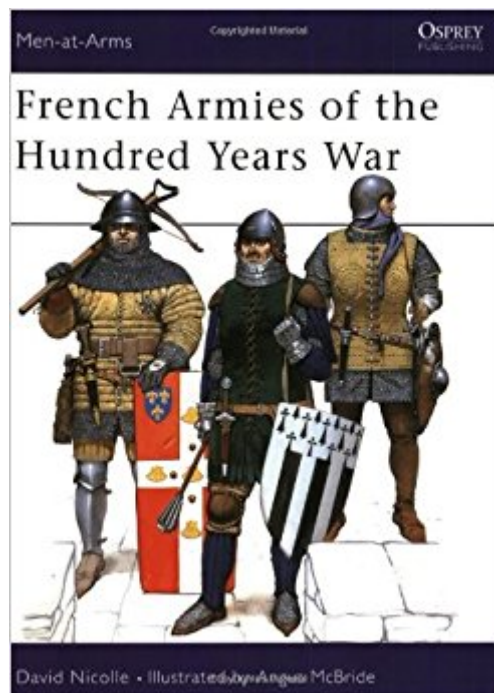




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# French Armies Of The Hundred Years War : 1328-1429 (Men-At-Arms Series, 337)



## Synopsis

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were a time of great upheaval for medieval France. In 1328 the Capetian line came to an end. This was the trigger for the Hundred Years War (1337-1453) as successive English kings attempted to uphold their claim to the French throne. Catastrophic defeats at Crécy and Poitiers shook the French kingdom to its core. A period of respite followed under Bertrand du Guesclin, but an even more devastating assault was to follow, under the warrior-king par excellence Henry V, and the French disintegration continued until 1429. This book details how the French began a recovery, partly triggered by the young visionary Joan of Arc, that would end with them as the major European military power.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Packed with specially commissioned artwork, maps and diagrams, the Men-at-Arms series is an unrivalled illustrated reference on the history, organisation, uniforms and equipment of the world's military forces, past and present.

David Nicolle was born in 1944 and was educated at Highgate School. For eight years he worked in the BBC Arabic Service. In 1971 he went 'back to school', gaining an MA from the School of Oriental and African Studies and a PhD from Edinburgh University. For some years he taught art and architectural history at Yarmuk University, Jordan. David has written many Osprey titles, including MAA 140 Armies of the Ottoman Turks, MAA 320 Armies of the Caliphates 862-1098,

and Campaign 43 Fornovo 1495.

This book by David Nicolle reveals how the French armies would have looked during the Hundred Years War (1337 C.E. [Common Era through 1453 C.E.). The Hundred Years War is viewed by many historians as being a turning point, in which Knights began a decline as an effective weapon of war. Specifically it was the battles of Crecy and Poitiers which were won by the English which reflect this turning point very clear. In those battles the English long bowmen proved themselves very effective against the best of the heavy French knights.

The union of David Nicolle's knowledge of medieval military history and the late Angus McBride's great skill as an illustrator have produced a myriad of excellent Osprey titles, but for the plates alone I would claim this as one of my favorites. The plates portray all facets of the French military of the time, the knights, common soldiers, artillery, and mercenaries. Several famous (or infamous) characters of the Hundred Year's War, among them Jeanne d'Arc, Bertrand du Guesclin, and Jean de Bethencourt, are marvellously illustrated as they put on their armor, command their troops, etc. Plate E's rendition of a contemporary Basque warrior is also quite interesting. The text of course, is detailed and greatly informative, although a tiny bit dull in a few places. The section on the changing French tactics over the course of the war is particularly useful. Overall, this is an essential source for a student of the Hundred Year's War, a conflict that has overall been well presented by Osprey Military Publishing.

Great guild for any tabletop wargamer painting an army in the Hundred Years war, units sizes and commander can be found.

Shipped very quickly and a great price!

Nicolle managed to provide one of the best first approaches to the much maligned French armies of the hundred year's war (that by the way ultimately won the war). From the mindset focused on the conservative tactics of the chivalric world of the early period to the modern reorganized army of Charles VII there was an impressive evolution; and the author makes an excellent job explaining the evolution of tactics, arms and armor, organization and recruitment. A considerable feat considering the size of this book (just 48 pages) and that the different periods had quite a few specificities. The only slight weakness is the lack of information regarding some of the most iconic

commanders and characters, but it's perfectly understandable "space constraints. With fine internal photographs and reproductions, including the only known contemporary picture of Jeanne d'Arc where the illustrator Angus McBride based his color plate, this book provides a solid base to further your studies regarding this conflict that shaped Europe and influenced foreign politics of many countries. Angus McBride is the artist who produced the competently illustrated color plates; although the figures and equipment are, as usual, very well portrayed (and with references regarding the source material that inspired the images) it is obvious that the master artist had severe and tight time schedules...most backgrounds are barely sketched. They include: Cavalry 1337-1360; Infantry 1337-1360 (including a crossbowman, a sergeant and a Northern France Militiaman); Cavalry 1360-1415 (including representations of famous knights like Boucicault, Guichard Dauphin and Bertrand du Guesclin); Infantry 1360-1415 (including a crossbowman, a militiaman and a light infantryman from Southern France); Naval Warfare 1337-1415 (Jean de Bethencourt donning his armour; a Basque sailor and a Castilian naval captain); Cavalry 1415-1453 (Jeanne D'Arc in civilian clothing; a Breton man-at-arms and a French Knight); Infantry 1415-1453 (a Franc-archer, an insurgent and a Flemish mercenary); Artillery 1430-1453 (including a gunner with ribaudequin, his assistant and a handgunner). This sequential structure is excellent to better visualize the evolution of both cavalry and infantry in each phase of the hundred years war.

This book is a great overview of the period covered; however I think it was a bit over-industrious to squeeze so much into one book (the normal Men-At-Arms size, that is). I think keeping it to the early period (up to Poitiers or Najera) and a separate one for the Agincourt/Joan of Arc period would've been better. McBride, master illustrator that he is, kind of disappointed me with his renditions of both du Guesclin and the Maid. Joan was shown in a dress! It still has good illustrations of the armor of the average man at arms and "lowly" infantry types, though.

This lavishly illustrated and meticulously researched Osprey Men-At-Arms book is a concise, yet informative study of the composition and tactics of French armies of the Hundred Years War. My only complaint is that the author has not gone to the same extent as Nicholas Michael (Armies of Medieval Burgundy, 1364-1477) in covering the compagnies d'ordonnances. Aside from this fault, this book is a great introduction to a subject that has long been neglected by Osprey publishing.

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