

# The Viking Great Army and the Making of England: A Historical Epic



The Viking Great Army, a formidable force of Norse warriors, played a pivotal role in shaping the history of England. Their arrival in the 9th century marked the beginning of a tumultuous era that would ultimately lead to the formation of a unified English kingdom. This article explores the origins, campaigns, and lasting legacy of the Viking Great Army, shedding light on their impact on the political, cultural, and social landscape of England.

## The Viking Great Army and the Making of England

by Dawn Hadley

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5



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Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
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## Origins of the Great Army

The Vikings, a seafaring people from Scandinavia, began raiding and trading in England in the late 8th century. These initial raids were largely small-scale, but in 865, a massive invasion force known as the Great Army arrived on the shores of East Anglia. Led by legendary figures such as Ivar the Boneless and Halfdan Ragnarsson, this army was a formidable force, consisting of seasoned warriors, skilled archers, and fierce berserkers.

## Campaigns and Conquests

The Viking Great Army embarked on a series of devastating campaigns across England. They captured York in 866 and established a stronghold in the north. Over the following years, they conquered swathes of territory, including East Anglia, Northumbria, and Mercia. Their brutal tactics, including pillaging, burning, and mass slaughter, spread terror throughout the land.

However, the Vikings also faced challenges. They were defeated by King Alfred the Great of Wessex in the Battle of Edington in 878. This victory marked a turning point in the conflict, as Alfred began to consolidate his power and unify the English kingdoms against the invaders.

## **The Danelaw and Viking Settlements**

After the Battle of Edington, the Vikings negotiated a peace treaty with Alfred the Great. The Treaty of Wedmore divided England into two distinct regions: the Danelaw, under Viking control, and the Kingdom of Wessex, ruled by Alfred. The Danelaw comprised areas of eastern and northern England, where Viking customs, laws, and language became prevalent.

Over time, the Vikings established settlements within the Danelaw. York became a major Viking trading center, while other settlements, such as Lincoln and Stamford, emerged as important hubs of commerce and industry. As the Vikings integrated into English society, they brought new technologies, ideas, and influences, enriching the cultural and linguistic heritage of England.

## **The Vikings and English Identity**

The Viking invasions had a profound impact on the formation of English identity. The conflict between the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons shaped a shared sense of nationhood and a common purpose to defend their homeland. The Vikings' new customs, such as the use of longships and the art of shipbuilding, influenced the development of English mariners and traders.

Moreover, the merging of Viking and Anglo-Saxon cultures gave rise to a unique blend of traditions and language. Many English words, such as "berserk," "ransom," and "skull," have Viking origins. The Norse influence is also evident in the names of towns and cities, such as York, Derby, and Grimsby, which reflect the Viking presence in those regions.

## **Legacy and Influence**

The Viking Great Army left an enduring legacy on England. Their invasions and conquests accelerated the unification of the English kingdoms and paved the way for the emergence of a strong centralized monarchy. The Danelaw introduced new legal and administrative systems that influenced the development of English law.

The Vikings' impact on English culture and society was equally significant. Their language, customs, and technologies became integral parts of English heritage. The legacy of the Viking Great Army continues to inspire fascination and admiration today, as their exploits form an epic chapter in the history of England.

The Viking Great Army was a formidable force that played a pivotal role in shaping the political, cultural, and social landscape of England. Their arrival in the 9th century marked the beginning of a tumultuous era, but also led to the formation of a unified English kingdom. The Danelaw, the Viking settlements, and the blending of Viking and Anglo-Saxon cultures left an enduring legacy that is still evident in modern-day England. The story of the Viking Great Army is a testament to the resilience, adaptability, and cultural exchange that have shaped the rich history of this nation.



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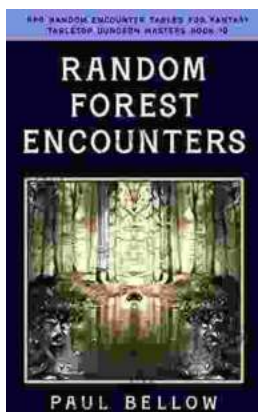
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