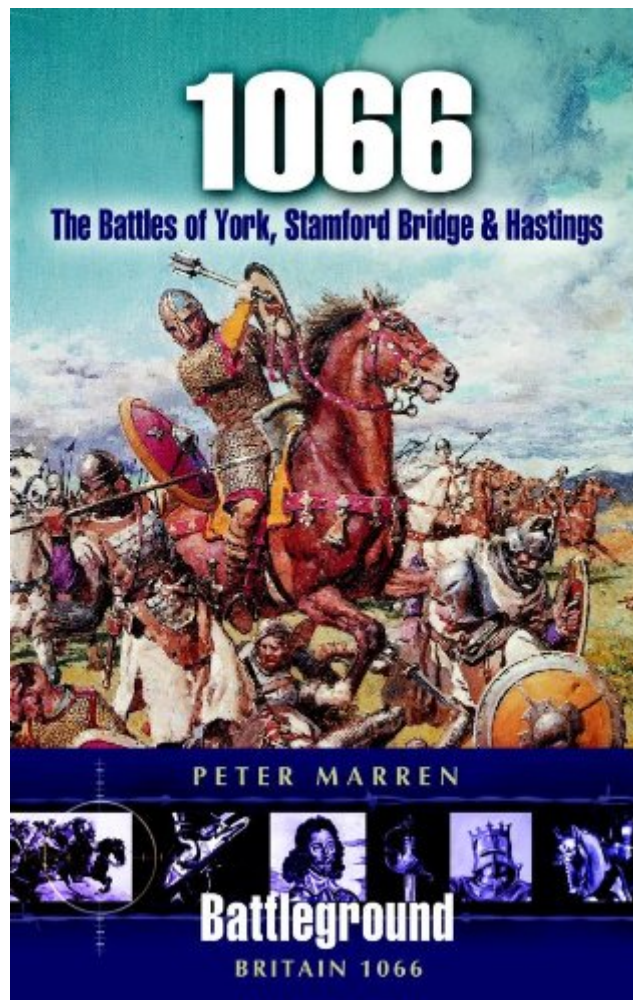




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1066 - The Battles Of York, Stamford Bridge And Hastings (Battleground Britain)



Synopsis

If ever there was a year of destiny for the British Isles, 1066 must have a strong claim. King Harold faced invasion not just from William and the Normans across the English Channel but from the Dane, King Harald Hadrada. Before he faced the Normans at Hastings in October he had fought and defeated the Danes at York and neighboring Stamford Bridge in September. What dramatic changes of fortune, heroic marches, assaults by land and sea took place that year! This book explains what really happened and why in what is arguably the 'best-known' but worst understood battle in British history.

Book Information

File Size: 6317 KB

Print Length: 176 pages

Publisher: Pen and Sword (February 19, 2004)

Publication Date: June 25, 2013

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00DN5TTXI

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #513,939 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #61

inÂ Books > History > Europe > Scandinavia > Norway #508 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks >

History > Military > Other #693 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Europe > Medieval

Customer Reviews

A surprisingly well-written book that throws new light on a well-covered area. I've read a lot on 1066 - and while I don't agree with everything Peter Marren says, he makes strong cases for his different approaches. Well-written and well-argued. The Kindle edition is so cheap it is well-worth the price.

Very clear on the battle and explains things that you need to know like how swords were made back then.

I bought it for a friend for Christmas and she loved it. She says that it is a great book.

Peter Marren has done an excellent job of research and explaining the background of the conflict culminating in the Battle of Hastings. Clearly he knows his history and extensively researched the "Chronicles" written within 200 years of the battles he describes. He does point out that the chronicles must be taken with a grain of salt since the majority were written from the Norman perspective. I appreciate the fact that Mr. Marren is very fair towards King Harold and Anglo-Saxon England. This book is a must read for anyone wanting to know more about these milestone battles in the history of England. Further, it should prove extremely helpful for anyone traveling to the sites of the battles. The book provides numerous maps and diagrams of the battles and tactics as well as photos of the terrain as it looks now at the battle sites. There is enough detail in the book for the military history buff but it's not so overwhelming that those who are novices in this area would be put off. The ONLY fault I find with this book is an error regarding archery which I see repeatedly from many authors. When speaking of archery, Mr. Marren repeatedly speaks of "firing" arrows (or in the past tense uses the term "fired")! This is a technical error that should not occur! Archery is one of my lifelong hobbies. And those of us who're archers KNOW that an arrow may be "released", "loosed", "launched" or "shot". But unlike a firearm or artillery piece, there is no explosive propellant involved in archery. A gun, howitzer, or cannon may be "fired". An arrow absolutely cannot! Mr. Marren and other authors of history (or historical fiction) should know this. I speak so strongly of this error because otherwise everything in this book (down to the logistics of the armies) is spot on. I do recommend this book highly to anyone wanting to know more about these three battles which were crucial to the history of England.

I enjoyed this, but the David Howarth book 1066 The Year of the Conquest is so much better that I am sorry I read the Marren book.

Peter Marren contributes to the 1066 body of literature by giving us this nice concise book. This book can be used as a deeper introduction to people vaguely familiar with the events or to those who wish to have a more pictorial view of the sites. He publishes some (currently) new insight on the Battle of Hastings, showing Harold may not have been the passive commander most writers of that battle have accused him of being. Interesting material to anyone who's read the more well known books. My feeling is that Tetlow's "Enigma of Hastings" has probably the best but this is a

great companion, especially to those who are planning a visit. He gives the reader more insight to the Battle of York (aka Battle of Fulford Gate) that affects the Battle of Stamford Bridge much the same way Stamford Bridge affected the Battle of Hastings. He gives insight to the weaponry used and tries to give insight to the personalities involved. I also like that he publishes the names of all those who are documented to have fought in the Battle of Hastings. I visited the battlefields in the past year and Mr. Marren includes some great, accurate diagrams and photos of the sites. I wish I'd had this book with me. They represent the areas very well and this book would be an enormous help to those planning a visit. He includes photo's of battles re-enactors whose physical appearance... well, you can tell they're not professional soldiers. In fairness they're included to show the probable battledress. Marren doesn't bog the story down with too many details and while that's a strength it's probably the biggest weakness too. You want to know more. But, unfortunately there just isn't much source material and that which is available does not have the Anglo-Saxon point of view. Marren also doesn't delve too much in the political aftermath of Hastings but that's fine in this context. Marren also states that had Harold won Hastings, England would have had serious problems due to the enormous loss of life in the three battles. Excellent point that leaves the reader believing another invading force would have had it easy. This is a good book.

This book gives a good picture of the logistics involved in these campaigns down to figures on tons of animal fescues produced. Lots of stats on type of armaments, equipment, boats used, type of horses (which were considerably smaller than a lot of today's), a real nuts and bolts book but easy to read. What interested me was the breakdown of the fighting units in the armies. It seemed the "housecarls" were the retained hardcore weapons people whereas the "fyrd" was poorly equipped and probably of questionable loyalty to either side. After all, this was centuries before the nation/state where soldiers had a direct stake in winning or losing. At Hastings probably the levied (drafted/forced) saw a victory by either side as a mild change in benefits or oppression. The Norman army definitely was better prepared and had some new warfare techniques learned and proved true on the continent like a new use for cavalry and archers. The guys running around with little to no defensive equipment on in the Bayeux tapestry make sense now. They're probably depicted that way because they had no equipment, and no stake in the outcome: No wonder they're running like the dickens, not cowards—just smart!

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