

# WEAPONS

Weapons were used during battles and sieges. They were stored in castles and kept in people's homes. The king was able to order weapons to be sent to him from all over the country when he needed them. Often people had to be employed to fix weapons, such as carpenters and engineers.

Here are some examples of weapons used in the War of Independence.

**Siege-engine:** a machine used for attacking a castle. Edward I used lots of siege-engines on Stirling Castle in 1304. The engine probably had to be transported in small parts. We don't really know what the engine would have looked like, but we do know the parts needed for the engine included ropes, lead, iron, wood, animal hides and a 'rod'.

**Catapult:** a military machine for firing stones or other objects. The power to fire came from a strong lever held back with tightly twisted ropes and suddenly released.

**Crossbow:** a very high-powered type of bow and arrow. It fired a crossbow bolt, a shorter version of an arrow.

**Windlass crossbow:** a more powerful type of crossbow where the string is pulled back using a winding-mechanism.

**Two-foot crossbow:** a crossbow was loaded manually. The archer used both feet to steady the bow while drawing back the string by hand.

**Ballista crossbow:** An even more powerful version of the windlass crossbow, used against castles and forts. It was so big it could not be held by hand.

**Longbow:** a bow drawn by hand and firing a long feathered arrow.

## WEAPONS FOR THE SIEGE OF STIRLING CASTLE

**St Andrews: 20 March 1304**

**Edward I orders the keeper of Edinburgh Castle to make sure that his engineer has enough wood to repair the siege-engines.**

King Edward to Sir John of Kingston, keeper of Edinburgh Castle: greeting.

I command you to see that Master Thomas, my engineer, takes all the timber he needs in the wood of Newbattle to repair my siege-engines at Edinburgh.

**St Andrews: 30 March 1304****Edward I orders shields to be sent to Stirling in time for his siege.**

King Edward, writing from St Andrews, to the keepers of Edinburgh and Berwick castles: greeting.

I order you to send all the great shields from your castles that you think are suitable for assaulting a castle, so that I have them upon my arrival at Stirling.

**Inverkeithing (Fife): 16 April 1304****Edward I writes to Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick (later King Robert the Bruce), thanking him for sending his siege-engines to Stirling and asking him to send a vital part of the great engine.**

King Edward, writing from Inverkeithing, to the earl of Carrick: greeting.

I thank you for sending your siege-engines to Stirling. I ask you now to forward the rod of the great engine if you possibly can, for which I will send you help.

**Outside Stirling Castle: 21 April 1304****Edward I writes to the keeper of Inverkip Castle (Renfrewshire), commanding him to send all iron from the siege-engines in Glasgow.**

King Edward, writing from my position outside Stirling Castle, to Sir Robert Leyburn, keeper of Inverkip Castle: greeting.

Your people of the castle are ignoring the commands of my officers, especially regarding the siege-engines and stones for my siege of Stirling. Nothing has been done to remedy this situation, and my siege is being greatly delayed by this state of affairs. I therefore command you, on pain of a large fine, to tear off all the iron from the engines at Glasgow and send it to me with the main timbers and stones for the siege of Stirling without any excuse or delay.

**Stirling: 20 May 1304****Edward I writes to some English sheriffs and the keeper of the Tower of London, ordering them to send him all the crossbows and arrows they have.**

King Edward, writing from Stirling, to the sheriffs of York, Lincoln, Nottingham & Derby, and London, as well as Ralph of Sandwich, the keeper of the Tower of London: greeting.

I command you to send me all the crossbows and arrows in your keeping for my siege of Stirling Castle.

**November 1306****Receipts for various things bought for weapons during the siege of Stirling.**

**Lead:** To Master Peter Cirugico, sent to take the roof off Dunfermline church for taking lead for the king's engines at Stirling in 1304 and for the wages of men bringing that lead to the siege of Stirling from various places, in May and June 1304: £4 [about £2,000 today].

**Hides:** To Gilbert Haunchis of Dumbarton, for 12 tanned hides bought by him and

the provosts of that town for the engines, at 22d. [£47 today] for each hide: 22s. [£570 today].

**Iron:** To William Fichet of Aberdeen for 40 pieces of iron bought from him for the siege of Stirling: 10s. 3d. [£265 today].

**Iron:** To Thomas the ironsmith, of St Andrews, for iron for the siege of Stirling: 7s. [£181 today].

**Coal:** To John the smith, for carrying sea-coal from the sea to the forges of St Andrews, for the siege of Stirling: 18d. [£40 today].

**Iron and coal:** To Walter the smith, for iron and coal bought by him from John of Clackmannan for the siege of Stirling: 12s. 4d. [£320 today].

## SIEGE-ENGINES

**Between May and October 1301**

**Receipt of payment for ropes bought for the king's siege-engine.**

Payment to William Trenchefoil, for 2 great ropes bought for the siege-engine at Edinburgh: 16s. 2d. [about £160 today].

**September 1301**

**Receipt of payment for carrying siege-engines to Bothwell Castle to attack it.**

Payments made to Robert of Farnham for transporting siege-engines from Edinburgh for the assault on Bothwell Castle in August and September 1301: 100s. 2d. [about £2,600 today].

**3 January 1304**

**Record of delivery of parts for siege-engines to Berwick.**

Record of the delivery by Thomas Cotting to Richard of Bromsgrove at Berwick of certain items for siege-engines: that is, the two made at Brechin, as well as the engines known as 'Seagrave', 'Vernay', 'Robynet', 'Forster', and one engine from Aberdeen.

## CATAPULTS

**30 March 1311**

**Receipt of a payment to carpenters for making a catapult.**

Record that a cash advance of £7 20d. [about £3,100 today] was given for the wages of carpenters sailing from Berwick to Aberdeen to make a catapult.

**30 March 1311**

**Receipt of a payment to an engineer for helping repair the king's catapults.**

Payment to Master Reginald the engineer, going to Aberdeen with the king's sailors for the repair of catapults on the king's ships.

## DUMFRIES CASTLE'S WEAPONS

**20 November 1298**

**Record of the weapons sent to Dumfries Castle.**

Record that Sir Robert has taken the following weapons to Dumfries Castle:

- 2 siege-engines
- 2 catapults
- 2 windlass crossbows
- 2 two-foot crossbows
- 1 windlass crossbow
- 2 two-foot crossbows
- As many quarrels [crossbow bolts] as possible