

SUFFOLK UNDER ARMS.

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In the remote past the district known as Suffolk was sparsely inhabited by migratory warriors. Possibly they acknowledged the rule of a valiant chief, and were ready to follow their Queen when she sought vengeance on the Romans for her ruined home. Finally, however, the force of numbers and discipline triumphed over native courage, and Roman soldiers planted camps on the maritime confines of the district at Burgh Castle and Felixstowe.

The camp on the former site is still marked by massive walls, which the storms of centuries have failed to overthrow. There, a company of Stablesian horse, recruited by the Romans from the shores of North Africa, found a station in view of Breydon Water. The place has aroused the speculations of several writers, but little reliable information remains to give us an insight into the history of the garrisons which piled their arms within the walls. The late Canon Raven recognised in Burgh Castle the *Gariannorum* of the *Notitia Imperii*. Other writers believe it to be the spot mentioned by Bede as the place where King Sigeberth received St. Ferseus "*in castro quod in lingua Anglorum vocabatur Cnobheresburgh.*"

It is true that the Saxon warriors who made their settlements in the land seized early fortified sites and erected their *burghs* thereon. Similarly, Norman lords raised their *castles* upon the Saxon mounds when practicable. Earl Bigod, for example, used

the Roman site at Felixstowe on which to erect a castle, but we are told by the monks of Rochester in their register (*Cott MS. Dom. X.*, fo. 109) the sea washed away the *burg*, and Bigod gave them the *brechinge* or what remained of the mound for forty-eight acres of firmer ground whereon to rear another castle. The number of castle-sites to be met with in Suffolk is as numerous as were the Saxon burghs, shewing the martial spirit which pervaded the district.

Felixstowe Castle was standing in the days of Elizabeth; it was in the occupation of Robert Cole in 1566 (*Subsidy Roll 8 Elizh.*, P.R.O., 182/359). It was probably built of material collected from the seashore, and not as other Norman strongholds of timber. In several instances, e.g., at Bredfield, Milden and Pakenham, the castle-sites are marked only by trenches and moats, sometimes, as the Oliver Ditches, Bredfield, deep and overgrown with brushwood, at other times, as the Milden earthworks, only slight undulations of the ground. Jocelin in his Chronicle states that the timber-built castle of Milden stood over 120-ft. in height. The deeply entrenched mounds at Offton, Lindsey, Denham, Clare, and elsewhere, mark the serious nature of the fortifications, and of the assaults directed upon them. We have an account in the Pipe Rolls of an attack made upon Haughley Castle, held by a garrison under Ralph de Broc, instigator of the murder of Thomas Beckett. Bigod's Fleming mercenaries were unable to seize or destroy the stone-built royal castles at Walton or Orford, but effected the surrender of Haughley Castle, 1174, by piling brushwood around it and setting it on fire.

The western borders of Suffolk were defended by extensive dykes, viz., Devil's Dyke, Fleam Dyke, Brent Dyke, and the Warbanks; the eastern borders

were protected by castles. The most prominent castle was Orford Castle, erected in the reign of Henry II. It withstood a siege before its fortifications were complete, and when its garrison comprised only twenty instead of a hundred men. Its walls were protected by revolving bars bristling with spikes, called *hericia*, from *hericus*, a hedgehog, and by lofty wooden towers and stockades known as *brestachia*. The Flemings who destroyed Haughley, Castle and besieged Orford, were totally defeated at Fornham St. Genevieve. A vivid description of a mythical attack on Orford by the Danes in the days of King Edmund was written by the French poet, Dennis Piramus, about the year 1240. This account has no foundation of truth any more than the legendary siege of Framlingham Castle, when King Edmund escaped from the Danes, or the battle scene between the forces of King John and Louis, Prince of France, near the walls of Bury St. Edmunds, described by Shakespeare:

The forces of the Plantagenet monarchs assembled at Walton and near the mouth of the Orwell when making expeditions to Flanders. A notable occasion was when a fleet of forty Suffolk ships, with a complement of thirteen hundred men, collected at the mouth of the Deben, whilst Edward III. mustered his forces for a week upon the neighbouring coast, 1338. The Suffolk contingents were under the command of John, Earl of Oxford, Ralph de Neville, Robert de Mildenhall, and John de Norton. The means adopted for supplying soldiers may be seen from entries in the Fine Rolls, *e.g.* :—

The supervisors and arrayers of hobelars and arrayers in the County of Suffolk assert that Thomas de Redlesworth, who on the certificate of the Sheriff was assessed for a hobelar on 10 librates of land, shewed he did not hold lands sufficient to support himself and children, so acting generously they remitted the hobelar for an archer for whom the said Thomas paid forty shillings into the Treasury.

The town of Sudbury paid 10 marks for two armed men.

Bury St. Edmunds assessed for thirty armed men was permitted to pay five marks for ten armed men.

Robert Giffard assessed for lands and tenements in Suffolk for two hobelars, testified that he did not hold ten marcates of land, and since in the rolls of Richard Talbot he was assessed for a hundred solidates of land he was charged with one hobelar.

Robert de Rokewod was assessed for one armed man, one hobelar, and one archer, but because a great part of his lands and tenements in Suffolk did not lie six leagues from the sea the assessment for a hobelar and archer was remitted, and he paid ten marks into the Exchequer for the expenses of one armed man.

Strife and resort to arms prevailed throughout the county during periods of heavy taxation. The year 1381 saw serious loss of life both in East and West Suffolk. Blood flowed in the streets of Ipswich, and fire destroyed halls at Melton, Eyke, Hollesley, and other villages; whilst in West Suffolk Simon of Sudbury and the Prior of Bury Abbey were murdered, the Castle of Mettingham was twice plundered, and many noble residences were left by the mob in ruins.

Similar riots occurred when the soldiers employed in the Hundred Years' War were disbanded, and during the years of strife between the partisans of the Houses of York and Lancaster. The Paston Letters throw much light on the character of the struggle as far as it affected the inhabitants of Suffolk. Much of the narrative contained in the Letters refers to the efforts made by the Pastons and Fastolfs to retain and regain possession of estates at Cowhall, Nacton, by the employment of hired soldiers. A graphic account is given of a riot in the Buttermarket, Ipswich, and the holding of the Church of St. Lawrence in a state of siege. A number of marauders also turned Stowmarket Church into a stronghold, and defied all civil authority.

The Duke of Suffolk then held his court like a

prince at Wingfield Castle, while the Duke of Norfolk, at the same time, with his council and soldiers, held rule at Framlingham. The alliance between the latter nobleman and the Earl of Warwick is signified by the presence of the shields, bearing the Mowbray lion and the Warwick bear and ragged staff, within the span-drills of the West door of Falkenham Church. The din of riot was again heard when four thousand weavers of Sudbury and Lavenham mustered arms, threatening their masters with violence because of the non-payment of wages.

Under the Tudors the military forces of the nation were re-organised. The soldier became more and more the King's man, and was no longer able to sell his services to the highest bidder. Previously, he hired himself to fight for a leader, and, having received wages in advance, deserted to another company, in which he received higher pay. Now arrays of arms were made at the ancient sites of the old Hundred Moots; and all able-bodied men were obliged to exhibit the arms which, by Statute, they should have in their possession. The wealthy freeman produced a hauberk, sword, knife, and horse; his poorer comrade presented a sword, bows, and arrows.

Camden, the Elizabethan historian, declared that when Englishmen used Hercules' weapons, viz., the bow and the black bill, they fought victoriously with Hercules' success; and his earnest wish was that since to these weapons of Hercules were added the Thunderbolts of Jove, victory might continue to follow their arms. Hercules, with his bow, is depicted upon the façade of the Ancient House, Ipswich. Conscription was at that time in vogue, nor has the law compelling attendance at arms yet been taken off the Statute Book.

Muster Rolls of all men of military age able to bear arms were made in each Hundred. A perfect one for the Babergh Hundred made in 1522, gives a complete register of names of men in all its villages fit for service, whether archers or double archers, billmen, or double billmen, hobelars or horsemen. The "Pink Papers" for the Wilford Hundred in 1538 give like statements, and also mentions the weapons each male between the ages of fifteen and sixty years of age possessed. The return for 1577 gives the male population of Suffolk as 18,948, of whom 8,922 were of military age, and from them 2,664 were selected for service. The muster-masters were commanded to see that their arms were complete according to the modern fashion—corseletts, long bows and harquebus were to take the place of leather jackets, scythes, and slings. The number of selected men was made according to a fix apportionment for various districts. The Geldable found 40 men, Bury 34, Ipswich 13, and the Liberty of St. Etheldreda 13.

To be a soldier of the King did not always mean payment of wages. The allowance of food was apparently satisfactory. The days were calendared as Flesh or Fast Days. Four men messed together. On Flesh days they were given for dinner among them, 2 lbs. of beef, and 1 lb. of bacon. For supper they had the same amount. On Fish days their rations were for dinner 8 herrings and half a lb. of cheese, as well as for supper. On special Fast days the four men were allowed but one meal, consisting of half a cod or stock fish, and 1 lb. of butter, or 10 herrings and 1 lb. of cheese. They were allowed daily 1 lb. of biscuit or bread, and for drink, wine and a bottle beverage, consisting of two pints of water to one of sack.

At the Musters men were pressed to serve in

various companies beyond the seas in Flanders, France, or Ireland. Of the twenty-five men sent to Bristol, under the charge of Sir Antony Cooke, one was William Mack Genys, of Butley, who was furnished with a cuirass, open head-piece, sword, long pistol, coat of orange tawny-cloth lined throughout with white, and guarded with white lace, a roan trotting gelding with white face and flaxen mane, and three white feet. Side by side with him rode William Smith, of Ipswich, similarly apparelled on a trotting gelding of dapple grey, doubtless buoyant with hopes of promotion to knighthood such as fell upon his fellow townsman, Pipho, the fish-boy, in the Irish Wars, when a contingent of two hundred horse served under his step-father, Sir John Travers, in 1599.

When the selected men left for the wars their departure was celebrated by much feasting. In 1594 £10 was spent in setting forth the soldiers marching under the Ipswich ensign of black silk and white Levant taffata. The following year the attendance at the musters under Captain Lewes was much greater than usual, consequently the banquetting was more extensive. Besides £5 given as wages to the muster master, he was supplied with wine at the Greyhound, and refreshment, consisting of bread, beer, wine, and victuals to the value of £6 15s. 8d., was consumed upon Rushmere Heath. Some parsimonious members of the Corporation objected to the amount spent in diet exceeding that spent on gunpowder, viz., £6 4s.

Next year's entertainment was likewise excessive. Training was thirsty work; at a dinner on the heath 2 hhd. of beer were consumed and 12 dozen loaves of bread were eaten. The soldiers made their own cartridges, for which Nicholas Groome supplied them with brown paper and thread to bind and tie up their gunpowder. Though the day of training was the 3rd

of May, the weather was rough, for the wind rent the blue cloth which had been hired to set up as a tent. An inspection was made by Sir Robert Jermyn, Sir Philip Parker, Mr. Talbote, and Lord Arundel, who were feasted on wine, marchpane, and sturgeon, after which the soldiers proceeded to Martlesham, presumably raising much dust, for all the officers found it necessary to partake further of wine. Sir Philip Parker drank one pint of sack and sugar, costing half-a-crown. A pause in the march had occurred at Kesgrave. The training lasted for five days, during which period John Minter carried on such vigorous drumming with two new drumsticks that he received 10 shillings for his wages. The soldiers had recreation at a "Tylte," which John Greneleafe was appointed to set up. From among the soldiers present at this muster 140 men were selected and sent to Flushing. A general collection was made in each ward to assist towards their setting forth, and for powder and training. Four soldiers set forth by the Town to Boulogne cost the Corporation £16 9s. 2d., and to set forth six soldiers to serve the Fleet with the Earl of Essex cost £15 6s. At Martlesham Bridge a fight between the Ipswich and Woodbridge train-bands ended in the rout of the latter and the death of their officers.

These soldiers set forth to the wars were the original "old soldiers" who had tales to tell and wounds to shew, which called forth almsgiving given by the overseers and town authorities. The "old soldier" was most in evidence in the Stuart days, when he always pleaded being pressed to the wars. Churchwardens' accounts, even of the smallest villages, quote the "levying of money towards the payment of presse money, conduct money, and conductor's wages for soldiers lately pressed." The Rendlesham overseers paid twenty-nine shillings for the training of their men for two days at Ipswich, and

four shillings and sixpence for 3 lbs. of powder, and 6 yards of match. As the time of training was at Whitsuntide they treated the men to two and a-half pints of wine and a pennyworth of bread.

Parliament occasionally made grants to assist towns to furnish soldiers with supplies. These grants were not great. Woodbridge had a grant of thirty shillings, twenty were spent to buy a musket, eight to find three feathers for a soldiers' head piece, and two to furnish him with several yards of ribbon for his gun rest. The usual pension granted to a maimed soldier was £4 a year, if he were blind and lame it might be increased to £5. The lists of lame pensioners, and travelling soldiers seeking relief, reveal the names of "gentlemen" well known in the county—names such as Cornwallis, Kerrison, Southwell, Cheeke, Jacob, Major, appear. To them small sums of two or three shillings were given, although they were styled ensigns and lieutenants. The usual number of county pensioners was thirteen.

Most of the "poor soldiers" claimed to have been pressed to serve the King "beyond the sea"; some were wounded in the Parliament's service. No engagement occurred in Suffolk during the Civil War. After the Restoration the clamour of arms was heard upon the Felixstowe shores, when the Dutch landed to attack Landguard Fort. In 1667 Colonel Dolman, a traitor Englishman, headed a force of 1400 Dutchmen to make the assault. The attack began at 5 p.m., and lasted forty-five minutes. Scaling ladders, hand grenades, and cutlasses were used. Shot scattered the shingle lying upon the beach, and more Dutchmen were wounded by stones than by shot. The result of a second attack made upon the fort at 7 p.m. brought the Dutch losses up to seven men killed and thirty-five wounded. The Suffolk losses comprised one killed and two wounded.

The Suffolk Militia took an important part in the defence of the fort. When William III. ruled, this Militia, under Lord Cornwallis, comprised four regiments—

Red	6 Companies	426	officers and men
White	7 Companies	509	officers and men
Blue	8 Companies	657	officers and men
Yellow	8 Companies	660	officers and men
<i>Total</i>	29 Companies	2252	officers and men

George I. and his son, George II., sought to maintain their continental possessions by the use of British troops. In 1756 it was the policy of William Pitt to send back the Electoral troops and Hessians to Germany, henceforth England was to fight her battles for herself. At the same time the militia was reorganised and better ordered. In 1757 the deputy-lieutenants of Suffolk met in Ipswich and ordered the constables of each parish to return lists of persons liable to serve in the Militia. When the returns were sent in apportionments were made for men to be selected from each Hundred, so that a regiment of 960 men was made. The county was divided into four divisions, which made selection of men as follows:—Bury 403, Ipswich 277, Woodbridge 149, Beccles 131. The selection was made by means of ballôt, or lots; and the return of names shews that men of all stations of life were selected. Men who were selected were allowed to find substitutes. One farmer at Otley paid £20 for his servant to take his place. Gentlemen in the county offered themselves as officers of the various companies formed by adjacent parishes. The Hon. R. Savage Nassau was appointed Lieut-Colonel. The expenses of the Militia for the decade 1763–1773 were made for a regiment varying from 5,000 to 3,500 men, with the Duke of Grafton as Colonel.

The militia to some extent found recruits for the

regiments of the line. In 1756 orders were issued for the raising of a 2nd battalion to each of fifteen regiments of the line. These battalions were erected two years later into regiments, of which ten still remain, numbered 61st to 70th. Of these the 63rd regiment, made from the battalion of the 8th, was known for a century as the West Suffolk Regiment. It served through the War of American Independence, and formed the flank-company at Bunkers' Hill. It reinforced Abercromby in 1800, and was with Beresford at Madeira, 1807.

In 1660 a company was formed to garrison Windsor Castle, and was increased and ranked as a regiment of the British Army in 1685, under the Duke of Norfolk. It was known as the 12th regiment of the line when it forced the passage of the Boyne. It fought alongside the Hanoverian and Hessian Army at Dettingen, 1743 (Lieut.-Colonel, William Whitmore), but it was at Minden, 1759, that it gained immortal glory and the laurel crown. Its Colonel was Robert Napier, made Lieut.-General in that year. In 1745 Lieut.-General Ligonier was its commander, and in reading through the diary of the campaign in Flanders it is interesting to note among the words of parole the sign and countersign—St. William and Mons. Therefore, 150 years ago the word Mons was foremost with the regiment.

At the siege of Gibraltar the regiment was first called the East Suffolk Regiment. Then the Suffolks "dashed forth on the Spanish batteries like schoolboys out of school." The noble deed gave the flag and the county their badge and motto. The other names upon the flag speak of the many valiant fights in which the men of the regiment gained renown under brave leaders. There is one name missing which is deep in the memory of all Englishmen, a name not

blazoned on the regimental flag :—Birkenhead, when the Suffolks standing at arms gained for their regiment glory and honour greater than was earned at either Minden or Gibraltar. A fitting monument to these heroes is erected in St. Mary's Church, Bury St. Edmunds.

Suffolk volunteers, at the time of the Napoleonic scare, furnished forty-three companies :—Infantry, Rangers, Cavalry, and Light Horse ; but as these companies existed in recent days their history must be left for another pen.