VICTORY AT STIRLING BRIDGE



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By September 11th, in 1297, Wallace heard that an English army led by the Earl of Surrey was advancing north. The armies met at the <u>Abbey of Cambuskenneth</u>, in <u>Stirling</u>, where Wallace's Uncle had taught him the poem about freedom.

The Scots were greatly outnumbered but refused to stand down. They wanted to make the English understand that Scotland was free.

<u>Cambuskenneth Abbey</u> is near the <u>River Forth</u> (of <u>Firth of Forth</u> fame). Stirling Bridge was the only way across the river.

<u>Abbey Craig</u>, a nearby hill, provided a great place for Wallace and most of his men <u>to camp</u> and watch the oncoming English. It also provided him with the critical <u>vantage point</u> he needed to give orders to his men who were on the other side of the bridge.

Most of the English were also across the river, around the great fortress of Stirling Castle. All that separated them from Wallace and his men was the narrow, <u>wooden</u> Stirling Bridge.

Refusing to listen to the advice of Earl Surrey who told him to stay off the bridge, Cressingham - the muchdespised tax collector - led his contingent of English soldiers across it. He wanted to wipe out Wallace and his men.

Wallace, however, outsmarted Cressingham. Using a prearranged signal, he ordered his strategically placed men to destroy the bridge. The English forces were divided in two. English soldiers on the bridge were trapped.

Not only did the strategy work, the psychological benefit was greater than Wallace could have imagined. The men who remained with Surrey saw their fellow soldiers getting slaughtered. They panicked and ran back to the English border.

<u>Stirling</u>, the place where Scottish Highlands and Lowlands come together to form the best <u>strategic location</u> in the region, was now in the hands of the Scots. So was <u>Stirling Castle</u>, a key <u>fortress</u> in Scotland.

Earl Cressingham, the King's tax collector, <u>died</u> in the battle. <u>Legend has it</u> that Wallace and his compatriots sliced the portly treasurer's body into strips. William Wallace reportedly used some of the strips to make a sheath for his dagger.

When Edward heard about the stunning defeat of his overpowering forces at <u>Stirling Bridge</u>, he realized Scotland was not Wales. Next time, Edward would lead the battle himself.

High on his list of objectives was the capture of William Wallace.

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

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/VICTORY-AT-STIRLING-BRIDGE-William-Wallace-Infam

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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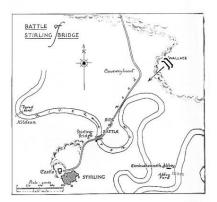


Abbey Craig

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Battle of Sterling Bridge - Map

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Cambuskenneth Abbey

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River Forth - Map

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Stirling - Battle at a Wooden Bridge

Illustration of the Battle at Stirling Bridge, included in *Cassell's Illustrated Universal History*, by Edward Ollier, published in 1890. Online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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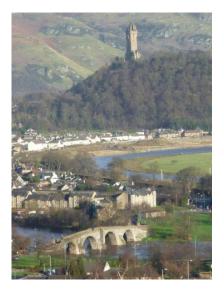
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Stirling - Panoramic View

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Stirling Castle - Key Fortress in Scotland

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Stirling Castle - View From the Beach

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Stirling Bridge - Medieval Version

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