

ANSWERS

Who was he?

Alfred the Great was the son of Aethelwulf, King of Wessex, in England in the 800s.



How did he become king?

Because Alfred had four older brothers, it was unlikely that he would ever become king himself. But when his father died in 858, three of his brothers became king and then died. Alfred's last brother, Aethelred, became king in 865.

King Aethelred named Alfred his second in command, and Alfred defeated the Vikings at the Battle of Ashdown. But the Vikings continued to attack, and in one of these battles, Aethelred was killed. Alfred was crowned king.

Key Events/Role

Alfred continued to fight the Vikings until he believed that Wessex had achieved a sort of peace with them.

Then in 878, the Danish King Guthrum attacked again. Alfred was one of the few who survived. He planned a counterattack. He soon had an army again as the men of Wessex, tired to the endless attacks, wanted to defeat the Vikings for good. Alfred's army won its next battle with the Vikings, and Alfred was able to reclaim his fort at Chippenham. As part of their terms of surrender, Alfred required that the Vikings convert to Christianity. The Kingdom of Wessex and the Vikings signed a peace treaty that gave the Vikings land on the eastern side of Britain that became known as Danelaw. As the king of a now peaceful kingdom, Alfred rebuilt schools and monasteries. Built forts around the country, created a navy, and established a national code of law. Alfred's grandson Aethelstan would become the first King of England.