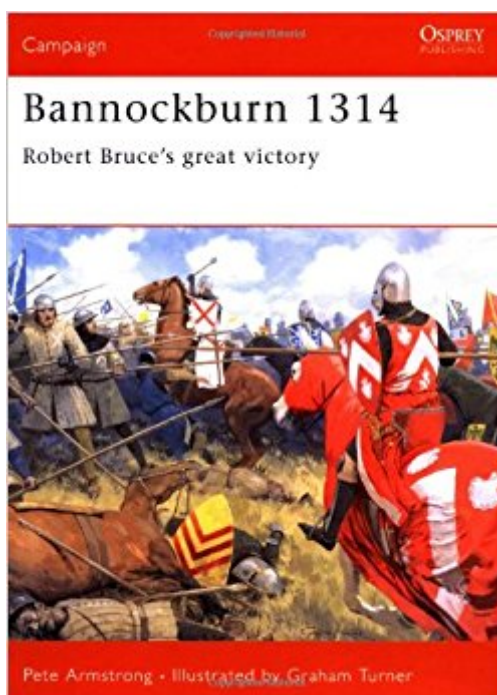


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Bannockburn 1314: Robert Bruce's Great Victory (Campaign)



Synopsis

Osprey's study of the Battle of Bannockburn, which was part of the First War of Scottish Independence (1296-1328) and the climax of the career of King Robert the Bruce. In 1307 King Edward I of England, 'The Hammer of the Scots' and nemesis of William Wallace, died and his son, Edward II, was not from the same mould. Idle and apathetic, he allowed the Scots the chance to recover from the grievous punishment inflicted upon them. By 1314 Bruce had captured every major English-held castle bar Stirling and Edward II took an army north to subdue the Scots. Pete Armstrong's account of this pivotal campaign culminates at the decisive battle of Bannockburn that finally won Scotland her independence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Armstrong's assured style makes the entire campaign both easy to understand and straightforward to follow. -- Military Illustrated

Highly visual guides to history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics, and experiences of the opposing forces throughout each campaign, and concluding with a guide to the battlefields today.

The battle of Bannockburn is famous as the battle which won Scottish independence from English rule, as well as one of the most famous battles of the Middle Ages. Depicted at the end of the movie

Braveheart, this book is the true story of the entire campaign leading up to the crucial battle. Not as good as the volume dealing with William Wallace's rebellion, but still a good book.

Pete Armstrong, a British artist and model-builder, has written an excellent campaign summary of Scotland's greatest military victory, the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Although some of the exact details of this famous battle remain open to debate, Armstrong does a fair job in presenting a balanced campaign narrative that incorporates different viewpoints. Bannockburn is also enhanced by excellent artwork and maps, which help to bring the battle into sharp focus. All in all, this is one of the better Osprey Campaign series titles. In accordance with standard Osprey Campaign series format, Bannockburn 1314 begins with short sections on the origins of the campaign (8 pages), a campaign chronology, opposing commanders, opposing armies and opposing plans. The section on armies details the infantry and cavalry formations of both sides and the author stresses that while the English had superior cavalry, their failure to employ combined arms tactics utilizing both infantry and cavalry was a fundamental flaw in their numerically superior army. Certainly combined arms tactics are sound advice in any period, but while the author points out the English failure in this regard, he fails to point out how the Scottish were any different. If the English were overly reliant on their cavalry, the Scots were certainly overly reliant on spear-armed infantry. The Scots had no answer to the English superior quality and quantity in archers, and this had led to the defeat at Falkirk 16 years before. The section on plans notes that the English King Edward II was well provided with intelligence about the enemy as well as supplies, but had no real plan of campaign other than to relieve the siege of Stirling Castle. Edward's lack of combat experience and his assumption that the Scots would disperse in the face of a major English invasion are cited as primary causes of his negligent planning. Again, while the author's assessment of deficient English planning appears correct, it is hard to see that the Scottish King Robert the Bruce had any serious plan of campaign either. Until the second day of battle, the Scots kept their options open to fight or flee and their victory was the result of opportunity, rather than planning. The campaign narrative itself is 38 pages long and is enhanced by five 2-D maps (Scotland in 1314, Edward II's invasion, the flight of the English army, Scottish raids in northern England, Bannockburn then and now) and three 3-D "Birds Eye View" maps (the fighting on 23 June 1314, the Scottish attack and the collapse of the English army). There are also three excellent battle scenes: the encounter between Robert the Bruce and Henry de Bohun, the attack of the Earl of Gloucester's cavalry on a Scottish schiltron and Edward II's flight). A somewhat longer than usual 20-page section on the battle's aftermath covers casualties, reasons for the English defeat, results of the battle, the continuation of the

English-Scot war and changes in military tactics because of the battle. Indeed, the author should be applauded for finding space for some analysis of the battle. Essentially, the author blames most of the defeat upon Edward II's atrocious lack of leadership and faulty decisions, which was certainly a key ingredient in the disaster. Coupled to Edward's poor leadership, Robert the Bruce's ability to boldly seize opportunity presented by English indecision and confusion resulted in a successful Scottish counterattack on the second day. Rather than merely blaming one individual, I think it might be fairer to say that English arrogance was to blame for the defeat, since this same kind of arrogance figured in other battles where professional English armies opposed irregulars (e.g. the American Revolution, the Zulus, the Boers). Inexperienced as he was, Edward II probably would have entered battle more cautiously if opposing a professional continental foe like the French or Spanish. The author does conclude that the English eventually learned at great cost to deal with Scottish tactics and that they put this to good use against the French in the Hundred Years War.

Bannockburn is a significant event in Scottish history, though not a turning-point. This summary covers all that the general reader needs to know. Illustrations are much above-average for medieval histories, even exciting. High recommended for those interested in English and Scottish history and medieval warfare in general.

As anticipated

Like all Osprey books, this is a great visual source, and like most titles in the Campaign series it gets pretty in-depth in its examination of this crucial battle in Scottish history. I'll give it 5/5!

Whoa! I am an distant ancestor of Robert the Bruce... I am a female and this is far too in depth for me. A lot of work went into this little pamphlet and for those who study wars in depth this would be ideal. For me not so much.

Too much money for a little bit of history. A VERY little bit of history. Very vague and disjointed. Not a good read.

Part of the Osprey campaign series, this one focuses on one of the conflicts in the longrunning conflict between England and Scotland, a north versus south territorial/political dispute that extends over a period of centuries. Not until the 20th century and a ton of social legislation which makes it

worthwhile for the Scots to put down the sword, does this on/off again sporadic conflict end. Bannockburn 1314, is one of the more memorable flare-ups between the "English and the Scots". Edward II, the English king appears to lack the leadership qualities necessary to win this campaign against Scotland in 1314. This is how I interpreted the authors' writing. On the other hand, King Robert I (known as Robert the Bruce) knows all the tricks including how to immobilize the English army by trapping pieces of Edward's grand army in the marshy bogs and soaking wet terrain. According to Armstrong, Edward II was never able to bring but a fragment of his troops into battle. It seemed the English strategy was to show more personal courage and hope this factor to overcome the Scots. Unfortunately for the English, the Scots were just as brave and had a lot more "tools" to use, if not the manpower. The result was a disaster for Edward II and he was almost personally captured twice during this campaign and a follow-up one. There are lots of color plates illustrating the uniforms and equipment of both sides. The portraits are made in context to dramatic points in the conflict so the reader gets to see both the equipment used and great displays of Action. As always maps galore and timetable overviews as well as marches to and from Bannockburn. In the case of Edward's army a speedy march from Bannockburn. This book doesn't however give a lot of politics, the last minute, "side-changers", Scots who welcome the English, or English not at all saddened by Edward losing his skin.

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