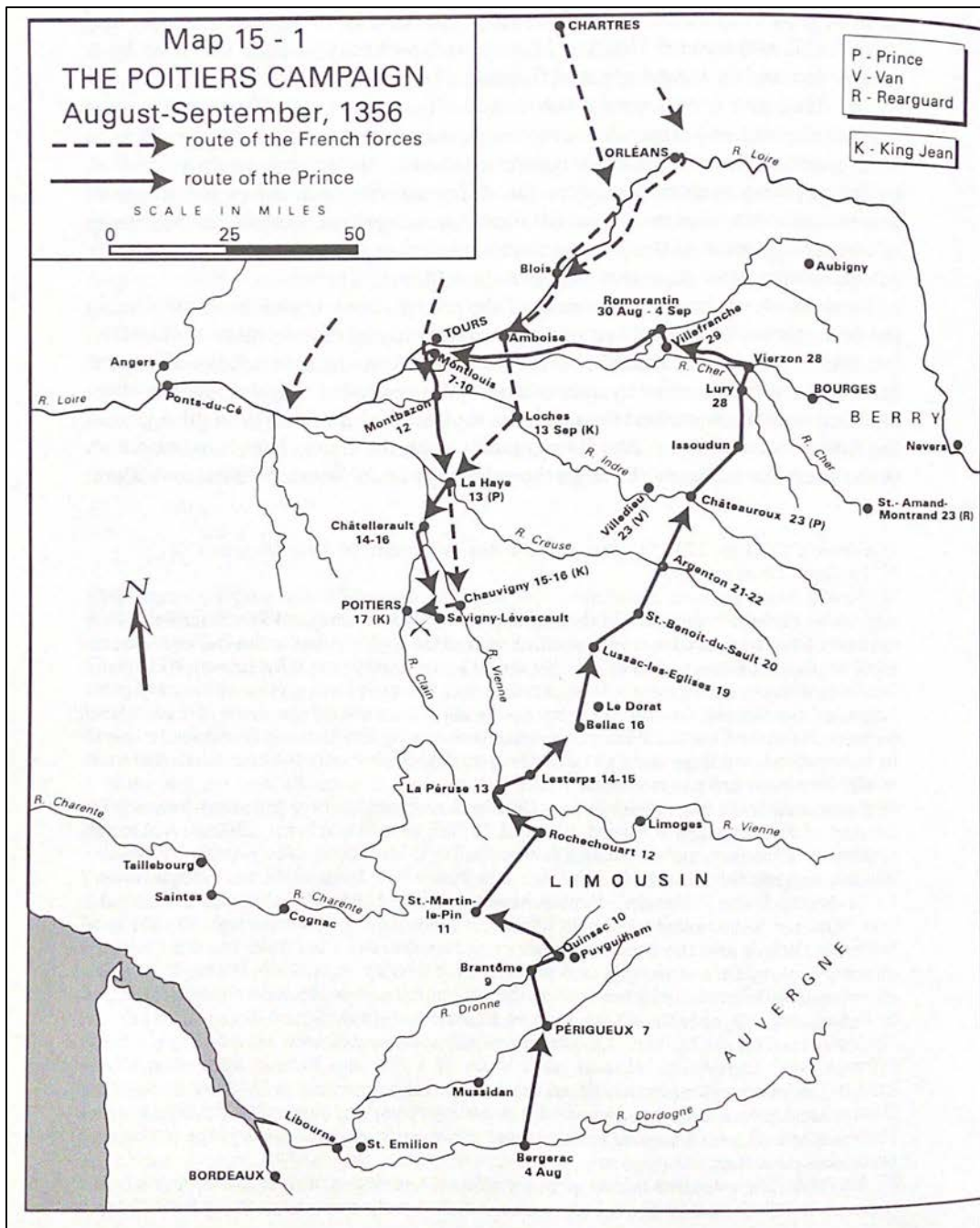


Figure 3. The Poitiers Campaign. Clifford D. Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III 1327 - 1360* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2001), 354.

As Harari has argued, warfare in the middle-ages tended to strike a pragmatic approach in preparing for and conducting a *chevauchee*.⁷⁴ Preparation would occur beforehand but supply

⁷⁴ Harari, "Strategy and Supply," 297-298.

during a campaign would alter whether the army sought to live specifically off the land, through captured resources, or be sustained on their lines of communication. The combination of these three means of support altered depending on both the tempo of the operation and the enemies' actions. Geoffrey Le Baker suggests that the French army, by positioning itself thirty miles away from the main body of the English force, had put the army to flight.⁷⁵

Faced with being outflanked and cut-off from retrograding to Bordeaux, the prince's army now faced unknown hardship. Battle may have been preferable for the English force as they were confident, experienced, and aware that battles often settled large political issues but battle on unsuitable ground and where chance of escape was difficult was not ideal. For the French, the previous days had been successful; the physical presence of its large army had provided enough of a threat to alter the *chevauchee*. Anticipation of the likely English withdrawal routes had also seen them limit the English to more restrictive terrain, in particular up a slope to adopt a defensive position. Although advantageous for defense, being on a hill exacerbated acute problems of water provision and the ability to forage for the Black Prince's army.⁷⁶ When in a similar position at Crécy, the French immediately attacked, but at Poitiers on 17th September, the French waited, content that their position was in the ascendancy. As Froissart describes, "The French...had plentiful supplies of provisions, whereas the English were extremely short. It was this that troubled them most, for they were hemmed in so closely that they could not send out foragers, nor could they move from there without exposing themselves to the French. It is fair to say that they had much less fear of battle than of being pinned down where they were and starved out like a beleaguered garrison."⁷⁷

Froissart's observations reaffirm that the main operational weakness of a *chevauchee* was if it lost its ability to move, constrained by topographical features, meteorological conditions and

⁷⁵ Barber, ed., *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*, 71.

⁷⁶ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 132.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

enemy action, or a combination of all three. In a situation where time would only further weaken the English Force due to its inability to succor its troops, one can only speculate why the French eventually chose to attack, noting the English propensity for fighting a defensive battle, even if in a weakened state. Although the start of the battle would be precipitated by an English attempt to cross the River Miausson and escape, should the French have consolidated an encirclement diplomacy may have succeeded in producing a stunning settlement for the French. However, John II was much influenced by the Bishop of Chalons who suggested that the King “not delay the conquest anymore, lest...see the vengeance for the offense you have suffered, and the full victory that God has arranged for you, escape through the delays of your negotiating and your taking counsel.”⁷⁸ The bishop’s words had a powerful impact on the king, who dismissed further attempts at diplomacy and settled on a battle.⁷⁹ This example has profound relevance for a modern military professional. Choosing *if* as well as *when* to use violence remains of critical importance. Although angered by the damage done to his realm over the preceding year as well subject to influence by other actors, should John II have waited longer it was possible that terms between the two armies could have reached, undoing much of the economic damage done by the English and Gascon forces, without risk to the French Army.⁸⁰ Although good judgement is a pre-requisite of any commander in the context of either responding to or conducting a *chevauchee*, knowing the difference between the value of victory and the price a leader is prepared to pay for it remains a fixture of conflict.

The failure of diplomacy in the Poitiers Campaign also identifies key lessons for a modern audience. Whereas in the twenty-first century institutional frameworks have been created to negotiate between warring states or populations, in the medieval period negotiations were

⁷⁸ G. Porter, ed., *Matteo Villani: Cronica* (Parma, Italy: Fondazione Pietro Bembo, 1995), 532-533.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Prestwich, *Hundred Years War*, 39.

chiefly facilitated and conducted through mediators of the Catholic Church. Although the specific actions of Cardinal Talleyrand of Périgord (1301-1364) remain focused on the events immediately prior to the Battle of Poitiers, their application to more general, localized diplomatic efforts are palpable. Born in south-western France into an aristocratic family, he became a key figure in the truce discussions.⁸¹ The negotiations and his part within them are important for two reasons. Firstly, they identify the need to choose as impartial a figure as possible to enter into negotiations: institutional neutrality is not sufficient when the representative could be perceived as not being unbiased. Secondly, for either side one must be cautious about how the military situation can rapidly evolve within the process of diplomacy, perversely reducing options instead of increasing them.

Alfred Burne has questioned Cardinal Talleyrand's motives in seeking to "engineer" a truce between the English and French armies in the lead up to the Battle of Poitiers.⁸² The battle occurred on 19 September but over the previous two days the Cardinal succeeded in setting the conditions for a truce. To his credit, Talleyrand articulated, with sufficient force to the Black Prince, France's militarily advantageous position, and forced aside the Prince's confidence that battle was the means through which his strategic aims could be achieved.⁸³ Despite Talleyrand's supposed impartial position, Froissart's admission that the Cardinal's entourage joined the fighting on the side of the French certainly undermines the legacy of impartiality, even if Froissart asserts the Cardinal's ignorance of this.⁸⁴ The resultant point is that even amidst the most brutal of campaigns, diplomacy still has a part to play; it can be effective, but careful choice and consideration must be given as to who conducts the negotiations.

⁸¹ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 370-371.

⁸² Burne, *The Art of War*, 83.

⁸³ Rogers, *War Cruel and Sharp*, 368.

⁸⁴ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 133.

The negotiations that Talleyrand facilitated were beneficial for both belligerents at various points. For the French, a possible settlement reduced the risk of losing a large percentage of their force and from their perspective only exacerbated the English supply situation. For the English, a truce was not beneficial for the operational outlook; they were effectively trapped and required a break-out to facilitate their escape. Yet, the opportune pause in hostilities afforded the English archers time to strengthen “their position by digging trenches and setting up obstacles around them.”⁸⁵ Tactically, punctuated rounds of diplomacy provided commanders the perfect chance to better prepare for battle, even if direct engagement was not the preferred outcome. The wider observation that can be derived is that a commander and diplomat should firmly establish the possible tactical and operational consequences of allowing diplomacy to run its course. For John II, the decision not to press his numerical advantage earlier allowed some semblance of a battle-plan to be formulated by the English as well as providing increased protection for their most vulnerable and valuable troops. Talleyrand’s actions delayed battle for twenty-four hours.⁸⁶ Whilst one can question both the neutrality of Cardinal Talleyrand and how a victory for either side would impact the wider Catholic Church, it is not unreasonable to suggest that both sides manipulated those seeking peace. Codifying the aims and purpose of a truce before negotiations commence seems the only way in which a risk of manipulation can be mitigated.

Conclusion

Henry V’s observation that fire and destruction are synonymous with war remains an apt description of conflict. Whilst governments and militaries of the twenty-first century grapple with how to utilize the emergent theatres of space and cyber domains, it would be naïve to disregard visceral acts of violence and relegate them to a bygone era. Although the Battles of Crécy and Poitiers bolstered Edward III’s claim to the throne of France, even with the capture of John II at

⁸⁵ Brereton, ed., *Froissart*, 133.

⁸⁶ Hewitt, *The Black Prince’s Expedition*, 112.

Poitiers, battles in the period failed to deliver unilaterally what was sought. Even the Treaty of Brétigny (1360) came four years after King John's loss and was ultimately outpaced by further developments in the Hundred Years' War. Nevertheless, raiding and *chevauchee* became ways that relatively small armies could have an inordinate effect against a defending government, becoming part of a strategy to gain political concessions. Although modern militaries are concerned with the possibility of conducting Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) as they demand an exorbitant number of supplies and material to be orchestrated effectively, violent and fast-moving campaigns conducted by less materially rich powers should not be ignored. Indeed, for large militaries, the challenge will be to ensure that their adversaries engage them on the former's terms as opposed confounding them in a more asymmetric manner.

Whilst the key protagonists of the period 1340-1360 saw victory in battle as way in which strategic aims could be met, for the English *chevauchee* became their operational approach to fighting the French by expeditions launched from England as well as contiguous borders to French territory. The economic advantages of doing so were numerous. Plundering would both contribute to the financing of the expeditions and severely hamper the unwilling host government's ability to respond if no central resources were available. Increased local taxation would only further weaken a population already impacted by *chevauchee* and would leave a bitter taste in the mouths of those that believed that their king had failed in their protection yet demanded recompense to prevent further damage. The weakening of the local infrastructure, primarily the destruction of property, farms, and buildings made those most affected question their loyalty to both central and local rulers. Although many did not defect, *chevauchee* provided an opportunity and excuse for them to do so. For those powerbrokers at the peripheries of a state, the challenge posed by *chevauchee* became increasingly problematic. As with the central government, local rulers faced problems of choosing how to respond as much as when and if to do so. Withdrawal into defensible positions that could be bypassed did not eradicate the potency of a raiding force and confronting them directly was a risky endeavor, particularly against armies

that became well-versed in raiding. Yet, to do nothing was ostensibly the worst option. If anything, some immediate response would at least galvanize local support.

Whereas failure to respond to a *chevauchee* was damaging, proceeding with too much vigor was seemingly just as bad. Responding in a calculated way that enquired and put much into determining the ultimate objective of the *chevauchee* proved successful. By July 1356, the French had determined that mobilization of a main French Army and its deployment to a likely avenue of advance or retreat fundamentally weakened the English and Gascon forces. If able to achieve disruption to their lines of communication or limit their advance, the operational strengths of raiding were effectively neutered. Once contained, the attacker had to balance the tempo of his movement with his ability to sustain the force and maintain the fighting efficiency of it. During both the Crécy and Poitiers campaigns, the French had positioned their forces effectively enough to essentially defeat *chevauchee*. However, due to a lack of tactical patience as well as the fighting superiority of the English, both resulted in ignominious French defeat. Despite the combatants being imbued with the martial spirit of chivalry, it must be stressed that due consideration ought to be given for the judicious use of force rather than a ubiquitous one.

Diplomatic efforts ebbed and flowed in intensity throughout the Hundred Years' War. What is most relevant for today is the identification of as near as unbiased mediators as possible and a recognition that during diplomatic efforts the tactical situation may outpace the ability of those institutions to contrive an immediate and lasting settlement. Nevertheless, the importance of constant attempts at negotiation is undiminished. As with Edward the Black Prince's decision to split his forces during the winter and spring of 1355-1356 with a view to exert constant pressure on his adversaries, the application of constant diplomatic efforts promotes and increases options rather than reduces them. Clifford Rogers' decision to name his book on English activities in the Hundred Years' War, *War, Cruel and Sharp* best identifies the legacy of raiding in general and *chevauchee* as its purest form. Whilst western nations are training their militaries for the next large-scale conflict, ignoring how to intervene in local and regional disputes that form part of a

superpower struggle is unwise. How the English and later Gascon forces attacked the seams of French authority during this period, promoting regional instability and ruthlessly exploiting marginal success, is both cautionary and enlightening for the military practitioner of today.

Bibliography

- Ayton, Andrew and Philip Preston. *The Battle of Crécy, 1346*. Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2005.
- Allmand, Christopher T. *Society at War: The Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years War*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1973.
- Barber, Richard, ed. *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince*. New York: St. Martin's, 1986.
- Barker, Juliet. *Agincourt: The King, the Campaign, the Battle*. London: Abacus, 2006.
- Brady, Lisa M. *War upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes during the American Civil War*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012.
- Brereton, Geoffrey, ed. *Froissart, Chronicles*. Middlesex, UK: Penguin, 1979.
- British Army Land Warfare Development Centre. *Army Doctrine Publication AC71940, Land Operations*. Warminster: UK Government Publishing, 2017.
- Burne, Alfred H. *The Agincourt War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- . *The Art of War on the Land*. Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing, 1947.
- . *The Crécy War: A military history of the Hundred Years War from 1337 to the peace of Bretigny 1360*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955.
- Curry, Anne. "Disciplinary ordinances for English and Franco-Scottish armies in 1385: An international code?" *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 3 (2011): 269-294.
- Fowler, Kenneth, ed. *The Hundred Years' War*. London: Macmillan, 1971.
- Freedman, Lawrence. *The Future of War*. New York: Public Affairs, 2017.
- Harari, Yuval Noah. "Strategy and Supply in Fourteenth-Century Western European Invasion Campaigns." *The Journal of Military History* 64, no.2 (2000).
- Hewitt, Herbert J. *The Black Prince's Expedition 1355-1357*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958.
- Jones, Michael. *The Black Prince: England's Greatest Medieval Warrior*. London: Pegasus Books, 2018.
- Livingston, Michael and Kelly DeVries. *The Battle of Crecy: A Casebook*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015.
- Lynn, John A. *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2003.
- Madden, Mollie M. *The Black Prince and the Grand Chevauchee of 1355*. Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2018.

- Keegan, John. *The Face of Battle*. New York: Penguin, 1984.
- Keen, Maurice H. *Chivalry*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984.
- Porter, G. ed. *Matteo Villani: Cronica*. Parma, Italy: Fondazione Pietro Bembo, 1995.
- Prestwich, Michael. *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.
- . *The Hundred Years War*. London: Taurus, 2018.
- Rogers, Clifford D. *War Cruel and Sharp: English Strategy under Edward III 1327 -1360*. Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2001.
- Slim, Field Marshal Viscount William. *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945*. New York, NY: Cooper Square Press, 2000.
- Sumption, Jonathan. *The Hundred Years' War*. Vol. 1: *Trial by Battle*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1991.
- . *The Hundred Years' War*. Vol. 2: *Trial by Fire*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1999.
- . *The Hundred Years' War*. Vol. 3: *Divided Houses*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2009.
- Thompson, E.M., ed. *De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*. London: London Rolls Series, 1889.
- Vale, Malcolm. *War and Chivalry*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981.
- US Department of Defense, Joint Staff. Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning*. Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2020.
- US Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*. Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2019.
- . *Field Manual 3-0, Operations*. Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2017.