Despite the war raging across the channel in France, life mostly continued as normal for those who called London home. Though the city saw no combat, it was still an essential theater of the war due to the fact that it provided the money, men, and supplies that kept the war effort afloat. It is essential to understand the roles played by guilds, knights and other soldiers, women, and noncombatants, as well as the various aspects of military industry. It is also worth noting how the Black Death affected various aspects of the war, as well as the role of propaganda. All in all, the city had the benefit of profiting from the war through various means, while continuing to pursue life as normal.

I. Guilds

During the Hundred Years War, life continued on in London. As such, so too did the evolution of the structures of the medieval economy, as the ongoing creation of articles and ordinances concerning over 30 different guilds witnesses. Guilds provided an organizational system for the city, as well as a standardized system of quality control, through apprenticeship, for its goods and services.

Guilds were commonly used by the city to organize itself, and this held true in times of war, just as it did in France. We find evidence of this during the preparations in 1370 for a feared attack by the French on the city. During these preparations, the mayor and Aldermen mandated

watches organized by guild, as found in H.T. Riley's *Memorials of London and London Life*: "On Tuesday, — the Drapers and the Tailors. On Wednesday, — the Mercers and the Apothecaries. On Thursday,—the Fishmongers and the Butchers…"[1] Guilds therefore played an integral role in the protection of the city.

Guilds are a direct predecessor to modern-day unions; they provided the city with quality control. In general, most of the guilds required something along the lines of "…that no man of the trade shall take an apprentice, unless he be free of the city; and if he be free, that he shall take no one for less than seven years."[2] The at-minimum seven-year process indicated that the guild intended that a person would be highly trained before being allowed to create and sell product or become a master-level member of the guild. Only the very best could become a heaumer, barber, or fletcher, to name a few with military relevance, which meant that the city was getting high quality products. This also meant that the weapons, armor, food, etc. being sent across the English Channel were the best possible quality. The guild principle of power in numbers worked as well in financing the war effort. James Sherborne's study shows the men of London coming together in syndicates so as to be able to pool their resources and make the heavy loans needed by the crown.

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[1] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries,* (London: 1868), 341-347; available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life.

[2] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries,* (London: 1868), 216-220; available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life.

II. Knights

Besides actual campaigning, the knights of England played a significant role in business concerning the home front. In general, historians view the founding of the Order of the Garter as an attempt by Edward III to breathe life back into the chivalric ideology of the time. According to Hugh Collins,

> …the order of the Garter was conceived by its founder as a celebration the deeds of arms of English knighthood… the order set a benchmark for knightly eminence that was to remain throughout the medieval period. With its élite fellowship of twenty-six knights, comprising the most distinguished soldiers and peers in the realm, the brethren of the fraternity stood at the apex of the English chivalric hierarchy.[3]

The Order is said to have been founded by Edward III because of the embarrassment of a lady at a dance. She dropped her garter, and as everyone laughed, the king "…tied it around his own leg, declaring "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" and promising to found an order of knighthood in honor of the garter that would become so famous that all those now laughing would want to join it."[4]

The Order served the king in battle as well as in tournaments. According to Richard Barber, the Battle of Crécy likely had significant influence over the choice of the founding members of the Order; "Of the twenty-six members, eighteen were definitely at the battle of

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[3] Hugh E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England,* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

[4] Stephanie Trigg, *Shame and Honor: A Vulgar History of the Order of the Garter,* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 5.

Crécy; five may have been there; and three were fighting elsewhere in France."[5] It is equally as likely that many of the members were also a part of Edward's tournament teams. Ultimately, the Order of the Garter "linked the aristocratic community together in common cause against France."[6] It also created a common ground of tactical maneuvers and habits that aided the successful execution of later battles like Poitiers.

David Green joins a chorus of other historians in arguing that, while chivalry was not dead, actual knighthood was becoming less common. The costs associated with being a knight, mainly equipment, horses, and tax-abilities, were burdensome to even moderately propertied elites, and many did not want to pay the higher financial duties associated with the rank. Additionally, becoming a knight meant that a man had more money, and therefore more resources to offer the King should he need manpower or money in an upcoming battle. Green notes:

As the nature of the military aristocracy changed in this period, nobility and knighthood, once almost synonymous, became disentangled from one another. Both faced financial threats in the post-plague economic world, and also military threats from commoners on foot or wielding long-range weapons. In England the aristocracy became increasingly stratified, leading to the development of a sub-knightly aristocracy, or gentry, who adopted the ranks of esquire and gentleman. One could be chivalrous, one could bear arms (militarily and heraldically), yet not be a knight.[7]

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[5] Richard Barber, "The Military Role of the Order of the Garter," *Journal of Medieval Military History,* Volume VII (2009), 3; available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt81s0k.3.

[6] David Green, *The Hundred Years War: A People's History,* (Yale University Press, 2014), 36.

[7] Ibid., 40.

Some might still want to be chivalrous, but this cross between a knight and the lower orders was an excellent way to advance their circumstances and leverage.

III. Women

The Black Death increased the need for women workers because of the sudden dearth of warm bodies. Although the Statute of Laborers kept workers from taking higher wages than those offered before the Black Death, "women's wages doubled after the Black Death,"[8] which could have ushered in a "Golden Age" for women. According to Sandy Bardsley's article, women may have experienced an increase in wages in the period following the Black Death because of the lack of skilled workers. This may have "…temporarily afforded them greater social and political autonomy. They had the resources to travel around the countryside, to relocate to towns, to delay marriage, or, in some cases, not to marry at all."[9] Unfortunately, despite the logic, there is not very much solid evidence for this "Golden Age," and it thus remains a debate. There is, according to Bardsley, not a lot of evidence to support that women were clearly making more money than male counterparts, as the Golden Age debate suggests, but Bardsley writes that the simple fact that they were working more than before is notable.

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[8] Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England," *Past & Present*, no. 165 (1999), 5; available from http://www.jstor.org/stable/651283.

[9] Ibid., 4.

David Green also comes to the conclusion that women found employment "in a new range of businesses, as smiths, tanners, carpenters, brewers and tilers. Some of these professions were directly connected with the war effort."[10] It is important to understand that many of the new jobs women were taking on directly affected the war. In addition to becoming more important to the war effort, one can say, as Green does, that women and women's rights were a direct cause of the war. Green writes that "the Hundred Years war was fought, ostensibly, over the question of female rights, and whether women could bequeath power and authority to their children."[11] Of course, this references the fact that Isabella, Edward III's mother, was the sister of the late king of France, which gave Edward III his claim to the French throne. Women were excluded from succession rights in France because of the conveniently reintroduced Salic Law. This suppression of female worth at the higher levels of society during the period is ironic when the positive rebounds women of lower socio-economic classes felt.

IV. Military Industry

In Memorials of London and London Life, mention is made in 1338 of a "Royal mandate for fortifying the city against an unexpected attack."[12] This feared attack became real in October of 1338, but in Southampton, "when a French galley fleet descended upon the port, causing the

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[10] David Green, *The Hundred Years War: A People's History,* (Yale University Press, 2014), 179.

[11] Ibid., 180.

[12] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries,* (London: 1868), 202-204; available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life.

citizens to flee to the surrounding country."[13] This was one of the few times during the Hundred Years War that the French attacked the English coast. This is one of the only ways that English noncombatants felt the same kind of terror French noncombatants regularly felt as war ripped through their country. In 1370, preparations were made for an expected attack on London that did not come.

In 1339, an inventory of the munitions of war provided by the city was taken, finding many springalds, cords, bows, powder, pellets, and gonnes.[14] The latter may reference early hand cannons, which were a precursor to later artillery development. 1340 saw negotiations with the king concerning a loan from the city of London. The King requested 20000 marks, and when the Mayor and Aldermen offered only 5000, the King refused it and forced the city to reassess. It was ultimately decided by the city that 5000 would be enough, most likely because it was all that could be raised, which the King accepted.[15] The king promised to repay this particular loan "through a subsidy from the county of Kent."[16]

When discussing munitions, it is important to mention the Tower of London in its role as a weapons depot. While most men were expected to arrive at muster points with their own

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[13] C.T. Allmand, "The War and the Noncombatant," *The Hundred Years War*, ed. Kenneth Fowler. (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1971), chap. 7, 170

[14] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries,* (London: 1868), 204-208; available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life.

[15] Ibid., 204-208.

[16] Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon, *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus, Part 1,* (BRILL, 2005), 254.

weaponry and means of protection, it is clear that the city also supplied and stored military gear, which Gary Baker notes in his article "On the Socio-Economic Origins of English Archers." The reasoning for providing the weapons and armor could be so that "…there was a greater scope for the less affluent members of the gentry to serve due to the fact that they did not have to provide their own equipment."[17] We saw this as likely true from the declining number of knights due to cost. Allmand notes that the Tower not only provided bows and arrows and armor, because "… other essentials had to be maintained: tents for soldiers; saddlery; crossbows and bolts; shields; heavy siege engines; all had to be provided."[18]

Documentary record gives another view of the military supply chain in August 1418. Henry V renewed his campaign in Normandy, and sent a letter to the Mayor and Aldermen, "requesting supplies of provisions for the army besieging Rouen." Tellingly, the letter requests as much alcohol as possible. The king was firm about the need for ale and beer, likely to placate his restless soldiers besieging the city. The letter states that Rouen is a city whose importance is second only to Paris, and thus as many small ships as quickly as possible, preferably full of drink, should be sent to assist the army there.[19]

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[17] Gary Baker, "Investigating the Socio-Economic Origins of English Archers in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval Military History,* Volume XII, (2014), 201.

[18] C.T. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War C. 1300-c.1450,* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 99.

[19] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries,* (London: 1868), 660-669; available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life.

V. Noncombatants

Peasants, merchants, and townspeople were without a doubt some of the most vital characters in the Hundred Years War, despite how little of their lives we actually see in the documents. They provided the money and supplies that made it possible to fight, including food, weapons, and ships, as well as themselves: the cheap manpower. As far as money was concerned, "…it was through royal taxes that Londoners made their principal monetary contribution to the war effort."[20] Additional taxes on those who owned a particular amount of wealth were imposed, as well as military taxes and other contributions made by the city. As noted before, there were also occasions that the king would take loans from particularly wealthy individuals living in the city. Noncombatants also provided moral support in the form of nationalism, without which the war could certainly not have lasted as long as it did. The taxes that noncombatants paid:

> led not only to a theoretical involvement in the war: men began to expect, and on occasions to demand, a say in the way national affairs were run. Money voted on in parliament became public money, and the king and those who held office under him were expected to see that it was not misused, as the events of the Good Parliament of 1376 serve to remind us.[21]

It is thus essential to discuss noncombatants, especially when discussing London as a home front.

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[20] Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon, *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus, Part 1,* (BRILL, 2005), 254.

[21] C.T. Allmand, "The War and the Noncombatant," *The Hundred Years War*, ed. Kenneth Fowler. (London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1971), chap. 7, 164

One of the only times peasants rose up against the fact that they were being taxed nearly to death was the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. It had several major causes, the first being that despite the lessened manpower due to the huge death tolls of the Black Death, the same amount of work and production was expected of agricultural laborers being worked to death by feudal lords in a system peasants no longer felt was right. The other was economic: constant taxation to support the war with France was bleeding peasant purses, especially once "the new poll tax [was] set at I shilling."[22] According to Kim Milone, "throughout April and May, sullen resentment grew into open protest which exploded into large uprisings."[23] The rebellion was rather quickly cut off, and life actually grew worse for the peasants for a time. However, "the revolt made men more aware of their market value as laborers, and the importance of community… Previously unarticulated ideas about medieval man's rights and his desire for freedom and fairness were articulated during the revolt." [24]

The use of propaganda by the king to keep wartime morale up during the war was quite common. The king regularly sent letters back to London to announce victories, which likely encouraged non-combatants to contribute to the war effort because they felt more confident in their king and his armies. One such instance occurred after the siege of Harfleur, which resulted

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[22] Kim Milone, "The English Peasants Revolt of 1381," *The Student Historical Journal 1986-1987*, vol. 18 (1987), 3; available from http://www.loyno.edu/~history/journal/1986-7/documents/TheEnglishPeasantsRevoltof1381.pdf.

[23] Ibid., 4.

[24] Ibid., 8.

in the English army taking the city. The king sent home a flowery letter thanking God and the citizens:

We do greet you oftentimes, in signifying unto you, for your consolation, that we are in very good health as to our person, thanks be to God who grants unto us the same, and that, after our arrival on this side, we came before our town of Harefleu on Saturday, the 17th day of August last past, and laid siege thereto, in manner as we have written heretofore in our other letters sent to you. And by the good diligence of our faithful lieges at this time in our company, and the strength and position of our cannon, and other our ordnance, the people who were within the town made great urgency to have divers parleys with us[25]

It was also common for the king to play his propaganda game by praising the mayor for his excellent preparations of the city during expected invasions, or for carrying out day-to-day tasks, such as Edward III's commendation of "…Andrew Aubrey, the mayor, for his prompt execution of two offenders, in Chepe."[26]

An argument can be made in regards to processions as a form of propaganda as well. Processions were fairly common occurrences in London; they were called for by the mayor for celebrations to thank God for a victory, or to beg him for one. L.J. Andrew Villalon and Donald J. Kagay explain processions as:

…public displays it [the city] held for Edward III, such as the one that followed the English victory if Halidon Hill in 1333. During this event, clergy and citizens of the city walked throughout London with relics removed from St. Pauls Cathedral. In 1357, a more elaborate celebration was held following the Black Prince's victory at Poitiers. The city busily decorated

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[25] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries,* (London: 1868), 601-624; available from http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life.

[26] Ibid., 208-211.

its streets and buildings with flags, pennons, and other displays…During this three hour procession the Black Prince was showered with gold and silver leaves.[27]

VI. Conclusion

Using the work of historians who have extensively studied various aspects of the Hundred Years War, we can understand how London acted as a home front as war was waged to the south in France. As noted by Villalon and Kagay, "…the size and wealth of the city of London made it the most important contributor during the Hundred Years War."[28] This is due to the thousands of soldiers mustered, ships sent (or appropriated) for naval service, the money lent by citizens, and construction of defenses.

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[27] Donald J. Kagay and L.J. Andrew Villalon, *The Hundred Years War: A Wider Focus, Part 1,* (BRILL, 2005), 257.

[28] Ibid., 257.