

## John Carew

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No Picture Available

Born: Buckinghamshire, England

Married: Lucy Willoughby

Died: 1346

Parents: John Carew & Margaret Mohun

John Carew is reported to have died at the siege of Calais, France

The **Siege of Calais** began in 1346, towards the beginning of what would later be called the [Hundred Years' War](#). [Edward III of England](#), who was at the time claiming kingship over France as well, defeated the French navy at [Sluys](#) in 1340, then went on to make raids throughout [Normandy](#), culminating at the [Battle of Crécy](#) in 1346. By this point, the English army could no longer continue without renewed supplies, reinforcements, and aid from [Flanders](#), so they withdrew north. The English ships had already left the shores of [Normandy](#) for England, and so Edward needed to seize a defensible outpost where his army could regroup, and be resupplied.

Calais suited his purposes perfectly. It was highly defensible, with a double moat and city walls built a hundred years earlier. The citadel in the northwest corner of the city had its own moat, and further fortifications. In addition, the city lay on the [English Channel](#), meaning that once it was taken, it could be resupplied and defended easily by sea. Of course, as attractive as it was for Edward III, as a highly defensible position, this also made it quite difficult to seize.

## The siege

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In September of 1346, Edward's men approached the city, and immediately began making preparations for a drawn-out siege. The city walls and moats would not be easily breached or crossed. The siege attracted aid from both England and Flanders, and while King Philip ([Philip VI of Valois](#)) of France failed to interfere with the English supply lines or their army, Edward likewise failed to interfere with the supplying of the population of Calais by [Genoese](#) sailors loyal to France. For over two months little was accomplished by the English army; essentially a stalemate had been reached.

In November, the English were supplied with cannon, [catapults](#), and long ladders, but attempts to breach or scale the walls continued to fail. By February, Edward had given up on attacking the city, and decided to simply starve them out. One more French supply convoy succeeded in supplying the citizens, but the English navy repelled all further supply attempts. Still, King Philip's armies did nothing to end the siege. In the spring, both English and French armies enjoyed reinforcements, but Philip still could not hope to defeat the attackers; the marshland surrounding the city also defended its attackers.

By June, the supply of food and fresh water within the city was nearly nil. A month later, after another convoy was stymied by the English fleet, 500 children and elderly were expelled from the city, so that the remaining healthy, adult men and women might survive. The English refused to allow these exiles to approach them, and so they starved to death just outside the walls.

On 1 August, the city lit fires signalling they were ready to surrender. Philip destroyed the encampment where his army had been planning to attack the English, so that it would not fall into enemy hands. Edward was persuaded by his advisors to allow the remaining citizenry to live, so, after providing them with some provisions, he allowed them to leave the city.