

# **THE FAILED FLEMISH CAMPAIGN OF EDWARD I IN 1297**

## **A case study of efficient logistics and inadequate military planning**

**Bryce Lyon**

If the history of warfare teaches any lessons, certainly one is that wars are only won by a combination of efficient logistics and intelligent military planning and strategy. Deficient in this combination wars are lost. There are cases where the military strategy and tactics have been superb but the logistics lacking. Such was the case with Hannibal. After years of successive victories over the Roman legions, he finally had to leave Italy because Carthage failed to give him adequate logistical support. During the American Civil War despite its superiority in material and manpower, for a number of years the Union's incompetent generals awarded repeated victories to the Confederates. When both logistics and military strategy are deficient the results are catastrophic. Such was the case with Napoleon's invasion of Russia and more recently with Hitler's. And what would have been the result in North Africa if Rommel had been sufficiently supplied with war material and troops?

More examples could be cited, including the poor logistics so evident during the various Crusades combined with incompetent leadership. But this article will focus on the ill-fated campaign of Edward I of England during the autumn of 1297 in Flanders against Philip IV of France. No campaign illustrates more clearly that extremely efficient logistics cannot compensate for incompetent military planning and strategy. The records for this campaign are most adequate, especially those on logistics, the most informative being the wardrobe book of Edward I for 1296-1297 and associated financial accounts detailing the expenses for provisions, supplies, troops, horses, and

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war material.<sup>1</sup> And the documentation for military planning is not lacking.

It is well-known that after John of England lost a large part of France to Philip Augustus and was only left with Gascony his attempt to regain French territory ended in the defeat of his continental allies at the battle of Bouvines in 1214 in the county of Flanders. Meanwhile an English expedition mounted from Gascony also failed. Quite obviously waging a two-front war, relying upon Low Country and Germany allies, proved to be untenable, a lesson neither Edward I nor Edward III learned.

During the long reign of Henry III (1216-1272) a few desultory campaigns in Gascony gained nothing for the English.<sup>2</sup> But with Henry's son Edward I (1272-1307) it appeared there could be some chance of challenging France's hegemony in northern Europe. Edward's Welsh campaigns resulted in the incorporation of Wales into his realm and proved that he was an adequate leader, a builder of great castles well located for supply by sea, and an individual well aware that good logistics undergirded a successful campaign. Then came his Scottish campaigns which won him the sobriquet of "Hammer of the Scots."<sup>3</sup> These successes would seem to demonstrate that Edward was a competent military leader with an appreciation of efficient logistics. But it must be emphasized that his successes thus far were limited to England.

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<sup>1</sup> Bryce and Mary Lyon, eds. *The Wardrobe Book of 1296-1297: A Financial and Logistical Record of Edward I's Autumn Campaign in Flanders Against Philip IV of France*, Brussels, 2003, and B. and M. Lyon: "An Account of the Provisions Received by Robert de Segre, Clerk of Edward I of England, in Flanders and Brabant in the Autumn of 1297," *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire*, CLIX, 2003, pp.37-49, B. Lyon, "Un compte de l'échequier relatif aux relations d'Edouard I<sup>er</sup> avec le duc Jean II de Brabant," *Bul. Com. Roy. Hist.*, CXX, 1955, pp.57-93. See also Jean de Sturler, "Deux comptes 'enrolés' de Robert de Segre, receveur et agent payeur d'Edouard I<sup>er</sup>, roi d'Angleterre, aux Pays-Bas (1294-1296)," *Bul. Com. Roy. Hist.*, 125, 1960, pp.561-612, "Le paiement à Bruxelles des alliés franc-comtois d'Edouard I<sup>er</sup>, roi d'Angleterre (Mai 1297), *Cahiers Bruxellois*, V, 1960, and "Les relations politiques de l'Angleterre et de Brabant sous Edouard I et Edouard II Plantagenet (1272-1326)," XI, 1932, pp.627-660; Michael Prestwich, *Documents Illustrating the Crisis of 1297-98 in England*, in *Camden Fourth Series*, Royal Historical Society, XXIV, London, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> For these events see M. Prestwich, *Politics and Finance Under Edward I*, Totowa, N.J., 1972 and *Edward I*, Berkely, 1988; F.M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307* 2<sup>d</sup> ed., Oxford, 1962.

<sup>3</sup> See especially J.E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I*, Oxford, 1901; J.G. Edwards, "Edward I's Castle-Building in Wales," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXXII, 1946, pp.116-170; A.J. Taylor, "Master James of St. George, Builder of Welsh Castles," *English Historical Review*, LV, 1950, pp.433-457; M. Prestwich, "A New Account of the Welsh Campaigns of 1294-5," *Welsh Historical Review*, VI, 1972, pp.89-94.

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After John's loss of the Angevin possessions in France it remained the hope of most English kings during the rest of the middle ages to avenge this loss and to regain the lost territory.<sup>4</sup> Edward I seemed to believe that this would be his crowning achievement. His construction of *bastides* along the Gascon border made this region secure and provided a springboard for an attack against Philip IV from the southwest.<sup>5</sup> And it seemed that conditions in the Low Countries were propitious for a strike from the northeast.

After the defeat at Bouvines suffered by John's allies, notably among them, the count of Flanders, the French kings kept nibbling away at Flemish territory and interfering in Flemish internal politics. Their goal was to acquire Flanders with its vibrant commerce and industry. Flemish politics were riven until the countship of Guy de Dampierre (1280-1305) by strife between the affluent urban patricians and craft workers. The leading communes such as Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres took every opportunity to weaken comital control which during the rule of countess Margaret was ineffective. But with the accession of her son Guy to the countship Flanders got a count who partially tamed the urban patricians, many of whom were supporters of the French kings and known as the Leliaerts. Guy also cemented relations with Edward I not only because of Flemish dependence upon English wool but also because he hoped for English support against the scheming Philip IV. Negotiations led to an alliance and subsidies to Guy.<sup>6</sup>

Edward I had previously established close ties with Duke John II of Brabant by the marriage of his daughter Margaret to the duke and by granting him a most generous subsidy of 40,000 lb. in money of black Tours.<sup>7</sup> Another daughter, Elizabeth, had been betrothed to John, son of Floris V, count of Holland and Zeeland. Among other Low Country supporters were the duke of

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<sup>4</sup> F.M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy*, Manchester, 1913; A.L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta, 1087-1216*, 2<sup>d</sup> ed., Oxford, 1955.

<sup>5</sup> M.A. Curie-Seimbres, *Essai sur les villes fondées dans le sud-ouest de la France aux xiii<sup>e</sup> et xiv<sup>e</sup> siècles, sous le nom générique de bastides*, Toulouse, 1880. See also Charles Higounet, "Bastides et frontières," *Le Moyen Age*, LIV, 1948, pp.113-141; Odon de Saint-Blanquat, "Comment se sont créés les bastides du sud-ouest de la France," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, IV? 1949, pp.278-289.

<sup>6</sup> For the alliance see *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292-1301*, London, 1895, pp.232-233, and Thomas Rymer, *Foedera*, I, ii, p.682. This alliance also included an agreement that either Philippa or Isabella, Guy's daughters, would marry Edward's son. See also E. Varenbergh, *Histoire des relations diplomatiques entre le comte de Flandre et l'Angleterre au moyen âge*, Brussels, 1874, L. Pabst, "Die äussere Politik der Grafschaft Flandern unter Ferrand von Portugal (1222-1233)," *Bul. Com. Roy. Hist.*, LXXX, 1911; H. Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Brussels, 1929, I, pp.365 ff.; Theo Luykx, *Het Grafelijk Geslacht Dampierre en zijn Strijd tegen Filips de Schone*, Louvain, 1952.

<sup>7</sup> Lyon, *Bul. Com. Roy. Hist.*, 120, 1955, pp.59-93.

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Guelders, marquis of Juliers, and the lord of Cuyk. Edward even negotiated for the support of Adolf of Nassau, the ruler of Germany, and some Rhenish lords. It should not be overlooked that generous fiefs-rentes and subsidies to these hoped-for allies were incentives for them to support Edward if he decided to wage a campaign against Philip IV from the Low Countries.<sup>8</sup> The diplomatic preparations for an eventual campaign were about as well-executed as could be.

Having prepared for a base of operations in Flanders and Brabant, Edward awaited for an opportune time to mount a campaign. He thought it had arrived when Guy de Dampierre defied demands of Philip IV and renounced his feudal allegiance to him. In response Philip IV sent a French army into Flanders.<sup>9</sup> Edward had hoped to have a force in Flanders during 1296 but had to postpone doing so because he had not yet amassed enough supplies, troops, and ships. His plans were also delayed because all the leading barons refused to serve overseas.<sup>10</sup> But finally in the late summer of 1297 he had assembled his force and along with it sailed from Winchelsea and neighboring ports on 22 and 24 August. Consisting of about 900 cavalry and 8,000 archers and footsoldiers, the force crossed the North Sea in 273 ships, its destination being the Zwin estuary and its principal port Sluis.<sup>11</sup>

Even before Edward and his force began their overland march to Ghent there was a harbinger of what was to be his most unsuccessful campaign. The bitter rivalry between the sailors of Great Yarmouth and the Cinq Ports erupted when the fleet arrived in the estuary. An armed conflict broke out and during

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<sup>8</sup> H. Obreen, *Floris V Graaf van Holland en Zeeland, Heer van Friesland, 1256-1296*, Ghent, 1907; O. Oppermann, "Holland unter Graf Florens V", in *Studium Lipsiense*, Berlin, 1909; F. Bock, "Englands Beziehungen zum Reich unter Adolf von Nassau," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung*, Erg-Band XII, 1932; G. Barraclough, "Edward I and Adolf of Nassau," *Cambridge Historical Journal*, VI, 1940, pp.225-262; F. Trautz, *Die Könige von England und das Reich, 1272-1377*, Heidelberg, 1961; Lyon, "The Fief-Rente in the Low Countries: An Evaluation," *Rev. Bel. de Phil. et d'Hist.*, XXXII, 1954, pp.422-465, and *From Fief to Indenture: The Transition from Feudal to Non-Feudal Contract in Western Europe*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957.

<sup>9</sup> F. Funck-Brentano, "Documents pour servir à l'histoire des relations de la France avec l'Angleterre sous le règne de Philippe le Bel," *Revue Historique*, XXXIX, 1889, pp.326-348, and *Philippe le Bel en Flandre*, Paris, 1897; R. Favier, *Philippe le Bel*, Paris, 1978; J.R. Strayer, *The Reign of Philip the Fair*, Princeton, 1980.

<sup>10</sup> Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp.376-400.

<sup>11</sup> *Cal. Pat. R., 1292-1301*, p.306. Just before sailing on 22 August 1297 from Winchelsea on the ship *cog Edward*, the chancellor John Langton transferred the great seal to John Benstead, controller of the wardrobe. For the size of Edward's force see N.B. Lewis, "The English Forces in Flanders, August-November 1297," in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F.M. Powicke*, Oxford, 1948.

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it some thirty ships were lost.<sup>12</sup> After embarking Edward and his force proceeded to Bruges and then to Ghent which was to be his headquarters. Having installed himself within Ghent and his force in a fosse constructed outside the walls of Ghent, Edward soon learned that hoped-for allies were reluctant to join him in a campaign against Philip IV and it became evident that his small army had arrived too late to save Guy de Dampierre from Philip IV whose superior force had been in Flanders for some time and was in control of considerable Flemish territory. Before long the inhabitants of Ghent were upset by the unruly conduct of Edward's Welsh archers and some footsoldiers. Within the walls of Ghent, Edward became vulnerable to the growing resentment. On one occasion the Gantois seized Edward and held him captive until his soldiers broke down the gates of a tower entry and freed him. The anti-English feeling undermined the precarious relations of Count Guy with his contumacious communes, many of whose inhabitants were Leliaerts loyal to Philip IV. Soon Edward realized that he must negotiate a retreat from Flanders. On 9 October a truce was concluded with Philip at St. Baafs Vijve which later was renewed until a peace was concluded at Tournai in January of 1298 and that was formalized at Montreuil-sur-Mer on 19 June 1299.<sup>13</sup>

In February 1298 a hundred ships came to Sluis to transport the English force back to England. About the middle of March Edward also returned. Meanwhile an English campaign mounted from Gascony against the French had been equally unfortunate. Guy de Dampierre became a prisoner of Philip IV and was taken to Paris. Then Philip's brother Charles of Valois occupied much of Flanders. Only the Matins of Bruges and stunning Flemish victory

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<sup>12</sup> For the conflict between the sailors of Great Yarmouth and those of the Cinq Ports see F.W. Brooks, "The Cinq Ports Feud with Yarmouth," *Mariner's Mirror*, XIX, 1933. Edward sent orders to bailiffs and men of Great Yarmouth to restrain violence with the sailors of the Cinq Ports so that he, his force, and supplies would not be disrupted in their passage to Flanders. Similar orders were sent to the bailiffs of Dover, Hythe, Sandwich, Romney, Winchelsea, Rye, and Hastings (*Calendar of Close Rolls, 1296-1302*, London, 1906, pp.59-60).

<sup>13</sup> For the negotiations, truces, and treaty see Prestwich, *Edward I*, pp.393-396. For a royal clerk's sketch of Edward I and Philip IV talking at Tournai which is depicted on the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, Memorando Roll 69, membrane 54 in the Public Record Office (Document E. 368/69 M54), see Lyon, "What Made a Medieval King Constitutional?" in *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, Toronto, 1969, pp.157-175. On 25 March 1298 Edward I sent orders to all sheriffs in England, reminding them of the recent truce with Philip IV which permitted French merchants to come to England safely for trading. Noting that Flemish merchants feared to come to England to trade because of certain disputes and riots at Ghent between the king's men and the Gantois while Edward was there, he also instructed the sheriffs to permit Flemish merchants to trade safely in England (*Cal. Close R., 1296-1302*, p.200).

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over the French at Courtrai in 1302 preserved the political integrity of Flanders.<sup>14</sup>

Despite Edward's diplomatic preparations and the substantial subsidies to his allies, they had no tangible results. He soon perceived that if a campaign was to be launched it would have to be done solely by his outnumbered force. Apparently it was only after his arrival in Ghent that he became aware of the tenuous relations of Guy de Dampierre with the largest communes whose denizens were sharply divided over loyalties to Guy or to Philip IV. Because the English force remained on the defensive in its fosse, it remains unknown what tactical plans Edward had. This failed campaign is a prime example of inadequate war planning for an overseas venture in a land whose political tensions Edward was ignorant of. And now, as will be learned from an examination of records concerned with logistics, however adequate and well-executed they are, they cannot compensate for a poor war plan.

Previously it was noted that Edward had hoped to commence his campaign in 1296 but postponed it because he had not yet secured adequate shipping to transport troops, horses, and supplies, and had been unable to procure adequate food and supplies to be delivered to coastal ports. Pertinent records indicate that Edward understood the value of logistics and was not prepared to go overseas until he knew they were adequate. Although some supplies, food, and wine had to be procured in Flanders and Brabant they were minimal; the bulk had to come from England.

The 273 ships transporting troops, horses, and supplies were mostly obtained from southern and southeastern ports such as Great Yarmouth, Harwich, Ipswich, and the Cinq Ports which included Winchelsea, Dover, Hastings, Hythe, Romney, Rye, and Sandwich. Other ports used were Faversham, Brightlingsea, King's Lynn, Grimsby, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Strood, Portsmouth, and even London. The wardrobe book and affiliated financial accounts are filled with this information plus the names of the ships such as *La Nicholas*, *Swan*, *Le Passager*, *La Presente*, *La Godyere*, and *La Blith*. Occasionally the type of ship was noted, as for example, a galley, barge, and cog. Each ship had a master, most a constable, and, of course, a crew. The names of all masters were given. The complement of sailors varied from

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<sup>14</sup> For these events and especially the Matins of Bruges and the Battle of Courtrai see the excellent articles in R.C. Van Caenegem, ed., *1302: Le désastre de Courtrai. Mythe et réalité de la bataille des Eperons d'or*, Antwerp, 2002, and J.F. Verbruggen, *De Slag der Gulden Sporen, Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van Vlaanderens Vrijheidsoorlog, 1297-1305*, Antwerp, 1952.

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around 15 to as high as the fifties and sixties. All were paid wages for the duration of their service.<sup>15</sup> For example, Richard de Goseford, master of the ship *Swan* from Great Yarmouth, had with him a constable and a crew of 53 to transport Edward's daughter Margaret from Harwich to Brabant. The master and constable received 6d. daily and the sailors 3d. Serving for 14 days, their wages totaled 9 lb. 19s. 6d. In addition to these wages were those for pilots, particularly for those familiar with the waters of Flanders and Brabant. For the crossing of Margaret, Richard de Goseford received 40s. which he had paid "*pro stipendiis lodmannorum*" Each of the two pilots had received compensation of 20s. In the section of the wardrobe book accounting for the expenses of ships and their crews the total costs were given as 5,586 lb. 19s. 3d.<sup>16</sup>

The ships transporting troops and supplies did not have to be refitted as did those for the transport of horses which required special gangways and stalls. For the lumber and nails to construct them wardrobe personnel contacted lumber merchants whose names are listed along with the compensation received for boards and nails. This information is found under the rubric of "*Necessaria provisa pro flota navium apud Winchelsea congregata contra passagium Regis versus Flandriam anno regni sui xxv<sup>to</sup>.*" Among the merchants were Nicholas Alard of Winchelsea who received 22 lb. on 22 August 1297 for procuring 2,750 boards 10 feet in length "*pro navibus reparandis ad equos pro passagio Regis versus Flandriam*". John Fish received 13 lb. 6s. 11d. for 100 boards 12 feet in length and for 625 boards 10 and 8 feet in length. For 300 boards some of a half foot wide and some three-quarters of a foot wide, and varying in length from 6 to 7 feet, he received 10 lb. 6s. 3d. Richard Finour received 8 lb. 2s. for 675 boards 10 feet in length at a price of 24s. per one hundred boards. Ten other merchants supplied varying numbers of boards of different lengths. In one case the sheriff of Sussex secured 250 boards in his county and sent them to Winchelsea.<sup>17</sup>

A certain Lawrence Cuppere from Winchelsea was assigned the task of providing nails "*pro navibus bordandis ad equos*," and he did so: 22,000 nails costing 2s. 11d. per package of 1,000 nails for a total of 64s.; 14,140 nails for 54s. 3d; and 2,000 nails for 4s. 1/2d. For transporting these nails from various places to Winchelsea he received 10s. He also provided canvas for making

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<sup>15</sup> The total expenses came to 5,586 lb. 19s. 3d. This information is provided in the section entitled "*Titulus de Vadiis Nautarum Navium in Diversis Flotis ad Diversos Portus Congregarum tam Pro Passagio Regis Edwardi Filii Regis Henrici versus Flandriam Quam Duchisse Brabancie Filie Regis et Comitis Hollandie Versus Propria et Pro Aliis Diversis Passagiis Anno Presenti XXV*" (*Wardrobe Book of 1296-1297*, pp.103-115).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.39-40.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.

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sacks to carry money.<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately there is no information in the wardrobe book on the wages of the carpenters who constructed the gangways and stalls. But it does record the wages paid to Flemish carpenters, masons, hod carriers, diggers, and simple laborers who constructed the defensive fosse outside Ghent. Under the heading of "*Compotus Ricardi de Wardington de operatione fossati extra Gandavum*" we learn that Wardington, the king's clerk, was deputized to pay wages of "*operariorum operantium in fossato extra villam de Gandavo solvenda quod rex fieri precepit ad sumptus suos in primo adventu suo ibidem.*"<sup>19</sup>

The work began on 12 September 1297 and continued without interruption (save for the Sabbath) through 1 October. The Flemish did all the labor under the direction of the master carpenter Gerard Marlebek. On 12 September Gerard and 24 workers began operations. Gerard received 6d. and workers 2d. On 13 September Gerard was joined by another master carpenter, Bartholomew of Ghent, and they supervised 99 workers. Gerard received 6d. daily, Bartholomew 4d., and workers 2d. On one day 199 *fossatori* (literally trenchers or diggers) received wages of 2s. On 19 September there were 260 workers plus 40 "*pueri portantes hottas*" who only received 1d. daily. The *pueri* who did simple tasks received 1-1/4d. In other accounts rendered by Richard de Wardington the wages for master carpenters are listed at 6d. daily and for ordinary carpenters 4d. daily. It could be that the wages paid to these Flemish carpenters and other laborers were higher than those paid to English carpenters but these figures do provide a rough estimate of what carpenters and other laborers received as wages.

While the ships and crews were being assembled and the lumber and nails procured for construction of gangways and stalls, provisions and supplies were being received from counties at embarkation ports. Because the wardrobe served as a kind of quartermaster department, some of its personnel arranged with sheriffs of counties and bailiffs for the provisions and supplies and for their transportation. A considerable portion of the wardrobe book is devoted to payments for these provisions and supplies and for their transportation, storage, and guarding.

Another source of information are financial accounts rendered by clerks assigned to receive these supplies and provisions at Flemish ports such as Sluis and Biervliet and Antwerp in Brabant. The busiest clerk was Robert de Segre, a trusted assistant of Walter Langton, treasurer of the exchequer. From 1294 to early 1298 Segre was continuously on missions on the Continent

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.101-102.

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during which he received numerous payments from wool merchants, the exchequer, and the wardrobe. On the first of two missions on the Continent, the first from 22 July to 10 October 1294, and the second from 18 November 1294 to 13 November 1296, Segre traveled in the Rhine valley and the Low Countries disbursing the monies received in payments for subsidies previously negotiated by Edward's envoys with the anticipated German and Low Country allies. For these missions he was provided with ships, crews, pilots, guides, and barrels containing the money. For these services and for wages he was adequately remunerated.<sup>20</sup> Segre's third assignment in the autumn of 1297 was limited to Flanders and Brabant where he received supplies and provisions sent on ships from England. In the account rendered for this service are listed all the supplies and provisions as well as the payments to masters of ships for their service and that of their crews. The names of the masters are given as are the names of the ships and some of their English ports.<sup>21</sup>

Segre's account notes that he received cargoes from ships at Sluis 14 times. Although he received the cargoes at Sluis and paid masters of ships for their expenses there, all transactions were confirmed at Bruges. On 17 occasions Segre received cargoes at Antwerp and paid the expenses of the masters, transactions also confirmed at Bruges.

The following is typical of the entries in his account. On 7 August 1297 Henry Crappes, master of the ship *La Jonete* from Skirbek near Boston in Lincolnshire, delivered the following provisions to Segre at Sluis: 11 hogsheads (barrels or casks) of flour containing 54 quarters (8 bushels in a quarter) obtained from the sheriff of Lincolnshire, 64-1/2 quarters of beans and peas, 39 quarters of oats, 11-1/4 carcasses of cows, and 30 hams. Segre paid Henry Crappes 20s. for his expenses.<sup>22</sup> Most provisions in other ships were similar, consisting of wheat flour, wheat grain, oats, barley, hams, carcasses of cows (some described as salted), ale, and in one case 13,000 bundles (bales?) of hay. At the end of his account Segre entered the total amounts of provisions received at Sluis and Antwerp. At Sluis: 1,987 quarters and 1 bushel of wheat grain, 26 hogsheads of flour, 81 quarters and 7 bushels of barley, 1,228 quarters of oats, 249 quarters of peas and beans, 22-1/2 carcasses of cows, 58-1/2 hams, 13,000 bundles of hay. At Antwerp: 2,002 quarters and 5 bushels of wheat flour, 109 hogsheads of flour, 113 quarters

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<sup>20</sup> These details are provided by De Sturler, *Bul. Com. Roy. Hist.*, CXXV, 1960, pp.561-612. On 20 June 1294 Segre received letters of protection while serving the king overseas (*Cal. Pat. R., 1292-1301*, p.76). On 13 August 1294 Segre received orders to deliver 22,000 lb. sterling to allies in Savoy and Burgundy for their assistance in the war against Philip IV (*Ibid.*, p.83).

<sup>21</sup> *Bul. Com. Roy. Hist.*, CLXIX, 2003, pp.37-49.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

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and 1-1/2 bushels of barley, 1,334 quarters and 2 bushels of oats, 239-1/2 quarters of beans and peas, 20 carcasses of cows, 83-1/2 hams, 41 hogsheads and 2 pipes (2 hogsheads in a pipe) of ale, and 8,300 bundles of hay. Twenty ships transported the provisions. Twelve ports are noted as ports of origin. The provisions came from 10 counties, some as far north as Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland.<sup>23</sup>

Under the rubric of *Necessaria* in the wardrobe book are listed the provisions and supplies paid for by the wardrobe and, again, Robert de Segre appears as a major accountant. Others are Walter Blount, Peter of Chichester, Gerard Dargoil, and Adam de Blida, purveyor of oats. In May 1297 the wardrobe paid "*Domino Roberto de Segre conducenti de Westmonasterio usque Sandwicum 38 barillos cum denariis mittendis usque ad partes Flandrie ad dominum Walterum Conventrensis et Lychfeldensis episcopum domini regis thesaurarium in partibus illis commorantem pro solutione inde facienda comiti Flandrie iuxta conventionem inter regem Anglie et ipsum comitem initam mense Maii.*" He received 10 lb. 2s. 6d. for the wages of 10 carters and of 9 mounted and 20 unmounted archers who accompanied him and his barrels of money. Still in May it is noted that the sub-usher of the king was paid 30s. 3-1/2d. for purchasing the 36 barrels "*pro 18,000 libris que misse fuerunt in Flandriam per Robertum de Segre.*" In addition to the barrels the sub-usher purchased nails and paid the wages of coopers constructing the barrels. During the months of July and August 1297 Segre is noted as spending 27 days "*apud dictum portum de la Swyne*" to receive hay and provisions, and as being in Flanders from June to September to receive provisions.<sup>24</sup>

The wardrobe book omits no detail on how the 13,000 bundles of hay were procured in England and sent to Segre at Sluis. William de Sutton, sheriff of Essex and Hereford, provided the hay from Essex "*pro expensis hospicii regis in partibus Flandrie in exercitu suo ibidem.*" For each 1,000 bundles of hay he received 3s. 4d. for a total of 43s. 4d. For the wages of 8 men guarding the hay at various places for 16 days he received 32s. For the transportation of the hay from various places in the county to the Thames River he received 52s. For paying the freight charges for the four ships transporting the hay to Sluis he received 18 lb. 3s. 4d. Wages of 2s. 6d. were paid to a certain Richard de Paunfield for guarding the hay on the ships for 10 days at 3d. per diem. Finally, one of Henry's clerks was assigned the task for delivering the hay to Segre at Sluis. The total costs for this operation came to 36 lb. 13s. 2d.<sup>25</sup> Under the heading "*Adhuc computus Roberti de Segre de stauro recepti in*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.44-49.

<sup>24</sup> *Wardrobe Book of 1296-1297*, pp.12-13, 15, 17, 34.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

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*Flandria et Brabancia*” the wardrobe book lists all the provisions received by Segre and totals their costs.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the *Necessaria* the total costs of provisions and supplies received in Flanders and Brabant are given as 11,741 lb. 17s. 4-1/2d.<sup>27</sup>

Only a few provisions and supplies were obtained in Flanders and Brabant. These mostly consisted of parchment for the wardrobe clerks, wax for seals, and various items for the personal use of the king and his household. There were also the expenses for renting quarters in Ghent for the king and his household. And, finally, either by accident or from sickness, horses were lost and their owners had to be remunerated to replace them.<sup>28</sup> The wardrobe is silent on whether such horses were replaced from England or in Flanders.

Although the logistical operations of Edward concentrated upon having adequate supplies and provisions, not to be overlooked is his attention to those military devices for besieging fortified sites. During August and early September 1296 Stephen of Northampton, master engineer, supervised nine carpenters constructing *springalia* (catapult machines) which were then transported from Great Yarmouth to Winchelsea and Harwich where they were loaded on ships. All references to these *springalia* are in the plural but no numbers are given. It is noted, however, that Stephen was ordered to proceed to Harwich to supervise the loading of two *springalia* aboard a ship. He was also responsible for supplying large bolts for the *springalia* and small bolts for crossbows (*ballista*) “*et pro portagio tam magnorum spingaliorum pro spingalis quam 15,000 pavorum quarellorum pro ballistis.*” The two *springalia* loaded at Harwich were accompanied by 200 large bolts. From his Welsh campaigns Edward had learned about the efficacy of the longbow and had provided for large numbers of Welsh longbowmen but the references to catapult machines and to small bolts for crossbows indicate his awareness of their need in besieging and taking fortified points.<sup>29</sup>

The evidence discussed supports the conclusion that the logistics for Edward’s campaign were efficiently organized and executed by an experienced personnel mostly from the wardrobe. Coming from numerous counties and some bishoprics, the provisions and supplies were transported to English ports and then over the North Sea to ports in Flanders and Brabant. By water or by land they were taken to their destination in Ghent. In the process some provisions spoiled, some were lost and others stolen but the wardrobe book even accounts for these losses. This logistical operation could only have been

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.78-82. The following is typical of the entries concerned with remuneration: “*Willelmo de Meltone pro restauo 1 runcini sui ferandi pomele appreciati et redditi ad karvannum apud Gaunt mense Novembris per manus proprias ibidem eodem die, 20 mr.*” (p.79). *Karvannus* literally means a caravan but in this case refers to a site outside Ghent where horses lost were appraised and their owners remunerated.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.100-101.

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executed by a well-organized central administration closely integrated with local units of government, an administration that was developed years before, even as early as the reign of Henry II (1154-1189), and was much advanced over similar administrations on the Continent.

T.F. Tout, that pioneer in English medieval administration, has concluded that by the late thirteenth century a nascent civil service was in place. By the time of Edward I the key department for executing the royal will had become the wardrobe which was indeed a war office and quartermaster department. It was always with the king wherever he was. Receiving money from the exchequer and other sources, it paid the royal expenses, provided personnel for diplomatic missions, and took charge of the logistics for campaigns. No such department existed on the Continent.<sup>30</sup>

Despite well-planned and executed logistics no campaign can be successful without an intelligent and practical military plan and strategy. This is what Edward did not have in 1297. His diplomatic preparations brought no military assistance from his hoped-for allies. His knowledge of Flemish politics was deficient. Without the support of his baronage for an overseas campaign his force was too small to confront the superior French army already established in Flanders. It is indeed unfortunate that this failed campaign did not serve as a cautionary tale for later English campaigns as well as for the many other campaigns that have failed because they did not combine efficient logistics with able ware planning and strategy.

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<sup>30</sup> *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, Manchester, 1920-1933, 6 vols., and "The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, III, 1916, pp.185-214.