AWESOME stories

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Henry VIII ordered a fort to be built at Tilbury, located along the Thames Estuary. A similar fort was built at <u>Gravesend</u>, on the opposite river bank. If London was at risk, armed soldiers could defend the city by fighting against invaders and placing a chain across the river (between the two forts). It was at Tilbury where Henry's daughter, Queen Elizabeth, delivered her famous rallying speech in 1588. This image of the Tilbury Fort is maintained by the <u>Essex Record Office</u>.

British ships were close to home, but what would the Armada's commanders do next? The wind decided for them.

The day after Gravelines, the wind changed direction. Without motors, the ships had no choice but to sail where the wind pushed them. In this instance, they were forced into the North Sea. Camden <u>tells us</u> what happened:

The last day of the moneth [July 31, 1588] betimes in the morning, the West-north-west winde blew hard, and the Spanish fleete, labouring to returne to the narrow straight, was driven toward Zeland. The English gave over the chace [chase], because (as the Spanyards thinke) they saw them almost carryed to their ruine; for, the West-north-west winde blowing, they could not but runne aground uppon the sands and the shallows neere Zeeland.

Fortunately for the Spanish fleet, the wind spared them such destruction. Camden continues:

But the wind turning presently into the South-west and by West, they sayled before the winde, and being cleere of the shallowes, in the evening they consulted what to doe; and by common consent it was resolved to returne into Spaine by the North Ocean, for that they wanted many necessaries, especially great shott, their shippes were torne, and no hope there was that the Prince of Parma could bring forth his fleete. (Camden, Annales Rerum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha, 1588, Section 29)



PUSHED TO THE NORTH SEA

As the Spanish fleet <u>headed north</u>, pushed by the wind, they neared the Thames Estuary. Invading Britain would be possible if Spanish troops were able to land and fight their way toward London - and the Queen.

Parma, meanwhile, had managed to arrive at Dunkirk. His presence there was meaningless, however. He could not assist his countrymen since he and his fleet were <u>hemmed-in</u> by Dutch rebels and British ships:

The same day that last fight was, the Prince of Parma, after hee had made his prayers to our Lady of Hall, came somewhat late to Dunkirke, where he was receaved with opprobrious speeches of the Spanyards, as if in favour of Queene Elizabeth he had overthrowne a good opportunity to worke some noble exploit ... Howbeit, that Parma might not come forth from Dunkirke, the Lord Admirall commanded the Lord Henry Seimore and the Hollanders to keepe watch upon the coast of Flanders ... (Camden, Annales Rerum Angliae et Hiberniae Regnante Elizabetha, 1588, Section 31)

Perhaps not knowing the extent of the Armada's damage, Elizabeth's land forces were assembled east of London at West Tilbury. To rally her troops, and calm their fears, the Queen paid a personal visit to the Tilbury Camp. Camden records her famous speech.

Let's listen in.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PUSHED-TO-THE-NORTH-SEA-Elizabeth-I-The-Golden-Age

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