

The Battle of Hastings happened on 14 October 1066 between the Norman–French army of William, the Duke of Normandy, and an English army under the Anglo–Saxon King Harold Godwinson, beginning the Norman conquest of England. It took place approximately 7 miles (11 kilometres) northwest of Hastings, close to the present-day town of Battle, East Sussex, and was a decisive Norman victory. The background to the battle was the death of the childless King Edward the Confessor in January 1066, which set up a succession struggle between several claimants to his throne. Hardrada and Tostig defeated a hastily gathered army of Englishmen at the Battle of Fulford on 20 September 1066, and were in turn defeated by Harold at the Battle of Stamford Bridge five days later. The composition of the forces is clearer; the English army was composed almost entirely of infantry and had few archers, whereas only about half of the invading force was infantry, the rest split equally between cavalry and archers. Harold was crowned king shortly after Edward's death, but faced invasions by William, his own brother Tostig, and the Norwegian King Harald Hardrada (Harold III of Norway). While Harold and his forces were recovering, William landed his invasion forces in the south of England at Pevensey on 28 September 1066 and established a beachhead for his conquest of the kingdom.