



The Defence of Calais: The Army at War Series

Eric Linklater

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It is a tale of defeat, but when defeat is characterised by valour of a certain pitch and quality, its memory may outlast a tale of victory. And like the Burghers who came with ropes about their necks, to offer their lives that a whole people might be spared, the men who fought at Calais, and helped to save a British army, will surely be remembered.

In the introduction to *The Defence of Calais*, Eric Linklater called it an 'interim report', a 'half-told tale'. This report, first published in 1942 as part of The Army at War Series, is comprised of the information Linklater gathered from the surviving officers and soldiers who took part in the battle.

The Siege of Calais (1940) and its aftermath was for many years a subject of a heated debate over its importance in saving the British Expeditionary Force from capture; Linklater's account of the actual military decisions and actions that followed, written freshly after the events, gives an insightful perspective to that discussion.

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