

# Clan ARMSTRONG

<b>ARMS</b>	Argent, three pallets Azure
<b>CREST</b>	An arm from the shoulder, armed Proper
<b>MOTTO</b>	Invictus Maneo (I remain unvanquished)



The legends and traditions of this powerful Borders family hold that the first of the name was Siward Beorn ('sword warrior'), also known as Siward Digry ('sword strong arm'), who was the last Anglo-Danish Earl of Northumberland and a nephew of King Canute, the Danish king of England. The family is said to have been related by marriage both to Duncan, King of Scots and William the conqueror, Duke of Normandy and King of England. The name was common over the whole of Northumberia and the Borders, and the Armstrongs became a powerful and warlike border clan in Liddisdale and the debatable border land. Black lists Adam Armstrong as being pardoned at Carlisle in 1235 for causing the death of another man and Gilbert Armstrong, steward of the household of David II, as ambassador to England in 1363. The Armstrongs continued to expand their influence into the valleys of the Esk and Ewes and in about 1425 John, brother of Armstrong of Mangerton, in Liddisdale, built a strong tower. The Armstrongs were said to be able to raise three thousand horsemen and at one point were in virtual control of the debatable land. In 1528 the English warden of the marshes, Lord Dacre, attacked and raised the Armstrong tower but the Armstrong response was to burn Netherby. The Armstrongs' power was seen as a threat by James V to his own authority and according to tradition, the king tricked John of Bilnockie to a meeting near Hawick, where the king hanged the laird. The historian Pitscottie attributes to Armstrong the brave retort that 'King Harry would down weigh my best horse with gold to know I were condemned to die this day'. King James was to rue his treatment of the Armstrongs when they failed to support him at the Battle of Solway Moss in 1542. The union of the Crowns in 1603 brought an official end to the Anglo-Scottish border wars and the last of the Armstrong lairds was hanged in Edinburgh in 1610 for leading a reviving raid on Penrith. A ruthless campaign followed as the Crown attempted to pacify the Borders. The families were scattered and many sought new homes in Ulster, particularly in Fermanagh. Armstrong is now among the fifty most common Ulster surnames. There have been many distinguished Armstrongs, including Sir Alexander Armstrong, the Artic explorer and, in keeping with the Armstrong spirit of adventure, the most far-traveled must be Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon. There has been no trace of the Armstrong chiefs since the dispersal of the clan in the seventeenth century, but a powerful and active clan association is in existence and the Clan Armstrong Trust was established in 1978.

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