

THE NAVY IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

Submitted by Michael James Lea-O'Mahoney, to the University of Exeter, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in September 2011.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned chiefly with the military role of sea power during the English Civil War. Parliament's seizure of the Royal Navy in 1642 is examined in detail, with a discussion of the factors which led to the King's loss of the fleet and the consequences thereafter. It is concluded that Charles I was outmanoeuvred politically, whilst Parliament's choice to command the fleet, the Earl of Warwick, far surpassed him in popularity with the common seamen. The thesis then considers the advantages which control of the Navy provided for Parliament throughout the war, determining that the fleet's protection of London, its ability to supply besieged outposts and its logistical support to Parliamentary land forces was instrumental in preventing a Royalist victory. Furthermore, it is concluded that Warwick's astute leadership went some way towards offsetting Parliament's sporadic neglect of the Navy.

The thesis demonstrates, however, that Parliament failed to establish the unchallenged command of the seas around the British Isles. This was because of the Royalists' widespread privateering operations, aided in large part by the King's capture of key ports in 1643, such as Dartmouth and Bristol. The Navy was able to block many, but not all, of the King's arms shipments from abroad, thus permitting Charles to supply his armies in England. Close attention is paid to the Royalist shipping which landed reinforcements from Ireland in 1643-44.

The King's defeat in the First Civil War is then discussed, with the New Model Army, and greater resources, cited as the key factors behind Parliament's victory, with recognition that the Navy provided essential support. Finally, the revolt of the fleet in 1648 is examined. It is concluded that the increasing radicalism of Parliament alienated a substantial section of the Navy, but that the Royalists failed to capitalise on their new-found maritime strength.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Bodleian Library:	Bodl.
British Library:	BL
Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series:	<i>CSPD</i>
Calendar of State Papers, Venice	<i>CSPV</i>
Journals of the House of Commons:	<i>CJ</i>
Cornwall Record Office:	CRO
Devon Record Office:	DRO
Historical Manuscripts Commission	<i>HMC</i>
Journals of the House of Lords:	<i>LJ</i>
National Archives:	NA
North Devon Record Office:	NDRO
Thomason Tract Collection:	TT

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to two members of my family who I miss deeply: to my Grandma, Evelyn Lea, and to my Uncle Terence, *in memoriam*.

THE NAVY IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR: INTRODUCTION

In 1642 the escalating quarrels between Charles I and his Parliament erupted into a full-scale conflagration, the King's raising of the royal standard at Nottingham on 22 August merely formalising what had already begun: the English Civil War. One of the key factors behind Charles' eventual loss in the conflict was his failure to command the allegiance of the Navy at the outbreak of hostilities. Having devoted considerable efforts to raising an impressive fleet during his Personal Rule of the 1630s, Charles was dismayed when the service pledged its support to Parliament in 1642. The King had been confident of the sailors' loyalty before the moment of reckoning, but was left outraged when the naval leadership defied his commands. Outmanoeuvred politically, Charles lost the chance to control the seas when a bungled attempt to dismiss Robert Rich, 2nd Earl of Warwick, Parliament's choice to command the fleet, forced a struggle for mastery which his own nominee, the aged Sir John Pennington, was unable to win.

Thereafter, the King was at a considerable disadvantage: what ships remained loyal to him were few in number and presented little threat to the now Parliamentary Navy. Clarendon's famous remark on Charles' failure to hold the fleet remains the starting point for any historical study of the topic: 'this loss of the whole navy was of unspeakable ill consequence to the king's affairs'.¹

Contemporary documents testify to the Navy's important contribution to the Civil War. Frequent references to shipping appear in the journals of Parliament, in State Papers, and in a plethora of other primary material. Surprisingly, though, many of the general works on the period pay scant attention to the Navy, but this study sets out to examine the importance of power at sea to the course of the war. The only significant published study of the subject is Robert Powell's *The Navy in the English Civil War*, written in 1962.² With numerous alterations in historiography since then, a fresh look at the topic is worth undertaking.

This thesis provides a link between two important works of maritime history: Andrew Thrush's study of the Navy during the Personal Rule of Charles I and Bernard Capp's extensive survey of the fleet during the Interregnum.³ Thrush's investigation traced in detail the expansion of the Caroline fleet during the 1630s and concluded on the eve of the Civil War. This piece of work, then, assesses the next period of English

¹ E. Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England To Which is Added an Historical View of the Affairs of Ireland* (6 vols., Oxford, 1827), II, p.955

² J. R. Powell, *The Navy in the English Civil War* (London, 1962)

³ A. Thrush, 'The Navy under Charles I' (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of London, 1991); B. Capp, *Cromwell's Navy: The Fleet and the English Revolution, 1648-1660* (Oxford, 1989)

naval history: Parliament's employment of the fleet *against* Charles I and the King's efforts to confront that challenge. It considers how Parliament attempted, not always with success, to respond to some of the problems which Thrush detected in Charles' Navy, such as recruitment and finance. The study concludes at the end of 1648, with the King defeated in war for a second time and with England poised to become a republic. The fleet of the Interregnum (1649-1660) continued to battle the House of Stuart, but, whereas the events of the 1640s centred on a largely domestic war in which Parliament was ultimately victorious, in the 1650s the fleet undertook operations much further afield. War against foreign powers, in fact, took on more importance for the fleet than the threat from the Stuarts. The Navy grew in size significantly and was essential to the security of the republican regimes which governed England after the abolition of the monarchy. The Navy in the Interregnum is covered at great length by Capp and this thesis therefore helps to place his survey of that period in greater context. Thus, Thrush analysed the growth of England's Navy under Charles I in peacetime, this thesis discusses how seapower was disputed by both parties during the Civil Wars, and Capp related how the Parliamentarian Navy which emerged at the close of the 1640s was developed into a powerful instrument of Cromwellian foreign policy in the 1650s, quite different in character and purpose from the fleet which it had grown out of.

This thesis will consider the maritime activities of both the Parliamentarians and the Royalists. In particular, the King's various attempts to challenge Parliament's grip on naval supremacy merit discussion, having been ignored by most historians of the period. This piece of work therefore seeks to address a gap in Civil War historiography. Callwell remarked that historians are inclined to consider the art of maritime war solely from the point of view of the strongest party and I seek to move beyond such a one-sided approach.⁴ The primary focus of this study is the impact of the Navy on England. This approach has been chosen because the maritime histories of Wales, Scotland and Ireland in the 1640s merit their own full-length studies. Therefore, events in the peripheries of the British Isles are discussed when they had an impact on England or are especially relevant in relation to the fleet.

Some distinguished historians have overlooked the Navy's impact in the Civil War, with the late John Kenyon describing Parliament's control of the navy as 'more ornamental than useful'.⁵ John Morrill is another who stressed that it is easy to overrate

⁴ C. E. Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance: Their Relations and Interdependence* (London, 1905), p.52

⁵ J. P. Kenyon, *Stuart England* (London, 1978), pp.147-148

the contribution made by the Navy to Parliament's victory in the war.⁶ He argued that if a single factor for Parliament's triumph had to be chosen, it was its control of London and the capital's economic strength.⁷ He perhaps underestimated the importance of the Navy in this case, for, had Parliament not controlled the substantial majority of the fleet in 1642, the war may very well have ended several months before the battle of Edgehill.

IF THE KING HAD HELD THE FLEET

Had the King held the fleet, he would have been at liberty to blockade the Thames, thus crippling the commerce of London and potentially winning the war before it had begun. By placing his warships in the great river, he could have halted the city's trade from abroad: food and fuel shortages would have become endemic. Hungry mobs on the streets of the capital would surely have protested so loudly that the Parliamentary leadership would have been forced to reach an embarrassing accommodation with the sovereign. The consequences of such an accommodation for the leading figures in Parliament would have been bleak. Losing the Navy, however, meant that Charles could only hope to conquer his capital by land, thus limiting his opportunities for victory in the war. Without taking charge of London, Charles could not defeat Parliament. Control of the Navy thus allowed Parliament to define, to a large extent, the shape of the war. It is important, however, to remember Corbett's judgement on the overall impact of naval power in any conflict: 'it scarcely needs saying that it is almost impossible that a war can be decided by naval action alone'.⁸ So Parliament, despite the great advantage of a strong fleet, could not expect to triumph in the Civil Wars without also possessing well-organised, well-supplied land forces.

Clarendon rightly described London as 'the metropolis of England'.⁹ Such a view was endorsed by the majority of his contemporaries, regardless of the faction to which they belonged.¹⁰ By seizing the Navy, and thus safeguarding its control of the capital, Parliament could reap the rewards from the highly valuable customs revenues which flooded into one of Europe's most important trading ports and, as a result, had the opportunity to draw on London's considerable wealth as a means of funding its war effort. Thus, Morrill's recognition of London's undoubted importance should not be accompanied by an under-estimation of the Navy's role in safeguarding Parliamentary

⁶ J. Morrill, 'Introduction', in J. Morrill (ed), *Reactions to the English Civil War, 1642-1649* (Basingstoke, 1982), p.18

⁷ Morrill, 'Introduction', p.19

⁸ J. S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (London, 1911), p.15

⁹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.577

¹⁰ S. Porter, 'Introduction' in S. Porter (ed), *London and the Civil War* (Basingstoke, 1996), p.1

dominance of the capital. Customs revenues came from the levy of tonnage and poundage, a long-standing tax on wine and other customs taxes which, before the reign of Charles I, had by convention been granted for life to the monarch upon his or her accession.¹¹ The King had collected the taxes without Parliament's sanction during his Personal Rule of 1629-40, acting unconstitutionally, but Parliament would replicate his actions and claim them during the Civil War on its own authority, thus also acting against the constitutional norm.

Parliament's hold on London was not only an economic boon, but also a strategic one. The capital was a pivotal centre of distribution: numerous cargoes would sail up the Thames, before being sent to their final destination over land. This was important for military as well as economic reasons. For instance, in the most intense years of the war, numerous arms bound for Reading, the storage depot for the New Model Army, would first make their way up the Thames.¹² It has been acknowledged widely that, in the early modern era, transport was far more efficient by sea than by land, with Colomb arguing that transport by land could not compete on anything like an equal playing field.¹³

One of the great advantages of the Navy, in comparison with the Army, was that it was a regular standing force and sailors were used to serving at considerable distance from home.¹⁴ The Army, at the start of the war, consisted of various locally raised forces, generally led by a local magnate raising men from his estates or relying on the trained bands. The men raised were usually raw recruits. The Navy was much more professional and, as such, could carry out its functions more effectively under one overall command. Not until Fairfax was appointed to head the New Model Army in 1645 did Parliament have a national, unified land force. By seizing the Navy, Parliament thus had charge of the most professional sector of England's armed forces. Woolrych argued that, due to the Navy's 'close-knit' and professional nature, it had greater freedom in choosing which side to support at the outbreak of war, in contrast to the county militias.¹⁵ The two Houses recognised the crucial role to be played by the Navy, as demonstrated in their instructions of mid-1642 to Robert Devereaux, 3rd Earl of Essex, the Parliamentarian Lord General: 'the safest and surest defence of this

¹¹ M. Bennett, *The English Civil War: A Historical Companion* (Stroud, 2004), p.228

¹² P. Edwards, 'Logistics and Supply' in J. P. Kenyon and J. Ohlmeyer (eds), *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), p.258

¹³ P. H. Colomb, *Naval Warfare: Its Ruling Principles and Practice Historically Treated* (3rd edn., 2 vols., Maryland, 1990), II, p.254

¹⁴ Powell, *The Navy in the English Civil War*, p.xiv

¹⁵ A. Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution* (Oxford, 2002), p.225

Kingdome is our Navie, and...we can never be hurt by Land by a forraigne Enemy, unlesse we are first beaten at sea'.¹⁶

Callwell's expression, 'maritime preponderance', is the best means of explaining Parliament's overall position at sea during the Civil Wars.¹⁷ Parliament naturally sought to acquire what is often referred to as the 'command of the sea', or at least to deny it to the Royalists, a key objective of naval warfare.¹⁸ As Callwell pointed out, however, 'command of the sea' has always been a phrase which is open to dispute and is somewhat limited in applicable meaning to many episodes of naval history.¹⁹ This is because maritime command is a 'question of degree', being 'rarely absolute in favour of either belligerent'.²⁰ Callwell advanced the point further, by highlighting that even a fleet vastly superior to that of the enemy would struggle to establish 'absolute' maritime command, except by being ubiquitous. Such ubiquity would be almost impossible to achieve, as it would require the stronger fleet to maintain a series of blockades on hostile coasts so complete that not even the smallest of enemy detachments could slip through the net.²¹ Parliament, for example, never possessed naval resources sufficient to monitor each and every Royalist region of strength, but nor was it ever likely to, given the constraints of seventeenth century technology. Colomb highlighted the issue of bad weather as a constant in naval warfare during the age of sail: when conditions became so intolerable at sea that the blockading fleet was driven back to base, the enemy had an opportunity to take a risk and put out to sea in the hope of mounting a challenge for maritime control, if only for a short time.²² The ships of the seventeenth century, when compared even to those of the later eighteenth century, were more liable to damage from poor weather.²³

With dominant sea power, a party can enter the theatre of war in one area, whilst containing the enemy in another.²⁴ The support which Parliament's fleet could provide to its land forces was highly advantageous. For example, the fleet prevented key Parliamentarian outposts from falling to Royalist armies, with the defence of Hull in 1643 (discussed in chapter three) a good example. The siege of a coastal fortress has

¹⁶ BL, TT, E.121 [30] *A letter sent from both Houses of Parliament, to his Excellence, the Earle of Essex, Lord generall of the army for the King and Parliament* (London, 1642)

¹⁷ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.1

¹⁸ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.91

¹⁹ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.2

²⁰ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.234

²¹ C. E. Callwell, *The Effect of Maritime Command on Land Campaigns since Waterloo* (London, 1897), pp.4-5

²² Colomb, *Naval Warfare*, I, p.26

²³ Colomb, *Naval Warfare*, I, p.100

²⁴ Callwell, *The Effect of Maritime Command*, p.17

always been an endeavour made far more difficult if the garrison can call upon the support of an active fleet.²⁵ Callwell identified that an investment can never be complete so long as the garrison can continue to receive supplies by sea, with the besiegers also having to face the prospect that at some stage a relieving force could be landed to challenge their own position.²⁶

A further advantage of ‘maritime preponderance’ was the fleet’s ability to provide a place of refuge if troops needed a sudden retreat.²⁷ That option, though, was dependent on the shipping having adequate supplies, with calm and predictable weather providing suitable conditions in which to operate. When either of those requirements was found wanting, then forces ashore could be left isolated, as happened during Essex’s campaign in the Southwest in 1644 (considered in chapter six).

In terms of how to deploy military force during the Civil Wars, Parliament had far greater opportunities to benefit from what Thomas More Molyneux described as ‘conjunct expeditions’, or what would now be termed combined or amphibious operations.²⁸ Callwell emphasised the ‘intimate connection’ between a strong position at sea and the control of the shore.²⁹ Further to that, Corbett appreciated that a strong naval power could succeed in warfare by exploiting the enemy’s fear of what the fleet could enable the army to do.³⁰ Discussing the same circumstances, Molyneux referred to the enemy’s ‘Continual Apprehension’.³¹ Naval and military forces combined, in fact, could benefit from a strength and level of mobility beyond the individual intrinsic value of each contingent.³² A commander of forces on land, if supported by effective sea power, had greater liberty of action.³³

Molyneux recognised that, when combined effectively, land and naval forces could ‘carry with them the most formidable Power’.³⁴ He stressed vividly the advantages of such deployments in warfare, when well organised: ‘The Conjunct Armament goes against the Enemy, like an Arrow from a Bow. It gives no warning where it is to come, and leaves no traces where it has passed’.³⁵ The enemy would be uncertain as to where forces might be landed, thus distracting them and slowing down

²⁵ Callwell, *The Effect of Maritime Command*, p.151

²⁶ Callwell, *The Effect of Maritime Command*, p.151

²⁷ T. M. Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions: Or Expeditions That have been carried on jointly by the Fleet and Army, with a Commentary on a Littoral War* (London, 1759), Part II, p.164

²⁸ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part I, p.vi

²⁹ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.443

³⁰ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.16

³¹ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, p.27

³² Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.63

³³ Callwell, *The Effect of Maritime Command*, p.9

³⁴ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part I, p.3

³⁵ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, p.21

their decision making.³⁶ When performed effectively, combined operations could gift the attacking force the crucial element of surprise.³⁷ Even as such operations reached their final moments, the defenders might still be unable to determine whether or not they were under genuine attack or being subjected to a feint.³⁸ Parliament capitalised on such tactics, most memorably at the siege of Lyme in 1644, an episode which is addressed in chapter four.

Molyneux warned of the shortcomings which sometimes afflicted ‘conjunct expeditions’, citing the recurring problem of the joint commanders failing to work well together and thereby letting their disagreements scupper the whole enterprise.³⁹ He observed that ‘the strength of a Body consists in a close uniting of all its Members’.⁴⁰ Relations between Parliamentary naval and military commanders tended to be good, although, as in any prolonged war, there were episodes of discord.

Another demonstration of the fleet’s strategic importance to Parliament’s war effort was its role in preventing the King reclaiming his authority via a foreign army landing on English soil. The Parliamentary Navy constituted a formidable threat and, at a time when most of Europe was involved with the intractable Thirty Years’ War, continental rulers had their own domestic problems to contend with.

In 1642, bereft of any tangible presence at sea, Charles appeared much weakened in the eyes of the foreign powers to whom he looked for aid and assistance, his losing the fleet having ‘made his condition much the less considered by his allies, and neighbour princes; who saw the sovereignty of the sea now in other hands’.⁴¹ The Royalists were compelled to seek help from abroad partly due to Parliament’s control of the kingdom’s key weapons stores, including the Ordnance Office’s magazines at the Tower, Woolwich and Greenwich. It should be noted, however, that many county magazines were often chronically short of supplies, the Tower itself suffering scarcities in 1642.⁴²

The growing domestic tensions faced by the King further diminished England’s stature, something summed up succinctly by Algernon Percy, 10th Earl of Northumberland: ‘all nations think us in that desperate condition at home that they

³⁶ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, p.21

³⁷ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, p.26

³⁸ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.302

³⁹ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, p.39

⁴⁰ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, p.41

⁴¹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.955

⁴² Edwards, ‘Logistics and Supply’, p.239

neither desire nor consider our freindship'.⁴³ Had foreign powers, however, invested serious time and effort in helping Charles recover his kingdom, then the Navy would have faced a stiff challenge.⁴⁴ The lack of confidence in Charles from those in power on the Continent, though, meant that Parliament did not face that threat.

It is useful at this point to turn once more to Corbett. He explained the important distinction between conquering territory on land and winning a dominant position at sea. The sea cannot be conquered, but the party possessing the greater naval strength can deny to the enemy the crucial 'right of passage'.⁴⁵ The sea is a means of communication and, by blocking the enemy's passage at sea, the stronger power can exert direct military pressure against the enemy ashore.⁴⁶ One of the primary aims of naval warfare, then, is the control of communications. Parliament's 'maritime preponderance' thus gifted it this advantage and, throughout the war, the Navy seriously impeded arms convoys bound for the King's armies on land, whilst limiting significantly the Royalists' opportunities to deploy troops by ship. The fleet thereby helped to restrict the amount of force that Parliamentary armies had to face.⁴⁷ Taking the theme of communications in warfare a little further, Parliament was better able to practice 'littoral war', whereby the fleet keeps open the communications upon which an army ashore so often depends.⁴⁸ The control of maritime communications also brings with it greater scope to exert secondary economic pressure upon the enemy, via 'commerce prevention': that is, attacks upon enemy trade.⁴⁹ Parliament's most striking means of damaging Royalist trade came via the fleet's ability to blockade the King's ports. The restriction of the enemy's activities at sea can be compared to the occupation of territory on land: freedom of manoeuvre is denied and activity stifled.⁵⁰

During the Civil War, though, sufficient supplies slipped through the Parliamentary net at sea to enable Royalist armies to fight. The pattern was established, however: Charles would have to rely primarily on luck and mistakes from his opponents if he were to receive these precious cargoes. Nevertheless, as subsequent chapters will show, the King did at times exploit sea power to his advantage.

⁴³ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C85/16; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 4 June 1640

⁴⁴ N. A. M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, 660-1649* (London, 1997), p.415

⁴⁵ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.93

⁴⁶ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, pp.93-94

⁴⁷ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.72

⁴⁸ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part II, pp.48-49

⁴⁹ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.102

⁵⁰ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.185

Charles, denied the Royal Navy, had no option but to reach agreements with privateers in order to mount a Royalist presence at sea during the war. The hiring of privateers reflected some wider trends of warfare in the seventeenth century. David Parrott referred to ‘the age of the military contractor’.⁵¹ Princes often turned to military entrepreneurs to raise armies on their behalf. So too, fleets were augmented by ships supplied by entrepreneurial contractors. Parrott discussed the advantages of the contract system and stressed that European rulers extended their military capability by devolving the responsibilities of raising and paying an army.⁵² We can apply Parrott’s model to sea power during the English Civil War: the King was provided with a presence at sea by contracting with privateers, whilst Parliament extended its fleet by doing the same.

Callwell’s argument that even relatively minor levels of shipping are ‘not incapable of mischief’ applies pertinently to an analysis of Royalist sea power in the Civil Wars.⁵³ As Callwell elucidated, during a period of war, the weaker maritime force can still dispute the so-called ‘command of the sea’, but only within restricted limits and usually confined to a local level for a short stretch of time.⁵⁴ Sporadic challenges to the ‘maritime preponderance’ of the enemy are possible, but are unlikely to threaten the overall issue of the war itself.⁵⁵ For example, that scenario applied to temporary Royalist maritime strength in the Irish Sea during 1643, a period which is discussed in chapter three. The distribution of the Parliamentary fleet, by necessity, had to take into account a variety of combinations of enemy sea power.⁵⁶ Warwick had to prioritise the deployment of naval resources to where he believed they would prove most effective. It was not always possible, given the financial constraints, to respond to each and every threat immediately. Returning to the theme of privateers, an armed merchant ship could be put to sea with reasonable haste and, whilst such shipping was unlikely to overturn the ‘maritime preponderance’ of the stronger power, it could nevertheless deprive that stronger power of the ‘undisputed command of the sea’.⁵⁷ The weaker party could still mount successful attacks on the enemy’s commerce as and when its ships managed to evade the stronger fleet.⁵⁸ During the Civil War, Royalist privateers engaged in such attacks against Parliamentary trade.

⁵¹ D. Parrott, ‘Cultures of Combat in the Ancien Régime: Linear Warfare, Noble Values, and Entrepreneurship’, *The International History Review*, 27, No.3 (September 2005), p.526

⁵² Parrott, ‘Cultures of Combat’, p.527

⁵³ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.2

⁵⁴ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.2

⁵⁵ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.105

⁵⁶ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.133

⁵⁷ Callwell, *Military Operations and Maritime Preponderance*, p.3

⁵⁸ Colomb, *Naval Warfare*, II, p.373

THE CAROLINE NAVY

It is prudent at this point to discuss the Navy which Parliament inherited in 1642. During the 1630s, Charles I had overseen the growth of the Royal Navy into a regular service and, whilst small in comparison with the fleets of some Continental powers, it nevertheless enabled England to maintain a presence in the Channel and to hold something of a balance of power in nearby waters.⁵⁹ Charles invested much energy into English maritime expansion and took a keen personal interest in all matters relating to the sea. Like his predecessors, he was adamant that the sovereignty of the seas around Britain was his by right, with John Selden's *Mare Clausum*, written during his father's reign, published and promoted as the strongest justification for such a viewpoint.⁶⁰ The presence of an active and visible fleet was designed to assert English pretensions to naval sovereignty.

Upon taking office as Lord High Admiral in 1618, George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, was presented with advice and observations on the fleet. One phrase bears repeating: as an island nation, the Navy formed England's 'wooden walls' and needed to be kept in good order.⁶¹ Yet under Buckingham's leadership, the fleet had withered. Part of the reason for Charles' drive to strengthen the Navy was its unfortunate legacy of failure in the opening years of his reign. Disastrous amphibious operations during the 1620s in wars against Spain and France had ended in ignominy. Following Buckingham's assassination in 1628, the King devoted more time to the Navy.⁶² In Molyneux's view, Charles 'exerted himself to the utmost'.⁶³

One of the factors behind the King's strengthening of the fleet was his recognition of the long-standing threat posed by Barbary pirates and Dunkirk privateers to the trade routes and coasts of England. Charles hoped that a more powerful Navy would be capable of confronting the piracy challenge head-on. The numerous petitions and letters from maritime communities during the Personal Rule, especially from the Southwest counties, testified to the overwhelming sense that more serious measures needed to be taken to deal with the problem. A petition sent to the King in 1636 from

⁵⁹ A short overview of the Caroline Navy can be found in B. Quintrell, 'Charles I and his Navy in the 1630s', *The Seventeenth Century*, 3, No. 2 (Autumn 1988)

⁶⁰ K. Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven, 1992), p.102

⁶¹ BL, Stowe MSS. 426, f.2r; 'Observations and Overtures for a Seafight upon our owne Coasts, and what kynd of order and disciplyne is fitted to bee used in Martialling and directing our Navies to best advantage, against the preparations of such Spanish Armadas or others as shall at anie tyme come to assayle and invade us', 1 March 1618

⁶² Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', p.34

⁶³ Molyneux, *Conjunct Expeditions*, Part I, p.46

‘the Merchants a[nd] owners of Shippes’ based in Southwest ports, such as Exeter, Plymouth and Dartmouth, pleaded for decisive action to be taken against those pirates who inflicted ‘utter ruin’ upon English shipping.⁶⁴ The damage committed was considerable:

the Pyrates of Sally [the pirate territory of Sallee on the coast of Morocco] in Barbary are of late come...soe numerous powerfull a[nd] bold in their attempts that they infest the coasts of yo[u]r Ma[ies]t[ies]s Domynions a[nd] doe almost dayly take yo[u]r Ma[ies]t[ie]s subjects a[nd] goods and doe carry away great numbers of them into miserable captivity...⁶⁵

English merchants were easily attackable because of ‘the nimblenesse of their [the pirates’] shippes in saylinge’.⁶⁶ Privateer vessels were invariably small, but heavily armed and manned: such ships were well-suited for surprise attacks on merchant shipping, their nimbleness also making them difficult for traditional, but more cumbersome, warships to catch. The petition did not call explicitly for the King to build similar vessels to compete with the pirate marauders, but, by mentioning their ‘nimblenesse’, the problem was brought to his attention: he preferred instead to oversee the construction of large warships, which were more suited to traditional naval warfare than to intercepting swift frigate-style vessels.⁶⁷

There were some successes in dealing with piracy, however, as the 1637 expedition to Sallee demonstrated. In Rodger’s words, this was ‘the only effective measure against Barbary raids undertaken in Charles’ reign’.⁶⁸ In part, it was down to the expedition being well-balanced, with two state ships, a pair of merchant vessels and two pinnaces which combined good speed with a shallow draught, thus making them more effective for inshore operations. Large and unwieldy warships were not the weapons such a mission called for. Under Captain William Rainsborough, a blockade of five months was undertaken against Sallee, the result being its submission and the release of 340 English prisoners. This did little to improve the King’s reputation as a defender of the merchant community, though, as Algerine pirates still made their presence felt in English and Irish waters.⁶⁹

The prevalence of the corsairs had a bad impact on maritime recruitment:

⁶⁴ Dorset Record Office, 2693 E; Petition of the Southwest Merchants to Charles I, 1636

⁶⁵ Dorset Record Office, 2693 E; Petition of the Southwest Merchants to Charles I, 1636

⁶⁶ Dorset Record Office, 2693 E; Petition of the Southwest Merchants to Charles I, 1636

⁶⁷ Frigates are discussed in G. Robinson, ‘The Seventeenth Century Frigate’, *Mariner’s Mirror*, 15 (1929)

⁶⁸ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.385

⁶⁹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.385; see also N. Matar, ‘The Barbary Corsairs, King Charles I and the Civil War’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 16, No. 2 (Autumn 2001)

the seamen will not be pleaded to goe to sea, sayinge that they had rather to suffer the worst of miseries att home then be taken a[nd] made slaves by the Turkes by meanes whereof what miseries are like to ensue without speedy redresse be[ing] applied...⁷⁰

This enslavement of ‘a great number of able seamen’ needed to be reversed and one can speculate that, as these incidents were reported and became common knowledge in coastal communities, potential recruits might have entertained second thoughts about serving at sea. The losses to piracy under the early Stuarts were considerable: between 1616 and 1642, somewhere in the region of 350 to 400 English ships were seized, along with 6500 to 7000 men taken prisoner, of whom half came from the Southwest.⁷¹

Contemporary commentators recognised the value of a strong Navy and were fulsome in praise, as the following discourse, from 1638, testified:

If either the honor of a Nation, Commerce or trade with all Nations, Peace at home grounded upon our Enemies, feare or love of us abroad, and attended with plenty of all things necessarie, either for the preservation of the publique weale, or thy private welfare, be things worthy thy esteeme...then next to God and the King give thy thanks to the Navy, as the principall Instrument whereby God works these good things to thee.⁷²

The early-modern era was one in which European rulers were eager to display their power and *puissance*. Charles I believed that one of the best means of asserting himself on the European stage was to send out royal fleets to enforce the salute from foreign shipping: that is to say, upon sighting an English vessel, a foreign ship would be compelled to acknowledge English sovereignty with a salute or else face the consequences, at least in theory.⁷³ The grand ships which took to the seas may not have been as effective as Charles I hoped in combating piracy and affronts to English sovereignty, but their sheer size certainly would have earned him prestige from his fellow rulers on the Continent. The mighty *Sovereign of the Seas*, launched in 1637, was a three-decker with more than a hundred guns.⁷⁴ She was the manifestation of Charles’ power at sea and sent out a message of authority, glory and princely honour. The fact that she was too cumbersome to deal with light frigates (she did not actually see service until the First Anglo-Dutch war of 1652-4) did not detract, in Charles’ eyes, from her

⁷⁰ Dorset Record Office, 2693 E; Petition of the Southwest Merchants to Charles I, 1636

⁷¹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.384

⁷² BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.4v; ‘A Discovres of the Navy of England’, 1638

⁷³ A discussion concerning salutes in the Stuart era can be found in S. Bull, ‘*The Furie of the Ordnance*’: *Artillery in the English Civil Wars* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp.34-37

⁷⁴ R. Anderson and R. C. Anderson, *A Short History of the Sailing Ship* (New York, 2003), p.144

usefulness in projecting regal ambition.⁷⁵ In some respects, the *Sovereign of the Seas* anticipated the larger ships of the next century and a half, being only one third smaller than the *Victory*, Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar (1805). Yet with less than half the sail of a vessel from Nelson's era, she was far more unwieldy to manoeuvre.⁷⁶

The costs associated with navies had risen considerably since the sixteenth century, with larger and more powerful ships being introduced. In particular, the size and quantity of artillery carried by ships had increased, with costs escalating as a consequence.⁷⁷ The ships of the Caroline Navy, which Parliament inherited for the Civil War, varied in size and were classified in six categories.⁷⁸ The largest vessels, the so-called First Rates, were over a hundred feet in length, with the Second Rates not far behind at up to a hundred. The Fifth and Sixth Rates were the smallest ships, with lengths of around sixty feet. The larger ships were capable of holding large pieces of artillery, but the smaller rates had advantages of speed and nimbleness. During the Civil War, Parliament chose to leave the First Rates in port, due to their high cost and ineffectiveness at combating privateers. Warwick and his associates changed the emphasis of the Navy, by using smaller ships which were more suitable for the protection of trade and for coastal defence.⁷⁹ Responding to the circumstances of a domestic war, then, Parliament moved the Navy away from the Caroline naval model of sending large ships to sea to uphold English foreign policy.

To pay for naval expansion, the King introduced the so-called Ship Money levy.⁸⁰ It had traditionally been a charge levied upon coastal towns to pay for and equip shipping in times of necessity. Charles decided to extend the toll nationwide and to collect it annually, thus bringing in new rate payers and making it a permanent charge on his subjects. It was an attempt to address some of the kingdom's underlying fiscal weaknesses, such as the narrow nature of a declining tax base, the relative weakness of local assessments and the way in which royal revenues were managed.⁸¹ Ship Money sought to stress the 'mutual duty of defence' and to try and link it with a sense of

⁷⁵ Having been renamed the *Sovereign*, Charles' great ship made her debut in sea combat at the Battle of the Kentish Knock as part of the Commonwealth Navy in September 1652. See N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2004), p.14

⁷⁶ G. Parker, 'Ships of the Line, 1500-1650' in G. Parker (ed), *The Cambridge History of Warfare* (Cambridge, 2005), p.125

⁷⁷ For a full discussion of the developments in naval artillery see N. A. M. Rodger, 'The Development of Broadside Gunnery, 1450-1650', *Mariner's Mirror*, 82 (1996), pp.301-324

⁷⁸ Powell, *Navy*, pp.8-9

⁷⁹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.421

⁸⁰ A. Thrush, 'Naval Finance and the Origins and Development of Ship Money' in M. C. Fissel (ed), *War and Government in Britain, 1598-1650* (Manchester, 1991)

⁸¹ A. McKay Gill, 'Ship Money during the Personal Rule of Charles I: Politics, Ideology and the Law, 1634-1640' (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1990), p.587

‘national community’ and ‘common purpose’.⁸² It raised substantial sums of money, the vast majority of which was ploughed into the Navy. Sound finance has always been central to the Navy, as ‘ships alone do not make a fighting fleet’.⁸³

Ship Money was highly controversial, however, as critics saw it as an unconstitutional tax because it had not been sanctioned by Parliament, the King governing without the Lords and Commons during the 1630s. It has been described by one historian as ‘the child’ of non-Parliamentary government.⁸⁴ Yet, as Kishlansky highlighted, Charles faced considerable fiscal difficulties, in large part due to the high debts incurred in the wars of the 1620s. The ‘outmoded obligation of the king to live of his own in times of peace’ placed great pressure upon royal finances and forced Charles to seek new and innovative measures of raising money.⁸⁵ Ordinary royal revenues alone were insufficient to support an increase in English naval strength. Sharpe drew attention to the paucity of ‘mutual understanding’ between early modern governments and ‘ordinary householders’ over issues such as the defence of the realm.⁸⁶ Many people were ignorant of the dangers facing the country and had no insight into the actual costs associated with war or defence. Similarly, governments sometimes failed to grasp the consequences of war demands for ‘ordinary householders’.⁸⁷ Those factors are worth bearing in mind when considering the constraints and pressures which Charles I faced in his attempts to fund naval expansion.

Protests and court challenges were launched against Ship Money by high-profile opponents such as John Hampden, but until the Bishops’ Wars with Scotland (1639-40) brought about a deterioration in the King’s authority, Ship Money was a remarkably successful initiative which was paid largely in full by each county. Sharpe argued that it was possibly the most successful ‘extraordinary tax’ in early modern England, contrasting its relatively swift collection with the long delays which often accompanied traditional subsidies.⁸⁸ He even suggested that the efficient collection of Ship Money ‘caused some historians surprise and discomfort’.⁸⁹ Underdown, though, sounded a note

⁸² McKay Gill, ‘Ship Money’, p.587

⁸³ Callwell, *The Effect of Maritime Command*, p.218

⁸⁴ McKay Gill, ‘Ship Money’, p.589

⁸⁵ M. Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain, 1603-1714* (London, 1996), pp.119-121

⁸⁶ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.36

⁸⁷ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.36

⁸⁸ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.558

⁸⁹ K. Sharpe, ‘Crown, Parliament and Locality: Government and Communication in Early Stuart England’, *English Historical Review*, 101, No. 399 (April 1986), p.345

of caution and offered an alternative analysis to that of Sharpe by questioning whether the sums collected were worth the political cost.⁹⁰

What was apparent, though, was that Charles was able to send out regular fleets into the English Channel because of Ship Money. In terms of strength, they surpassed the fleets of Elizabeth, with Northumberland commanding some thirty ships for the 1636 Summer Guard, only three of which were merchant vessels.⁹¹ In the Civil War, though, Parliament's Summer Guards often comprised over fifty state ships and merchantmen.⁹² The demands of war called for such an increase in fleet strength.

Foreign powers could not ignore the Ship Money fleets and Sir Kenelm Digby's much-quoted letter to Sir John Coke summed up the King's naval objectives in the 1630s: Charles could occupy an important position in European affairs

if he keeps a fleet at sea and his navy in that reputation it now is in; for I assure your honour that is very great. And although my Lord of Lindsey [commander of the fleet in 1635] do no more than sail up and down, yet the very setting of our best fleet out to sea is the greatest service that I believe hath been done the king these many years.⁹³

Charles hoped that a strong Navy would provide added weight to English diplomacy in matters relating to the Thirty Years' War. The Stuarts had a dynastic interest in the Rhine Palatinate through the King's sister, Elizabeth Stuart, and her previous marriage to the late, displaced Elector for that territory. She was in exile in The Hague and there was widespread support within England for her son's elevation to Elector Palatine, with the subsequent restoration of his father's lands. In the 1630s, Charles perhaps wished to achieve more by his reputation than had been accomplished by English arms in the 1620s.⁹⁴

Supporters of the King regarded the Ship Money fleets as a great success and could be prone to hyperbole when discussing Charles' naval record. One over-celebratory account paid tribute to the King:

when his abused patience began to be slighted, as that his power on the Seas, and his right to the Seas began thereby to be questioned, hath not only by his late expeditions...quelled Forraigne Insolencies, regained our almoste lost power & honor, silenced homebred Malecontents, but also settled his Kingdoms

⁹⁰ D. Underdown, 'Review: The Personal Rule of Charles I by Kevin Sharpe', *The Journal of Modern History*, 68, No. 1 (March 1996), p.172

⁹¹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.382

⁹² I. Friel, *Maritime History of Britain and Ireland, c.400-2001* (London, 2003), p.125

⁹³ Coke MSS. 51; Sir Kenelm Digby to Sir John Coke, 29 September 1635, quoted in Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.104

⁹⁴ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.519

in Peace, Commerce and Plenty, the Common Attendants of so wise and honorable a Governm[en]t.⁹⁵

The triumphalism went even further, with the English Navy described as a ‘wheeles (if truly turned) that sets to worke all Christendome by its motion’.⁹⁶ One treatise from 1618 captured the early-Stuart tendency to exaggerate England’s power at sea: the account spoke glowingly of how an attack by a modern-day Caesar would fail, as he would find the kingdom ‘being in the powerfull termes that now it is, a Morsell too grosse for him to swallow and more hard to digest’.⁹⁷ The King was prone to such thinking and perhaps over-estimated the maritime capabilities of the nation. Had such judgements on the fleet’s strength been true then Charles would have had minimal cause for concern.

Charles was able to earn useful subsidies by convoying Spanish ships to Flanders, thus exploiting England’s neutrality for profit, much to the annoyance of such powers as the United Provinces. A pacific foreign policy, then, opened up opportunities to profit from the neutral carrying trade.⁹⁸ Spanish silver was taken to England, two-thirds of it being minted there and the final third being sent to Dunkirk with English protection.⁹⁹ An increased trade in other commodities was a side effect of that arrangement, due in part to customs duties set at favourable rates for goods re-exported on the route from Spain to Flanders.¹⁰⁰ In Western Europe, the majority of English carrying for foreigners went through the English Channel or involved goods from foreign ships being transferred to English ships in the Downs: these circumstances provided opportunities for England to gain revenue.¹⁰¹ By such means, the King had held some importance in Europe, the Navy’s presence in small part offsetting his treasury’s inability to support any land forces in a continental adventure.

There was, however, over-confidence in the Ship Money fleets, with some believing that the command of the seas now rested with England. There was a misguided belief that foreign powers would refrain from forceful actions in English waters: ‘when both parties are under the tuition of any of his Ma[ies]ties Castles, or

⁹⁵ BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.4v; ‘A Discoveres of the Navy of England’, 1638

⁹⁶ BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.5r; ‘A Discoveres of the Navy of England’, 1638

⁹⁷ BL, Stowe MSS. 426, f.18r; ‘Observations and Overtures for a Seafight’

⁹⁸ J. S. Kepler, ‘Fiscal Aspects of the English Carrying Trade during the Thirty Years’ War’, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 25, No.2 (May, 1972), p.261

⁹⁹ M. B. Young, *Servility and Service: The Life and Work of Sir John Coke* (London, 1986), p.251

¹⁰⁰ Young, *Sir John Coke*, p.251

¹⁰¹ Kepler, ‘Fiscal Aspects’, p.262

Shipp, neither partie dare disturbe the quiet of each other, till they both be out of the protection'.¹⁰²

Such an analysis was shown to be false. The long-standing enmity between Spain and the United Provinces manifested itself in a bloody naval engagement in September 1639 which did much to embarrass Charles I.¹⁰³ The Spaniards had sent out a fleet carrying some ten thousand soldiers who were bound for the Low Countries to wage war on the Dutch. As the Spanish ships sailed up the English Channel, they were attacked by a Dutch fleet under the command of Admiral Tromp.¹⁰⁴ The Battle of the Downs, as it was thereafter called, saw the Spanish come off worse, having expended all their powder. Admiral Oquendo, their commander, directed his fleet into the Downs to seek shelter, but his ships were then blockaded by the Dutch.

For Charles I, the whole episode was awkward. He was allied tacitly to the Spanish, but it was apparent that any attempt to intervene on their behalf against the Dutch would be extremely risky. It was clear to Sir John Pennington, the commander of England's fleet, that his men were unwilling to aid their Spanish counterparts and were far more supportive of the Dutch as fellow Protestants.¹⁰⁵ In effect, Pennington was powerless to influence events: Tromp was able to attack and destroy the majority of Oquendo's fleet in full view of the English Navy in its home waters. A noticeable fog and a contrary wind provided an excuse for Pennington's having not intervened.¹⁰⁶ The idea of Charles I enjoying the unchallenged sovereignty of the seas rang very hollow, though.

Some accounts of the battle claimed that English sailors cheered on their Dutch counterparts, something alluded to in a letter from William Hawkins to the Earl of Leicester: 'the Dutch say they have had good helps from England'.¹⁰⁷ Certainly, England's position of declared neutrality, at a time when she was in fact aiding Spain, was coming under pressure. The Earl of Northumberland was concerned:

The Spaniards, as I heare, are pressing the King to a declaration, as well as the French and Hollanders. Certainly that neutralitie we now hold can not continu without givinge offence to some. My feares are that we shall so handle the matter, as we shall be so full of troubles att home and loose the freindship of those that may be usefull to us abroad.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.5r; 'A Discovres of the Navy of England', 1638

¹⁰³ Powell, *Navy*, p.5

¹⁰⁴ For an overview of Tromp's naval career see C. R. Boxer, 'M. H. Tromp, 1598-1653', *Mariner's Mirror*, 40 (1954)

¹⁰⁵ Powell, *Navy*, p.5

¹⁰⁶ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.126

¹⁰⁷ *HMC Sydney Papers*, p.195; William Hawkins to Earl of Leicester, 10 October 1639

¹⁰⁸ *HMC Sydney Papers*, p.220; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 23 January 1640

The default viewpoint for many Englishmen in the seventeenth century was that Spain was the great enemy. As a Catholic power and with the Armada of 1588 still gripping the imagination, Spain's reputation in England was especially poor. Strong criticisms and slurs against the Spaniards occupied various newsheets and publications at that time. Despite Charles' willingness to align with the Spanish during the 1630s, Protestant tracts still resonated with anti-Spaniard hostility and the King attracted criticism that he was overly-friendly with one of England's natural enemies. In defence of his policy, the King could point out that Spain was one of the most zealous defenders against Christendom's major enemy, the Ottoman Turk.¹⁰⁹

A fiercely Protestant tract, which detailed the state of England's coastal defences in 1642, presented the 1639 Spanish naval campaign as a grave threat. It enunciated the viewpoint that English sea defences were in a state of poor repair and that were Spain to attack, England could suffer ruin:

The said severall Castles, Bulwarks, and Places of Defence, were all, or most of them, without any strength formidable before the face of so strong and mightie a Fleet [ie. the Spanish fleet], or any Power resistable...¹¹⁰

Tromp's routing of the Spanish fleet was something of a humiliation for Charles' policies of the 1630s, but was celebrated by the Protestant author:

Had we not been then by the Holland Navie defended...England doubtlesse in the said yeer 1639 had miserably felt the savage crueltie of Spaines great Treacherie...¹¹¹

The suggestion appeared to be that the King was wrong in his policy and that the natural state of play was that Spain was still England's enemy. The underlying theme can perhaps be summed up as wishful thinking on the part of the author, but such opinions were nevertheless shared by a great many Englishmen in that period.

The routing of the Spanish fleet did, however, present commercial opportunities for England, as Northumberland outlined to Leicester:

The Spaniards haveing lost divers of their ships, are now put to seeke abroade for helpe from others to secure the comeing home of their plate fleetes[.] [T]hey have beene treateing here with some of our marchants to hyer 20 of their ships of 400 tunns apeece and upwards to goe into the West Indies, for wch they offer

¹⁰⁹ BL, Stowe MSS. 426, f.20r; 'Observations and Overtures for a Seafight'

¹¹⁰ BL, TT, E.137 [20] *Englands safety in navie and fortifications; the common interest both of King and people* (London, 1642)

¹¹¹ BL, TT, E.137 [20] *Englands safety in navie and fortifications; the common interest both of King and people*

them greate fraights[.] [I]t would be a very beneficiall imployment for our shiping, but will give so much distaste to the French and Dutch as I doubt whether they will ever suffer it.¹¹²

Northumberland was highlighting the hostility which England could expect from rival maritime powers if her merchants were seen to profit from an arrangement with the Spaniards. English maritime strength had been exposed as lacking during the Battle of the Downs, the failure to preserve neutrality in English waters showing weakness.

The Navy under Charles I has sometimes attracted scorn from historians, with suggestions that the service had declined from its so-called Elizabethan ‘glory years’. Andrews pointed out, however, that professional standards had improved in the years following her reign, with the growth of long-distance trading having had a positive impact on English seamanship.¹¹³ It is too simplistic to label the Elizabethan era as one of naval excellence, whilst castigating the Caroline Navy. That falls into the trap which many contemporaries fell into: looking back and propagating a semi-mythological ‘golden age’, magnifying successes and ignoring failures.¹¹⁴ The late-Queen ‘of famous memorie, immortalized her name, by her many great Victories’.¹¹⁵

Englishmen in early Stuart England believed that the Elizabethan naval wars had yielded substantial private profits, at minimal cost to the state: it was God’s will for Spain’s shipping to be attacked and for her wealth to be transferred to England.¹¹⁶ Andrews referred to a ‘misleading tradition of Elizabethan glory’.¹¹⁷ The 1620s campaigns were undoubtedly disastrous, but, in the 1630s, Charles was instigating measures to improve the Navy and create a much more professional, and more importantly, a regular service.

Andrew Thrush argued that blind criticisms of Charles’ Navy are unjustified and instead points to a mixture of positive and negative factors: ‘the notion that the administration was irredeemably corrupt and inefficient is highly questionable’.¹¹⁸ He reasoned that the ‘quality of Caroline naval administration may not have been universally good, but nor was it uniformly bad’.¹¹⁹ Thrush challenged the easy manner in which some historians had endorsed the ‘contemporary complaint literature’ against

¹¹² Centre for Kentish Studies, De L’Isle MSS. U1475/C85/4; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 12 December 1639

¹¹³ K. R. Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics: Seafaring and Naval Enterprise in the Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1991), p.2

¹¹⁴ N. A. M. Rodger, ‘Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power in English History’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 14 (2004)

¹¹⁵ BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.4v; ‘A Discoveres of the Navy of England’, 1638

¹¹⁶ Rodger, *Command*, pp.48-49

¹¹⁷ Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, p.4

¹¹⁸ Thrush, ‘Navy under Charles I’, pp.364-365

¹¹⁹ Thrush, ‘Navy under Charles I’, p.365

the Navy, with the fleet perhaps attracting an unfairly critical reputation. He disagreed with Oppenheim's willingness to take almost all contemporary complaints at face value and drew attention to the Navy's 'fair share of grumblers'.¹²⁰ For example, some officers were guilty of exaggerating failings in naval administration, either out of malice towards people they deemed to be their opponents, or on account of misunderstanding. Thrush singled out Sir John Pennington as a serial complainant who sometimes missed the mark, much to the irritation of other senior officers.¹²¹

Naval administrators tended to do a better job than they are given credit for, Thrush reasoned, but they were often hamstrung by the fleet's financial shortfalls. Ship Money provided a welcome boost to the fleet's coffers, but was spent predominantly on setting out naval guards abroad, with capital investment continuing to lag behind. Charles' insistence on diverting precious resources towards the funding of his flagship, *Sovereign of the Seas*, deprived other areas of finance and at the outbreak of Civil War up to a third of his fleet was 'badly in need of replacement'.¹²² Thrush's overriding judgement on Charles' fleet was that, rather than being engulfed by widespread administrative failures, 'it experienced the sort of shortcomings and lapses from which no human institution is ever immune'.¹²³ From low beginnings, though, the Caroline Navy was certainly improved during the Personal Rule. Chapter five of this thesis demonstrates that Parliament's stewardship of the fleet also suffered from many of the same problems, highlighted by Thrush, which occurred in the Personal Rule.

The positives of Charles I's contribution to English naval history have perhaps been ignored on account of his numerous failures and weaknesses as a monarch. The recent recognition that the Royalists have often been marginalised in accounts of the Civil War may also help to explain this.¹²⁴ It must be pointed out, though, that the King's triumphs during the Civil War have received recognition from historians, with Woolrych, for example, describing the Battle of Lostwithiel (1644) as his crowning success and acknowledging his personal involvement: 'from the start of the campaign to the finish it was essentially his own'.¹²⁵ Thus, Charles' reputation as a military leader is not always seen as being universally bad.

¹²⁰ Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', p.366

¹²¹ Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', pp.366-367

¹²² Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', p.368

¹²³ Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', p.369

¹²⁴ D. Scott, 'Rethinking Royalist Politics, 1642-1649' in J. Adamson (ed), *The English Civil War, Conflict and Contexts, 1640-49* (Basingstoke, 2009), p.36

¹²⁵ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.290

Kishlansky was highly critical of the negative historiographical consensus which prevails on Charles I and traced its development in a notable article for *Past and Present*.¹²⁶ He cautioned against the blind acceptance of such a consensus, warning that it could stifle critical judgement, or result in any instances which do not fit the standard paradigm being disregarded or underestimated.¹²⁷ Kishlansky launched a spirited defence of many aspects of Charles' reign, in a challenge to the traditional orthodoxy. For example, he gave Charles credit for ending the wars against France and Spain in the 1620s, citing the decision as an example of sound political compromise.¹²⁸ In the light of England's weak position at that stage, such an analysis appears sensible.

Echoing Sharpe's judgement that Charles was often right to adhere to his convictions, regardless of any political repercussions, Kishlansky argued controversially that the King was principled, rather than duplicitous.¹²⁹ That was at odds with the evidence presented by Michael Young, who detailed Charles' repeated breaches of trust in the 1620s and, in particular, his 'cavalier attitude' towards promises.¹³⁰ Perhaps Kishlansky's most striking attempt to reinterpret the historiography of the period was his statement that Charles I, renowned for his extended Personal Rule, wished to be 'the prince of parliaments'.¹³¹ Whilst some of Kishlansky's key arguments are unconvincing, then, his warning to look beyond the consensus on Charles I resonates with this thesis in relation to the King's influence on the Navy.

Andrew Lambert made the convincing argument that no matter how widespread a king's shortcomings might be, it is important to 'disentangle' any successes he might have achieved so that they can be understood on their own terms, without being obscured by pre-existing criticisms. Lambert applied that thinking to a survey of the naval career of Charles' nephew, James, Duke of York. Whilst he is widely acknowledged to have been a failure as King James II, his earlier exploits with the English fleet were largely successful.¹³²

Such an approach can be applied to a study of Charles I: whilst his reign cannot be considered a success, in terms of English maritime history his role was far from entirely negative. Sharpe, for example, looked beyond the calamities of the Civil Wars

¹²⁶ M. Kishlansky, 'Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', *Past and Present*, 189 (November 2005), pp.41-80

¹²⁷ Kishlansky, 'Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', p.47

¹²⁸ Kishlansky, 'Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', p.54

¹²⁹ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.954; Kishlansky, 'Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', p.49

¹³⁰ M. B. Young, 'Charles I and the Erosion of Trust', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 22, No. 2 (Summer 1990), pp.217-235

¹³¹ Kishlansky, 'Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', p.54

¹³² A. Lambert, *Admirals: The Naval Commanders Who Made Britain Great* (London, 2008), pp.81-118

when considering Charles' impact: under the King, a 'programme of shipbuilding was instigated which was to lay the foundations of the fleets with which Blake won his victories during the Commonwealth and Protectorate'.¹³³ He also reinforced the point that the Ship Money fleets, despite not pursuing any major engagements, must not be discounted by historians.¹³⁴ Further acknowledgement of Charles' impact came from Colomb, who argued that the 'superior classes' of ships built on his orders 'had a most material effect on the course of the Dutch wars', with the Dutch admirals bemoaning the inferiority of their shipping in comparison to that at the disposal of the English.¹³⁵

Till reasoned that naval planning has always taken into consideration the size and perceived capabilities of the navies of potential future enemies.¹³⁶ All naval planners have faced uncertainty when questioning who their likely adversaries might be at any given point in time.¹³⁷ In the 1630s, Charles recognised that the situation in Europe, from a maritime perspective, posed threats for the future. For example, the maritime strength of the Dutch was a key factor behind their ascendancy in worldwide trade, whilst Richelieu was overseeing the expansion of the French Navy. Unless England's Navy underwent an expansion of its own, then either the Dutch or the French fleets threatened to predominate in the Channel, thereby posing a risk to English security.¹³⁸ Sharpe, in fact, argued that Charles showed significant foresight in seeing the growing threat posed by France.¹³⁹ Charles' impact, then, is perhaps measured best on a more long-term basis: he began the process of English naval expansion and identified genuine future threats to English security, with Parliament taking over that project in the 1640s and beyond.

The failure of the Caroline Navy to tackle piracy, however, was regarded as its key failing by opponents during the 1630s.¹⁴⁰ As Colomb identified, though, 'the forces proper for gaining command of the sea might be quite useless for protecting commerce'.¹⁴¹ Even during peacetime, the funds were not available to pay for a fleet which could deal effectively with piracy *and* the growing threat from foreign, state

¹³³ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.598

¹³⁴ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.598

¹³⁵ Colomb, *Naval Warfare*, I, p.56

¹³⁶ G. Till, 'Maritime Strategy and the Twenty First Century', in G. Till (ed), *Seapower: Theory and Practice* (Ilford, 1994), p.184

¹³⁷ Till, 'Maritime Strategy and the Twenty First Century', p.184

¹³⁸ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.89

¹³⁹ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.96

¹⁴⁰ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.393

¹⁴¹ Colomb, *Naval Warfare*, II, p.300

navies.¹⁴² Charles gave greater emphasis to the latter challenge, thus dividing him from advocates of the former priority. Therein lay the fragility of Charles' Navy.

THE RECALL OF PARLIAMENT

Charles' pretensions to being a major power in Europe were rendered unrealistic by the growing domestic difficulties which he faced in the late 1630s. Having attempted to impose a new prayer book upon Scotland, more in keeping with his High Church Anglican sensibilities, he met with sustained opposition from his northern kingdom. A wave of protests soon developed into a more serious challenge to his royal authority north of the border, with significant numbers of Scots signing the National Covenant, which pledged resistance to some of his 'innovations' in policy. Unwilling to countenance such an assault on his government, Charles made plans for war.

Fissel recognised that, during Charles' Personal Rule, much of the emphasis in military matters had centred on the creation of a Navy strong enough to be regarded as an international force. There had been more attention paid to naval power than to land forces. Whilst Fissel argued that by 1638 the trained bands had reached a good degree of proficiency, nevertheless, they were regarded as a second line of defence, supposedly ready to repel any enemy landings which the Navy failed to block.¹⁴³ Of course, the Scots occupied the same land mass and so their rebellion forced a change in England's defence priorities, from looking outwards at sea, to looking inwards by land.¹⁴⁴

The First Bishops' War between Charles and the Scots failed to resolve their differences and placed an intolerable strain on the King's finances. An uneasy truce was agreed, the 'Pacification of Berwick' in June 1639, but there was little trust that fresh conflict would not erupt.

The failure to subdue the Scots first time around did little to dampen Charles' determination to attempt a second wave of force. He was compelled to end his Personal Rule and recall Parliament in April 1640, hoping to raise sufficient revenue to allow him to fight the impending Second Bishops' War. It soon became apparent, however, that the two Houses were determined to force Charles to redress their numerous grievances before voting him much needed subsidies to fund his war with the Scots. There was considerable bitterness from numerous elements in Parliament that the King had ruled without them for eleven years, during which time he had resorted to revenue-

¹⁴² Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.394

¹⁴³ M. C. Fissel, *The Bishops' Wars: Charles I's Campaigns Against Scotland, 1638-1640* (Cambridge, 1994), pp.196-197

¹⁴⁴ Fissel, *Bishops' Wars*, p.197

raising methods deemed unconstitutional by critics. Northumberland anticipated difficulties ahead:

It is yet to soone to judge what wayes this greate councell is likely to take, but by some of them that I converse with, I find it will be a hard matter to please them; their jealousies and suspitions appeeres upon every occation, and I feare they will not readilie be perswaded to beleeeve the faire and gracious promises, that are made them by the King[.] God give unto this meeteing a happie conclusion, for I do much apprehend the ill consequences of a breache.¹⁴⁵

Charles' dissolution of what became known as the Short Parliament on 5 May 1640 made plain his unwillingness to bow to Parliamentary demands, but left him to fight the Second Bishops' War without the grant of a single Parliamentary subsidy.¹⁴⁶ Northumberland was not alone in thinking 'it is impossible that things can long continu in the condition they now are in, so generall a defection in this kingdome hath not beene knowne in the memorie of any'.¹⁴⁷ Fissel referred to the bareness of Charles' Exchequer before the Bishops' Wars and the financial limitations of his Personal Rule.¹⁴⁸ The King's decision to wage war despite a serious lack of means proved to be a major strategic error.¹⁴⁹

The Scottish invasion and victory at the battle of Newburn during that summer compelled Charles to recall Parliament in the autumn, thus beginning the Long Parliament.¹⁵⁰ The King's Navy had accomplished little in the Bishops' Wars, spending most of its time cruising in the Forth, but failing to mount a successful blockade.¹⁵¹

The two Houses recognised that their strength lay in the King's financial weakness and that to increase their power the Crown's fiscal dependency on Parliament had to be exploited. In 1640 the Navy as a service was quite independent of Parliament, but with the two Houses recalled, a struggle to change the *status quo* got under way. Parliament began to take steps to control the kingdom's armed forces and, over time, managed to increase its hold over the Navy. Parliament was looking to increase its own power at the expense of the royal prerogative.

¹⁴⁵ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C85/12; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 16 April 1640

¹⁴⁶ A discussion of Royal finances in 1640 can be found in M. C. Fissel, 'Scottish War and English Money: the Short Parliament of 1640' in Fissel (ed), *War and Government*

¹⁴⁷ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C85/16; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 4 June 1640

¹⁴⁸ Fissel, *Bishops' Wars*, p.289

¹⁴⁹ Fissel, *Bishops' Wars*, p.287

¹⁵⁰ M. Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars* (London, 2008), pp.104-105

¹⁵¹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.412

Before Parliament's recall, the Navy was under the direction of the Lord High Admiral and four key administrators, regularly referred to as the Navy Commissioners. The Lord Admiral was 'supreame Governour & Comander of the Navy' as well being head of the High Court of Admiralty.¹⁵² He could wield considerable power if he chose to do so.¹⁵³ Northumberland was appointed by the King to the Lord Admiralty in 1638, to discharge the office until the young Duke of York (later James II and VII) reached his majority.

The four 'principall Officers' were the Treasurer, the Comptroller, the Surveyor and the Clerk of the Records.¹⁵⁴ One treatise on the fleet defined the employment of the Navy in three categories: wages, victuals and stores. It was argued that 'upon these three heads, depends the generall Governm[en]t of the Navy, there being nothing done in the Navy, but may properly be reduced to one of them'.¹⁵⁵ These key elements of the fleet all ultimately came under the authority of the principal officers, answerable to the Lord Admiral, so considerable responsibility was placed upon them.

The Treasurer's duties were clear cut: he was 'to receive and Issue for his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Naval Affaires' both ordinary and extraordinary revenue, with solicitations to the Privy Seal for funds taking place as and when required.¹⁵⁶ All estimates and contracts required his signature and annual accounts were supposed to be kept. In theory, he was 'to be present at and attend all Paym[en]ts of Shipp, or other great Payments whatsoever'.¹⁵⁷ The position thus carried great importance to the running of the Navy and whoever occupied the office was central to the fleet's functioning.

The Surveyor was called upon to supervise the ships and dockyards, and was 'at the end of the yeare to p[re]sente to his fellow Officers, what he conceives a fitt p[ro]porcon of all p[ro]visions for [th]e next yeare'.¹⁵⁸ He was to keep himself and his fellow officers well informed about the conditions of the ships in the fleet and survey all provisions ordered for the Navy.

¹⁵² BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.6r; 'A Discovres of the Navy of England', 1638

¹⁵³ M. L. Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics, 1641-1649', *Mariner's Mirror*, 82, No.4 (1996), p.398

¹⁵⁴ BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.6v; 'A Discovres of the Navy of England', 1638

¹⁵⁵ BL, Sloane MSS. 3232, f.7v; 'A Discovres of the Navy of England', 1638

¹⁵⁶ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.9r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁵⁷ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.10r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁵⁸ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.13v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

The Clerk of the Records oversaw all correspondence, being present at all meetings to make a note of everything agreed.¹⁵⁹ The man entrusted with ensuring that each officer did his job correctly and in proper order was the Comptroller, who had to consult the accounts of the Treasurer and those involved with victualling, in theory every quarter.¹⁶⁰ In order to see that things were done fairly, the Comptroller was 'to attend all payments of Wages to Seamen, Shipwrights, Caulkers' and others in the service.¹⁶¹ Furthermore, it was intended that he should 'informe himselfe and the other officers from time to time at what rates all Provisions for the Shippes are sould in the marketts'.¹⁶² He was also expected to monitor labour costs amongst the common subjects of the realm, 'to see that these usuall prices bee not exceeded in rating any Bills of Paym[en]t to bee made by the Kinge'.¹⁶³ Clearly then, it was imperative that an eye be kept on market conditions to ensure that the Navy paid a fair price for its needs. At least that was the intention of Northumberland, outlining detailed instructions to the officers in 1640.

These professional officers of the Navy and the Lord High Admiral were not directly accountable to Parliament, holding their positions thanks to the will of the King. The two Houses were adamant that the position be altered in their favour.

The best means of asserting Parliamentary authority over the Navy was to make its funding dependent on Parliament and thus Ship Money was abolished in 1641, the tonnage and poundage revenues instead being voted for the support of the fleet.¹⁶⁴ In the early stages of the Civil War, however, some Ship Money was still unspent and both parties were eager to use it. For example, in February 1643, the former sheriff of Chichester, Sir Humphrey Tracy, wrote to Digby: 'I have in my hands [th]e remainder of [th]e shippe monie which I leaved when I was sherife'.¹⁶⁵ He estimated that up to £200 still remained and pledged to 'adventure it for [th]e king's service', ignoring calls from Parliament 'to deteine it in my hands untill I h[e]ard their further pleasure'.¹⁶⁶ Tracy planned to put the money towards the raising of a troop of horse.

¹⁵⁹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.16r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁶⁰ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.12v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁶¹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.10v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁶² Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.10v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁶³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.10v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

¹⁶⁴ Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics', p.398-99

¹⁶⁵ Berkshire Record Office, D/ELL/04; Sir Humphrey Tracy to George Lord Digby, 8 February 1643

¹⁶⁶ Berkshire Record Office, D/ELL/04; Sir Humphrey Tracy to George Lord Digby, 8 February 1643

By April 1641, funds were available to provide some twenty ships for the forthcoming summer guard.¹⁶⁷ To assert Parliament's right to be involved with naval finance, a Committee of Navy and Customs was established which was ordered to probe the accounts of the Customs Commissioners, a ruse to facilitate Parliamentary interference.¹⁶⁸ This swiftly became a permanent standing body by the time that Civil War broke out, Sir Henry Vane Senior having replaced its original chairman, Sir John Culpepper.

In October 1641, a large-scale insurrection against English rule erupted in Ireland, and, as a result, Parliament soon seized the opportunity to extend its influence over the Navy.¹⁶⁹ Originating in Ulster, the rebellion spread quickly, as related by the County Tyrone MP, Audley Mervin: 'the poyson of this Rebellion was diffused through the veines of the whole Kingdome'.¹⁷⁰ The uprising came as a surprise and prospered, in large part, because of the serious divisions between King and Parliament. The causes of the rebellion were widespread, with long-term factors, such as Catholic anger towards the Protestant 'planters', and more short-term factors, such as the Crown's recent assaults on land titles, boiling over and triggering violence.¹⁷¹ To crush the rebellion, large-scale military intervention from England was required, but Charles I's failure to resolve his differences with Parliament prevented a swift resolution of the crisis.

The English administration in Ireland was woefully short of the materials, supplies and manpower necessary to subdue the uprising. One of the key problems which confronted the Chief Justices in Dublin was a lack of shipping, because there was no 'Irish' Navy so to speak: they had to rely on around half a dozen pinnaces to maintain communications with England. Therefore English naval assistance was an essential prerequisite for any meaningful shipments of troops being sent to crush the rebellion.¹⁷²

The initiative of sending troops to Ireland rested mainly with Parliament, because the King lacked sufficient authority and means to oversee matters on his own. Charles, however, took exception to Parliament's handling of military affairs and

¹⁶⁷ V. A. Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger: A Study in Political and Administrative History* (London, 1970), p.117

¹⁶⁸ Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics', p.399

¹⁶⁹ M. Perceval-Maxwell, 'The Ulster Rising of 1641, and the depositions', *Irish Historical Studies*, 21 (1978)

¹⁷⁰ BL, TT. E.149 [34] *An exact relation of all such occurrences as have happened in the severall counties of Donegall, London-Derry, Tyrone & Fermanagh in the North of Ireland* (London, 1642)

¹⁷¹ Kenyon and Ohlmeyer, 'Background to the Civil Wars' in Kenyon and Ohlmeyer (eds), *The Civil Wars*, pp.29-30

¹⁷² M. L. Baumber, 'The Navy and the Civil War in Ireland, 1641-1643', *Mariner's Mirror*, 57 (1971), p.385

frequently withheld his assent when he disagreed with what was being proposed. The Commons was striving to remove the King's prerogative of raising forces without its consent, but sometimes expressed dismay that the House of Lords was not being supportive enough.¹⁷³ On 21 December 1641, the Commons accused the Lords of being too slow to respond to petitions calling for English help for Ireland: 'to let the Lords know, that, if they after so many Messages concerning this particular [the speedy dispatch of troops to Ireland] cannot receive their Resolution, that they must acquit themselves to the World of their Endeavours'.¹⁷⁴ Differences of opinion, then, between the Lords and Commons sometimes hampered the relief effort for Ireland.

The political divide between King and Parliament, though, slowed down English naval preparations further. For example, in November 1641, Parliament had voted to send three state ships, the *Providence*, the *Swallow* and the *Entrance*, accompanied by the armed merchantman *Paragon*, as escorts for vessels carrying troops and supplies to Munster.¹⁷⁵ Yet it was not until the following February that the *Swallow* took to the seas as an escort to several supply ships. The King ordered the *Providence* and *Entrance* to escort the Queen to the Continent instead of sail for Munster.¹⁷⁶ That was a clear demonstration of the King's priorities: he placed the Queen's mission to raise arms abroad ahead of suppressing the revolt in Ireland. The threat at home from Parliament overrode the need to deal with Ireland. Baumber speculated that Charles resolved to push the burden of the war in Ireland onto Parliament.¹⁷⁷

The Lord Admiral had requested a Parliamentary ordinance to authorise the despatch of the four ships to Ireland and that had quickly been passed by the Commons: the King had been bypassed, something which troubled some in the Lords, but not to the extent of pressing the matter further.¹⁷⁸ It is telling, though, that Northumberland seemingly did not feel the need to involve the King.

To wield real power over the Navy, Parliament needed the support of the Lord Admiral. Fortunately for the two Houses, the Earl of Northumberland was to become the highest-ranking member of Charles' government to switch his allegiance. In Clarendon's words,

¹⁷³ J. Miller, *A Brief History of the English Civil Wars: Roundheads, Cavaliers and the Execution of the King* (London, 2009), pp.78-79

¹⁷⁴ *CJ*, II, p.352; House of Commons, 21 December 1641

¹⁷⁵ *CSPD, 1641-1643*, p.159; Parliament, 5 November 1641

¹⁷⁶ *CSPD, 1641-1643*, pp.282-283; Thomas Smith to Sir John Pennington, 11 February 1642

¹⁷⁷ Baumber, 'Navy, 1641-1643', p.389

¹⁷⁸ Rowe, *Sir Henry Vane the Younger*, p.119

Of those who were of the King's Council and who stayed and voted with the Parliament, the earl of Northumberland may well be reckoned the chief, in respect of the antiquity and splendour of his family, his great fortune and estate, and the general reputation he had amongst the greatest men, and his great interest by being High Admiral of England.¹⁷⁹

It is worth exploring why Northumberland decided to aid Parliament's seizure of the Navy as his role is sometimes underplayed. He had been appointed to the Lord Admiralty with strong support from the King's favourite, Sir Thomas Wentworth, later the Earl of Strafford. Yet Northumberland began to question royal policy as the Bishops' Wars were undertaken.¹⁸⁰ He was sceptical about the chances of success against the Scots:

the condition we here are in is most miserable, the day appointed for the marcheing of the army is att hand, but the want of money to mentaine, or to rayse these men wth all, doth necessitate the deferring of the rendesvous till the middle of Aug[ust]; a season not so proper for the drawing of an army into the field in these Northerne countries, and if I be not much deceived we shall then be as unable to undertake this action as now we are, wch must needes bring us into contempt abroad, and into disorders att home.¹⁸¹

Given that many of his lands were in the far North of England, Northumberland was perhaps also apprehensive about the damage that an invading force of Scots would wreak upon his estates. Unhappy at his appointment, again with Wentworth's (now Strafford's) insistence, to be General of the North in the Second Bishops' War, the Earl lost royal favour with his counselling against the dissolution of the Short Parliament.¹⁸² Northumberland's sister, the Countess of Carlisle, captured the decline in her brother's favour at Court: 'my brothers giving his opinione against the breking of the Parlement is not well taken, and beleevd by sume that it will mutch rest ine the Kings thoughts'.¹⁸³ In a further letter, she suggested that Northumberland's lower standing might impact on his wider circle, the King 'having lesse desier to obliege [his] friends, believing them all to be of sume opinions which [the King] dosse not like'.¹⁸⁴ The Earl had allegedly incurred the wrath of the Queen, who spoke 'lowdly against' him.¹⁸⁵ The King's unwillingness to back down from his martial preparations against the Scots,

¹⁷⁹ E. Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England, Begun in the Year 1641*, ed. W. D. Macray (6 vols., Oxford, 1888), II, p.537

¹⁸⁰ G. A. Drake, 'Percy, Algernon, tenth Earl of Northumberland, (1602-1668)', *ODNB*

¹⁸¹ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C85/15; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 21 May 1640

¹⁸² J. Adamson, *The Noble Revolt* (London, 2007), p.151

¹⁸³ *HMC Sydney Papers*, p.262; Countess of Carlisle to Countess of Leicester, 16 April 1640

¹⁸⁴ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C129/8; Countess of Carlisle to Countess of Leicester, 21 May 1640

¹⁸⁵ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C129/8; Countess of Carlisle to Countess of Leicester, 21 May 1640

‘notwithstanding this dissolution’ of the Short Parliament, disheartened Northumberland considerably. His letters in 1640 were rich with melancholy and a sense of dread, with recurring concerns about England’s declining standing in the eyes of fellow European states:

What will the world judge of us abroade, to see us enter into such an action as this...it grieves my soule to be involved in these councells; and the sence I have of the miseries that are like to insu, is held by some a disaffection in me, but I regard little what those persons say, or think of.¹⁸⁶

Northumberland, like many, was also concerned by the Crown’s willingness to look towards Spain for financial help. Soon after the dissolution of the Short Parliament, Strafford had pushed for Charles I to enter into an alliance with the Spanish Empire as a means of raising funds for the war against Scotland, thus freeing the King from reconvening Parliament. The Navy could have been central to such an alliance and might have been called upon to intervene against Spain’s Protestant enemies in Flanders.¹⁸⁷ Ultimately, pressure from the Dutch prevented Charles from cementing a formal alliance with Spain: they had threatened to treat any English ships escorting Spanish vessels as enemies.¹⁸⁸ Given that he was unable to raise adequate finance for war with Scotland, the King could ill afford to open hostilities with the United Provinces too.

For over twenty years, the Court had, in terms of foreign policy, been split between Hispanophile and Francophile contingents.¹⁸⁹ The Hispanophiles wanted to foster good relations with Spain in the hope of influencing the Habsburgs into making concessions regarding the Palatinate: such thinking was matched by a willingness to govern without Parliament. The Francophiles, on the other hand, looked towards France under Richelieu, aligned as it was with mainly Protestant states across Europe, notably Sweden and the Dutch. The latter faction was eager for military intervention on the Continent, something which would have necessitated Parliamentary funding. As the King moved towards a decidedly pro-Spanish foreign policy, those tied to the French ‘faction’ at Court found themselves declining in his favour.¹⁹⁰ Northumberland was identified with the Francophile faction and seems to have been alarmed at the rising dominance of pro-Spanish counsel in mid-1640. His preference for a foreign policy tied

¹⁸⁶ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L’Isle MSS. U1500/C2/42; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 7 May 1640

¹⁸⁷ Adamson, *The Noble Revolt*, p.40

¹⁸⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.5

¹⁸⁹ Adamson, *The Noble Revolt*, pp.40-41

¹⁹⁰ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.839

more closely to the Protestant cause was in keeping with most of those in the Navy at that time, and was a position that found considerable support amongst Parliament. Thus a picture emerges of Northumberland being in disagreement with key aspects of the King's outlook and being shut out somewhat at Court.

Clearly, from 1639, and with the increasing likelihood of further warfare against the Scots, Northumberland and Wentworth were growing apart politically:

Hear is a great expectation of war, and I am of opinione my brother [Northumberland] will be oferd the commaund of the army that goes from hens. [Lady Carlisle] does not yet find that [Northumberland] is in love with the actione, but mutch perswaded to it by the [Wentworth], and my thought is that [Wentworth] dosse not gaine apone [Northumberland].¹⁹¹

The breach between the Lord Admiral and the Court widened as the drift to Civil War accelerated, with Northumberland instrumental in the leaking of the so-called 'Army Plot' in 1641. Northumberland's brother Henry Percy was implicated in the conspiracy and the Earl extracted a confession from him, the price being his complicity in his sibling's escape.¹⁹² Northumberland then made the substance of his brother's confession known to Parliament. Part of Northumberland's motivation for aiding Parliament on that matter may have been a desire to demonstrate his loyalty at a time when many who had served the King were coming under attack from Parliament. Having formerly been closely aligned with Strafford, he perhaps wished to deflect any Parliamentary suspicions about his loyalty. Soon after the commencement of the Long Parliament, he had predicted hard times for those associated with the King:

Both howses understand one an other so well, and are so fully resolved upon a reformation of all things that I do verily beleeeve we shall see many persons questioned that wthin these 6 months thought themselves in greate securitie, and such are the Kings necessities that he will not be any way able either to defend those men, or to helpe himselfe[,] bee their proceedings never so distastefull to him.¹⁹³

By the summer of 1641, Northumberland was seen as a man in favour with Parliament:

¹⁹¹ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C129/2; Countess of Carlisle to Countess of Leicester, 21 November 1639

¹⁹² C. Russell, 'The First Army Plot of 1641', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 38 (1988), p.86

¹⁹³ Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C85/20; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 19 November 1640

Northumberland he comes but seldom to Court, which men impute to be his indisposition of body more than other ways, but with the Houses he stands very well.¹⁹⁴

Certainly his illnesses had restricted his ability to attend at Court, but by now he had taken a conscious decision to support Parliamentary calls for further reform by the King. He had opened up opportunities for Parliament to interfere in maritime matters and, whatever the possible doubts which he might have harboured about the drift to war, his role nevertheless was central to the King's losing control of his Navy. The next chapter turns to how Parliament seized overall control of the fleet.

¹⁹⁴ *CSPD, 1641-1643*, p.46; Sidney Bere to Sir John Pennington, 8 July 1641

CHAPTER ONE: THE KING'S LOSS OF THE FLEET

Parliament's seizure of the fleet in 1642 rested on its willingness to exploit any opportunities to intervene in naval affairs, twinned with the King's misguided or impolitic responses. As discussed in the previous chapter, Parliament had been encroaching ever further into the control of the Navy since its recall in 1640 and the chance to establish a decisive hold over the fleet presented itself in March 1642. The King had fled London in January, following his botched attempt to arrest leading members of Parliament and it now seemed a question of when, rather than if, Civil War would break out. Thus control of the Armed Forces became an even more pressing and serious matter.

Lord Admiral Northumberland, as was customary, drew up a list of captains for the impending Summer Guard and gained the King's approval for the names on the list. A dangerous precedent was established, however, when Northumberland, without any constitutional obligation, then sought approval from Parliament for his choices.¹ Exploiting the moment, the Commons decided to debate each captain's appointment individually, with votes being taken to decide approval. Northumberland, opting to send the Vice-Admiral to command at sea in his place, initially nominated Sir John Pennington, commander of the Winter Guard, to continue in his post for the summer. Pennington enjoyed personal popularity amongst the sailors, but that failed to aid the King's fortunes.²

As a known Royalist, Pennington's appointment was unacceptable to a Parliament growing increasingly protective of its position in an escalating crisis. Pennington was viewed as an honourable man who would never go against his King. Furthermore, his relationship with Northumberland had deteriorated since the late-1630s.³ Thus Parliament could not stand by and watch the fleet come under the command of an officer of 'unqualified devotion' to the royal authority.⁴

Pennington was a naval officer of considerable experience and had seen regular service with the Ship Money fleets, but his record was one of unshakeable obedience to royal orders: in early 1642, for example, he had conveyed Lord Digby to France under instruction from the King, despite the fact that Digby had been accused by Parliament of

¹ Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics', p.399

² P. Kemp, *The British Sailor: A Social History of the Lower Deck* (London, 1970), p.23

³ A. Thrush, 'Pennington, Sir John (bap. 1584?, d. 1646)', *ODNB*

⁴ G. Penn (ed), *Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn From 1644-1670* (2 vols., London, 1833), I, p.30

high treason.⁵ The King's decision to issue orders to Pennington to aid Digby, without reference to his Lord Admiral Northumberland, brought into focus the issue of who controlled the Navy.⁶ Parliament's severe disapproval of such use being made of the Navy was made starkly clear in the Lords on 26 January 1642:

The King's Ships, which ought to be a Wall of Defence to this Kingdom...are not fitted and employed as the present Condition of this Kingdom...requires; but some of them for the conveying away of Delinquents...to the great Encouragement of the rest of the malignant Party here, who, when the Designs and themselves be detected, know to escape the Hand of Justice, through the Abuse of a Royal Conduct.⁷

The aggressive nature of the Lords' statement revealed genuine anger that Parliament's will was being circumvented by naval officers loyal to Charles I.

In something of a provocative move, the Earl of Warwick was named as Parliament's choice as Vice-Admiral. Warwick was to be the central figure of the Navy during the Civil War: strongly supportive of Parliament and popular with the seamen, he was to prove a highly capable naval commander and strategist. Having inherited a privateering fleet from his father, Warwick had long been involved with various colonial initiatives, the most famous of which was the Providence Island Company. Such schemes had drawn him ever closer to the leading Puritan politicians of the age.⁸ Providence Island, located near the Mosquito Coast, had proved a successful base of operations for privateers to attack Spanish trade in the West Indies until its capture by the Spanish in 1641. Warwick and others like him made considerable sums of money from such raids on Spain's trade: attacks against the ideological enemy also had the convenient side-effect of returning handsome profits. A large proportion of Warwick's wealth derived from 'piracy' at Spanish expense: the outbreak of Civil War did little to dampen his enthusiasm for such campaigns, as seen by the successes achieved by Captain William Jackson, financed by Warwick, who plundered Spanish territories in the West Indies in late 1642. That expedition reflected Warwick's role as a financier of privateering operations: experienced at sea himself, he was also content to let others run the risks of a voyage, for a share of the profits.

One of the factors behind Warwick's popularity amongst the sailors was his long record of anti-Spanish piracy.⁹ As remarked upon earlier, the old enemies from the

⁵ *CJ*, II, pp.396; Examination concerning Lord Digby, 26 January 1642

⁶ Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', p.40

⁷ *LJ*, IV, p.538; House of Lords, 26 January 1642

⁸ S. Kelsey, 'Rich, Robert, second earl of Warwick (1587-1658)', *ODNB*

⁹ W. F. Craven, 'The Earl of Warwick, a Speculator in Piracy', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 10, No.4 (1930), pp.457-479

Armada of 1588 were still detested by the average seaman some half a century later. Many clung to the Elizabethan ideal of a war upon Spain fought out by Protestant heroes who plundered the wealth of the great Catholic empire.¹⁰ Warwick embodied that tradition, putting him at odds with the King's foreign policy in the late 1630s. Warwick, in fact, was one of Charles' most steadfast opponents: in 1640, as one of the so-called 'Petitioner Peers', he had colluded with the Scots prior to their invasion of England in the Second Bishops' War. Since the summoning of the Long Parliament, he had been a leading figure in the struggle to deprive Charles of many of his prerogative powers. Warwick had become powerful, being in charge of large sums of money earmarked for the occupying Scottish army. In effect, Parliament was operating financial bodies distinct from the Exchequer, which remained short of funds. Warwick assumed responsibility for the Navy's funding in late 1641, something which presaged his rise to command the next year and will be discussed further on.

Northumberland's reaction at the time of Parliament's decision to reject Pennington as commander is interesting. Clearly sympathetic to Parliament, he nevertheless hesitated for some three weeks before accepting its nominee. The Commons heard on 15 March the King's insistence that Pennington command the fleet, Northumberland perhaps waiting on events a little before his next move. He may have been concerned that his own influence over the Navy would be surpassed by Warwick's.

The consensus amongst historians is that Parliament *persuaded* the 'cautious' Northumberland to make Warwick his deputy for the forthcoming summer fleet. Accounts go on to stress that Northumberland was loathe to be caught in the crossfire of a squabble over the command of the Navy and exercised his constitutional right not to put to sea, preferring instead that somebody else assume the mantle of responsibility: his pleading illness at a time of profound political reckoning appeared rather convenient. Such an analysis is perhaps a little too simplistic: for one, Northumberland had a long record of genuine illness, something which had blighted him ever since his elevation to the Admiralty, and was not uncommon for statesmen (or anybody else for that matter) in an era bereft of modern medicine and health services. Some of his illnesses had certainly laid him very low in the past: 'my sicknes hath bin free from danger thies 3 weekes, but yet such an indisposition hath hung upon mee every other day, as I have

¹⁰ K. R. Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, p.5

scarce gained strength enough to write my name'.¹¹ On another occasion, he referred to a fever which 'made me a prisoner in my chamber'.¹²

Ultimately, accusations that Northumberland shied away from the constitutional struggles between Parliament and the King are largely unfounded. He had made conscious decisions to align himself with Parliament well before the question of appointments for the Summer Guard became such an issue and contributed significantly to Parliament's winning control over the Navy. What is certain is that Northumberland's 'delivering the fleet into the hands...of Warwick', the King 'resolved never to forgive'.¹³

Parliament informed the King of its decision regarding the summer fleet's command

The Lords and Commons in...Parliament assembled, having found it necessary to...set to Sea, a strong and powerful Navy...and taking notice of the indisposition of the Lord Admirall, which disables him at this time for commanding the fleet in his owne person, did thereupon recommend unto his Lordships the Earle of Warwick...¹⁴

The Address alluded to Charles' known intention that Pennington command the fleet, but stressed that prudence from the monarch needed to be exercised lest the post lie vacant in the midst of a dispute, something which would lead to 'great danger and mischief'.¹⁵ Parliament implored the King not to interfere with Warwick's appointment, 'out of any perticular respect to any other person whatsoever'.¹⁶ The last quote was an obvious reference to Pennington, Parliament making plain that the interests of the country (as it perceived them to be) should not be hazarded on account of the King's loyalty to a trusted servant.

The royal response was one of anger and questioned Parliament's right to nominate such appointments:

We believe it is the first time that the Houses of Parliament, have taken upon them the nomination or Recommendation of the chiefe Sea Commander, but it

¹¹ *HMC Sydney Papers*, p.329; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 24 September 1640

¹² Centre for Kentish Studies, De L'Isle MSS. U1475/C85/23; Earl of Northumberland to Earl of Leicester, 24 December 1640

¹³ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.949

¹⁴ BL, TT, E.141 [25] A message from both Houses of Parliament Sent to Yorke to the Kings most Excellent Majesty (London, 1642)

¹⁵ BL, TT, E.141 [25] A message from both Houses of Parliament Sent to Yorke to the Kings most Excellent Majesty

¹⁶ BL, TT, E.141 [25] A message from both Houses of Parliament Sent to Yorke to the Kings most Excellent Majesty

adds to the wonder, that...Pennington being already appointed by Us for that service...another [namely Warwick] should be recommended to us.¹⁷

The response went on to reiterate Charles' determination for Pennington to be made commander. Parliament offered to appoint Sir Charles Carteret, a noted Royalist, to the post of Vice-Admiral, but the King, consumed by pique and offended by Parliament's conduct, forbade him to accept the commission. The pro-Parliamentarian William Batten was thus given the post, something which Charles could have prevented had he responded in a more measured manner. Batten had many years' naval experience in the merchant service (he had also engaged in whaling) and since 1638 had held the Surveyorship of the King's Navy. He was linked closely to the mercantile interest in London and leaned towards Puritanism, hence his popularity with Warwick.¹⁸ He was to prove a damaging opponent to the King's affairs at sea during the First Civil War, although his position was later to change, as the radicalism of Parliament's leadership accelerated during the late 1640s and the King faced the executioner's axe.

Capp speculates that the King acquiesced on the question of Warwick so as to secure funding from Parliament to fit out the summer fleet, confident that he could reassert his authority over the Navy at a moment of his choosing later on.¹⁹ This argument is supported by the writings of Clarendon:

By his majesty's concealing his resentment [at Warwick's appointment] there was a good fleet made ready, and set out; and many gentlemen settled in the command of ships, of whose affection and fidelity his majesty was assured, that no superior office could corrupt it; but that they would, at all times, repair to his service, whenever he required it.²⁰

Charles may well have reasoned that a prolonged quarrel over the fleet's command would leave the service starved of funds. Confident that the Navy's ultimate loyalty would be to the monarchy, he probably decided that it was best to pacify Parliament in the short term so that his ships were in a state of readiness as and when he would need to call on them. His belief that he could overturn Warwick's appointment at a time of his own choosing was, of course, a profound error of judgement.

At the same time, Sir John Mennes was appointed as the Rear-Admiral. He had a good deal of naval experience, twinned with a record of loyal service to the King: commanding the *Lion*, he had transported the Queen over to Holland earlier in the year,

¹⁷ BL, TT, E.141 [25] A message from both Houses of Parliament Sent to Yorke to the Kings most Excellent Majesty

¹⁸ C. S. Knighton, 'Sir William Batten (1600/01-1667), naval officer', *ODNB*

¹⁹ B. Capp, 'Naval Operations' in Kenyon and Ohlmeyer (eds), *The Civil Wars*, p.158

²⁰ G. Huehns (ed), *Selections from Clarendon* (Oxford, 1978), p.208

a knighthood from Charles I his reward soon afterwards.²¹ He had also served in the King's army during the recent wars with Scotland. One could argue that his appointment may have been made in the same spirit as the proposed appointment of Carteret: as a man with a record of minimal, if any, opposition to the Crown was he chosen in an attempt to placate the King? In Clarendon's words, Mennes was of 'unquestionable integrity' as regarded his loyalty to the Crown.²²

Warwick's appointment was confirmed by the Lords on 4 April 1642.²³ The *Commons Journal* recorded the debates and its language is telling, the House having

Ordered, That Sir H. Vaine do carry unto the Lord Admiral the List of those Commanders that are not allowed of by this House, and desire his Lordship to supply others in the Place of those, and to send the Names of them to the House with all convenient Speed.²⁴

The order contained no mention whatsoever of the King. The Commons' resolve was apparent: those captains not approved had to be replaced with new candidates, to be vetted by Parliament. The convention had seemingly been set that naval appointments were now subject to Parliamentary approval. Parliament's making Warwick the effective 'head' of the fleet ensured that, in the event of a trial of strength over naval control, the two Houses would be best placed: such a trial erupted midway through 1642.

The King believed that ultimately the Navy would pledge its loyalty to the monarch if a choice had to be made between obeying his commands or those of Parliament. He was wrong. At the end of June 1642, Charles unleashed a plan to dislodge Warwick from the command of the Navy so as to reassert royal authority over the service, something 'which many men wondered [why] he neglected so long'.²⁵ Charles' three months of inaction following Warwick's appointment to the effective command of the fleet only served to allow the latter to consolidate his hold on the Navy.²⁶ Warwick took 'the fleet at length wholly into his hands'.²⁷ This rendered the King's aim of retaking the service more difficult than it might otherwise have been.

Nevertheless, the King decided to remove Northumberland from his position as Lord Admiral, the effect of this being that any appointments made under Northumberland's commission would be void. Warwick would thus be forced to step

²¹ C. S. Knighton, 'Sir John Mennes (1599-1671), naval officer', *ODNB*

²² Clarendon, *History*, II, p.953

²³ *LJ*, IV, p.697; Warwick confirmed as commander of the Summer Fleet, 4 April 1642

²⁴ *CJ*, II, p.474; Naval appointments, 10 March 1642

²⁵ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.949

²⁶ Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics', p.399

²⁷ L. Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. N. H. Keeble (London, 1995), p.81

down, or so Charles hoped. Unfortunately for the King, however, the attempt to seize the fleet was somewhat botched and Parliament had prior warning of the impending Royalist manoeuvres. Timing was crucial. Letters were drafted to both Northumberland and the captains informing them of the King's wishes. Initially, Pennington had declined Charles' request to head the fleet, his reasoning being that Parliament would object strongly to the appointment and that his journey towards the Downs 'would be immediately taken notice of', giving away the King's intentions earlier than was prudent.²⁸ Advised by Pennington, the King considered turning to another experienced seaman, Sir Robert Mansell, to head his fleet, but then decided against such a course when other advisors cautioned him regarding Mansell's advanced age.²⁹ Mansell was approaching seventy years old.

Pennington's doubts passed, meanwhile, and he came to the conclusion that he should accept the King's commission, but his change of heart came too late to stop the dispatch of the letter dismissing Northumberland. As new letters were composed to inform the captains of Pennington's appointment, the page carrying the address to Northumberland was riding swiftly to his destination. A royal messenger, Edward Villiers, was sent to meet with a retired but well-respected naval officer, Sir Henry Palmer, near the Downs. The King's plan envisaged that the pair of them would deliver the captains' letters aboard and then send for Pennington to take charge of the fleet when the right moment arrived. Northumberland, however, received his dismissal before all was put to the test and he warned Parliament of the King's impending *coup* attempt, informing the Lords that 'he received a Letter from the King, to discharge him of being Admiral'.³⁰ This was crucial: the King's scheme had hinged on the various letters all reaching their recipients at around the same time. Pennington's delayed acceptance of command, though, had slowed down the dispatch of the captains' letters, thus giving Northumberland the opportunity to contact Parliament. It was a further demonstration of his active support for the King's opponents.

When Villiers reached Palmer, the old officer was confused and failed to grasp the urgency of the situation. Villiers was therefore the man to deliver the King's orders to the fleet: Batten was in command, Warwick at that time being ashore. Charles' decision to block Carteret's accepting the Vice-Admiralty was now punished: had the King let him take the post, then at a key moment one of his supporters would have been

²⁸ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.951

²⁹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.951

³⁰ *LJ*, V, p.169; Earl of Northumberland to House of Lords, 1 July 1642

in charge of the fleet. Carteret might have surrendered the Navy willingly upon Villier's delivery of Charles' orders: in Clarendon's view, Carteret's

interest and reputation in the navy was so great, and his diligence and dexterity in command so eminent, that...he would, against whatsoever...Warwick could have done, have preserved a major part of the fleet in their duty to the king.

One must be mindful, though, of Clarendon's biases: on a number of occasions his *History* put forth the view that the King's party benefited from the prestige of Royalist gentry or men of 'interest' in a region, such as the local magnate. He was sometimes prone to over-estimating the impact of such support for the Royalists, however, partly due to his preference that the war effort be directed by 'great men'.³¹

Batten, unlike Carteret, was adamant that Parliament should maintain its grip on the Navy and remained steadfast in refusing the King's demands to submit to his authority. Batten's resolve was an important factor in denying the Navy to the King. Pennington was dithering, unsure of whether or not to go aboard himself, whilst Palmer never appeared at sea either. Pennington may have been fearful of the consequences were he to lose in a trial of strength with Warwick: his arrest would have placed him at Parliament's mercy and his past loyalty to the King, including his part in Digby's escaping England, would not have counted well for him.³² Villiers lacked the authority or seniority to impose the King's will over the Navy and, when Warwick came aboard, the royal messenger could not compete with his hold over the sailors.

Capp argues that the name Villiers was not one which inspired support amongst the sailors, his implication being that the late Duke of Buckingham's disastrous naval expeditions perhaps still exerted an influence over the sailors' mindsets. This perhaps assumes too much: it seems unlikely that the common sailors would have been aware that the messenger was a kinsman of Buckingham. More likely, Warwick's high standing swung the decision in favour of Parliament. Capp's reasoning possibly overestimates the impact of Villiers delivering the King's commands.

On 11 July, Edward Nicholas, writing to Ormonde, related Northumberland's decision to accept his dismissal from office by the King:

Northumberland hath received his Majestie's discharge from the office of Lord Admirall, to which he submitted with much civillity and duty, and refused to be

³¹ R. Hutton, 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', *English Historical Review*, 97, No. 382 (January 1982), p.74; a good general overview of Clarendon's worth to the historian is offered in J. Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, Romances & Inquiries from Herodotus & Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (London, 2007), pp.320-330

³² Clarendon, *History*, II, p.957

continued in that office by the Parliament, who offered to establish him in it by an ordinance of the two Houses.³³

The above quote demonstrated perhaps a sense of apprehension on Northumberland's part at the direction which events were taking. On the other hand, he may have wished to leave room for a future reconciliation with the King. The office of Lord Admiral was a lucrative one and Northumberland possibly hoped to be restored to the office if and when the struggle between Parliament and Charles I came to an end.

Parliament took the initiative and confirmed Warwick at the head of the Navy with the power to

grant Commissions, and to remove or displace all Officers, and other Persons whatsoever under your Command, and to place others in their Rooms, and to do all other Acts in as ample Manner as any Admiral hath formerly done, till further Order shall be taken by both Houses of Parliament.³⁴

It is worth noting that Parliament maintained Warwick on a 'leash', of sorts, by not appointing him as Lord High Admiral. Rather, he was to discharge that post's functions, but without the constitutionally recognised position which Northumberland had held. The stakes were high indeed, the King's letter to Warwick having reminded him ominously that 'it is no less than High Treason for any Person whatsoever to detain any of Our Ships contrary to Our express Commands'.³⁵ Parliament had, however, indicated that Warwick and those who served him would be protected legally.

Standing firm in light of the King's letter, on 2 July Warwick called a council of his captains and moved to secure the fleet for Parliament. The majority of his officers agreed to follow his stance, but five held out, Sir John Mennes amongst them.³⁶ Mennes wrote to Warwick pleading his distress at the turn of events:

I have...received an absolute Command not to obey your Lordship, but to follow such Instructions as I shall henceforth receive from Sir John Pennington...[and] I am commanded by His Majesty to assist, in taking Possession of His Majesty's Ship The *James*, and likewise the Command of Admiral of the whole Fleet.³⁷

Mennes' position was interesting: his letter to Warwick could be read as a giveaway of the King's plans. He was informing Warwick of the nature of his

³³ T. Carte, *An History of the Life and Times of James, Duke of Ormonde, from his birth in 1610, to his death in 1688* (3 vols, London, 1735-6), III, p.89; Sir Edward Nicholas to Marquis of Ormonde, 11 July 1642

³⁴ *LJ*, V, p.174; Ordinance for Earl of Warwick to command the fleet, 1 July 1642

³⁵ *LJ*, V, p.178; Charles I to Earl of Warwick, 28 June 1642

³⁶ The Navy's officers are discussed in D. E. Kennedy, 'Naval Captains at the Outbreak of the English Civil War', *Mariner's Mirror*, 46 (1960)

³⁷ *LJ*, V, p. 179; Sir John Mennes to Earl of Warwick, 2 July 1642

instructions from the Royalists, something that can only have been helpful to Parliament's naval commander. His letter made clear the threat to the *James*. Was Mennes just indiscreet or was he keeping his options open? Sensing that Parliament was in the ascendant, was he doing his best to placate both sides? Did self-preservation enter into his thinking? Before the episode had all got under way, Mennes had been amongst those dining with Warwick onshore, but the latter had not allowed him to go to his ship when news reached them of Villiers' delivering the King's instructions. Mennes was popular with Warwick, but could not be persuaded to throw in his lot with Parliament.³⁸

Warwick, alarmed at the threat to his flagship the *James*, was not prepared to countenance any opposition to Parliament's orders at sea and took prompt action. His letter to John Pym set out the turn of events. Captain Burley brought over the *Antelope* without a trial of strength, before the next morning Warwick

weighed [his] Anchors, and caused the rest of [his] Ships so to do, and came to an Anchor round about them, and besieged them; and when [he] had made all Things ready, [he] summoned them.³⁹

Mennes, commander of the *Victory*, and Fogge, aboard the *Reformation*, chose to submit at that point, but Slingsby and Wake, commanding the *Garland* and the *Expedition* respectively, continued to hold out. Warwick was determined to resolve the matter swiftly and, as his relation of events to Pym explained, the endeavour was successful:

I let fly a Gun over [Slingsby and Wake], and sent them Word that I had turned up the Glass upon them; if in that Space they came not in, they must look for me aboard them. I sent to them by my Boat, and most of the Boats in the Fleet: Their Answer was so peremptory, that my Masters and Sailors grew so impatient on them, that, although they had no Arms in their Boats at all, yet God gave them such Courage and Resolution, as in a Moment they entered them, took hold on their Shrouds, and seized upon these Captains, being armed with their Pistols and Swords, and struck their Yards and Topmasts, and brought them both to me.⁴⁰

Mennes was dismissed from his naval command and went on to serve the Royalists on land, with spells in the North-West and Wales, before he replaced Pennington as the King's Vice-Admiral in May 1645.⁴¹

³⁸ G. Callender, 'Sir John Mennes', *Mariner's Mirror*, 26 (1940), p.278

³⁹ *LJ*, V, p.185; Earl of Warwick to John Pym, 4 July 1642

⁴⁰ *LJ*, V, p.185; Earl of Warwick to John Pym, 4 July 1642

⁴¹ Knighton, 'Sir John Mennes'

The ‘gentleman commanders’ who had characterised the Navy’s officer class during the Personal Rule had been swept away by Parliament’s naval *coup* of 1642. Under the fleet’s new Parliamentary leadership, there was little scope for gentleman-at-sea (with large numbers of their attendants) enjoying a voyage on one of its ships, consuming vital stores of food and material:

keepe aboard the sayd shipp only the allowed number of 4 p[ersons] for Retinue, and [ensure] that the officers...have noe more servants then the Instructions doe permit them, [so] that the sayd shipp maie not bee pestered with Jokers and boyes.⁴²

With Warwick having brought the fleet in the Downs under Parliamentary control in early July 1642, there remained several ships at large whose allegiance was still to be decided. One such vessel was the *Lion*, under Captain Robert Fox. The *Lion* had been caught up in severe storms off the Dutch coast, with Princes Rupert and Maurice onboard and hoping to be transported to England. Three days of incessant seasickness, however, had taken their toll on Rupert, who became ‘so extreme sick...he had cast much Blood’.⁴³ He and his party had returned to land, whilst Fox sailed onwards to England. Arriving in the Downs on 8 July, Fox was oblivious to recent events and did not know that Parliament now commanded the Royal Navy. Warwick received him aboard the *James* and gave him a relation of recent events, before ordering him to resign his ship to Parliament. Warwick found him ‘much divided in his Thoughts’ and decided to arrest him.⁴⁴ He sent the news of Fox’s removal from command to the officers of the *Lion*. They ‘struck their Topmasts and Yards’ as ordered by Warwick and sent him a letter of support to acknowledge the ship’s submission.⁴⁵ Thus, another of the King’s ships was denied him.

Had Rupert still been onboard, it is perhaps possible that by the force of his personality he might have rallied or compelled the crew to resist Parliament, but even had that been possible, it seems doubtful that the *Lion* could have escaped Warwick’s overwhelming naval strength in the Downs. Rupert’s illness thus proved very fortunate for himself and his followers: his capture just a month or so before the outbreak of Civil War might well have cost the Royalists dearly.

Two key ships still remained loyal to the King in the summer of 1642: the *Swallow* under Captain Thomas Kettleby and the *Bonaventure* under Captain Henry

⁴² BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

⁴³ *LJ*, V, p.199; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 9 July 1642

⁴⁴ *LJ*, V, p.199; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 9 July 1642

⁴⁵ *LJ*, V, p.199; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 9 July 1642

Stradling. The two Third-Rate vessels had been part of the Irish Guard, but word reached Warwick that they had disappeared from their base at Kinsale. The Commons heard the news of their disappearance on 17 August and Warwick was told to ‘dispose of the said Ships’ as he saw fit: were they to refuse, he was to ‘use all Means to compel them thereunto’.⁴⁶

The Irish Sea was thus left relatively defenceless against privateers, exposing ‘his Majesty’s good subjects in that Kingdom to much Danger in these Times of Rebellion’, something of profound concern to the Lords Justices at Dublin.⁴⁷ For a period of time, supplies for the rebellious Catholic Confederates in Ireland faced little obstacle getting through to them by sea. The Catholic General Owen Roe O’Neill landed in Ireland in August 1642 (he would soon command the Army of Ulster)⁴⁸ and this was precisely the kind of thing that a functioning Irish Guard might have prevented. The Lords Justices were outraged:

The great Rogue Oneale had never landed, if Stradling and Kettleby had obeyed the Lords Justices Command...to ride at Anchor at the Haven of Wexford...and hovered thereabouts, the Lords Justices informing them of this Oneales intention to come there, but these two treacherous Captaines would not obey their Commandes, but weighed Anchor, and set Saile for England...⁴⁹

The only other ships the Lords Justices could look to for help were of minimal use. Thomas Bartlett, who commanded the *Confidence*, was suspected as a Royalist (something correct, as he later aided the King’s transporting of troops across to England following the Cessation in 1643).⁵⁰ John Bartlett, in charge of the *Swan*, was absent from the region that summer, and was also of Royalist sympathies (he too helped to ferry men across from Ireland for his sovereign later in the war). The only other ship of note, the *Phoenix*, had been destroyed by that stage.⁵¹

The presence of privateers was especially acute in Wexford, where the rebels ‘have set up the King of Spaines Colours’, demonstrating the prevalence of letters of marque from foreign rulers.⁵² The Confederates, of course, looked to Spain for aid in their campaign against the English in Ireland.

⁴⁶ *CJ*, II, p.724; Naval affairs, 17 August 1642

⁴⁷ *CJ*, II, p.724; Naval affairs, 17 August 1642

⁴⁸ J. Ohlmeyer, ‘The Civil Wars in Ireland’ in Kenyon and Ohlmeyer (eds), *The Civil Wars*, p.81

⁴⁹ BL, TT, E.118 [45] *Speciall passages and certain informations from severall places* (London, 20-27 September 1642)

⁵⁰ R. N. Dore, ‘The Sea Approaches: the Importance of the Dee and the Mersey in the Civil War in the North-West’, *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 136 (1987)

⁵¹ Powell, *Navy*, p.26

⁵² BL, TT, E.118 [45] *Speciall passages and certain informations from severall places*

Warwick did not at that time have the shipping available to intervene in the Irish Sea and, given that Parliament faced only hostile ports in Ireland, he would have faced difficulties even had he commanded spare vessels. The lack of an effective Parliamentary naval presence in that theatre contributed to the Royalist Marquis of Hertford being able to ship his men across the Bristol Channel from Minehead to Cardiff: 'All Ships and Boats are taken from the Coasts thereabouts, left the Marquesse escape by Sea to Wales'.⁵³ Hertford's 'escape' to Wales deeply troubled the Parliamentarians in Devon, who feared that he would 'quickly returne...not being above 4 houres sail' and strike at the castle near Minehead.⁵⁴ The Irish Guard had a tough enough task as it was in patrolling an increasingly dangerous sea, stretching from the coasts of Ireland to the Bristol Channel and beyond, and whilst two ships could by no means ward off all threats, the desertions of Kettleby and Stradling had a very negative impact.

It is worth exploring briefly the surviving correspondence between Charles I and Henry Stradling of the *Bonaventure*. From very early in 1642, the King was seeking to ensure Stradling's loyalty and seemed to trust him. Stradling was one of the 'gentleman commanders' and had seen service with the Ship Money fleets, with a brief foray into land operations during the First Bishops' War.⁵⁵ He was a fervent supporter of the monarchy. The King wrote to him on 8 January. The captain was to make sure the *Bonaventure* was firmly under his command 'a[nd] carry her presently wth the first opportunity of wind to St Helens point near Portsmouth' and then to await further orders.⁵⁶ Coming so soon after the attempted arrest of the Five Members, it is clear that the King was keeping his options open. Portsmouth would prove a good port from which to sail for the Low Countries, something the Queen had in mind. In a further letter on 27 January, Charles stressed the importance of his commands:

as soon as you arrive there...send us advertisement thereof by an expresse and trusty messenger, and...goe not from thence untill you shall receive our further pleasure. Hereof you may not faile.⁵⁷

The secrecy of the order was plain to see and great store was being placed in Stradling's fulfilling his allotted role.

⁵³ BL, TT, E.119 [24] *Speciall passages and certain informations from severall places* (London, 27 September-4 October 1642); J. Barratt, *The Civil War in the South-West* (Barnsley, 2005), p.14

⁵⁴ BL, TT, E.119 [24] *Speciall passages and certain informations from severall places*

⁵⁵ M. L. Baumber, 'Stradling, Sir Henry (d.1649?), naval officer', *ODNB*

⁵⁶ Glamorgan Record Office, Stradling MSS. D/D.TD.8; Charles I to Captain Stradling, 8 January 1642

⁵⁷ Glamorgan Record Office, Stradling MSS. D/D.TD.9; Charles I to Captain Stradling, 27 January 1642

By June 1642, confident of Stradling's devotion (and having knighted him by that point) the King sent another secret letter. Gearing up for his proposed naval coup just days later, on 23 June he wrote to Stradling ordering him to safeguard the *Bonaventure*:

there is att present a very pressing occasion for your repaire into the Northerne p[ar]tes of this Our Kingdome for a service much importing the safety of our person...take the first opportunity of winde to come about by Scotland for Newcastle.⁵⁸

This was to be carried out 'in as private a way as you may, a[nd] wth as much expedicon a[nd] as little Noyse' as possible.⁵⁹ Newcastle, of course, had recently come under Royalist control, and it would be a prudent move to station loyal shipping in its vicinity, the better to safeguard it. It was also an obvious place from which to communicate with the Low Countries. This was clearly part of the King's thinking when he wrote once more to Stradling on 18 August. The King recognised his servant's 'good Affeccion to Our Person and service in yo[u]r ready obedience to Our Command', before promising that it would reflect well on him.⁶⁰ Platitudes over, he then set out Stradling's orders: 'Wee understand that you are victualled to [th]e 12 of October; and having an important service for you in [th]e Low Countreys'.⁶¹ Upon arrival there, the captain was to notify the Queen and follow her commands, which would presumably have involved his transporting arms back to England to stock the Royalist armies. It is open to debate whether or not Stradling ever received this order. Baumber argues that it was unlikely.⁶² Given that Stradling sailed all the way around Scotland, following an involvement in the defence of Duncannon, it seems plausible that the letter might not have reached him.

Charles had borne Stradling in mind when plotting his naval *coup* and one can safely assume that he sent similar instructions to Kettleby of the *Swallow*, for he too was to be found off the North East coast in September 1642.⁶³ Parliament was adamant that their services be denied to the King and took steps to capture both ships. If left unchecked, the pair could have created problems for the Parliament at sea. In late-September, the *Bonaventure* and *Swallow* had started to victual at Tynemouth, in preparation for a voyage to Holland. Batten was sent north to deal with the threat

⁵⁸ Glamorgan Record Office, Stradling MSS. D/D.TD.10; Charles I to Captain Stradling, 23 June 1642

⁵⁹ Glamorgan Record Office, Stradling MSS. D/D.TD.10; Charles I to Captain Stradling, 23 June 1642

⁶⁰ Glamorgan Record Office, Stradling MSS. D/D.TD.11; Charles I to Captain Stradling, 18 August 1642

⁶¹ Glamorgan Record Office, Stradling MSS. D/D.TD.11; Charles I to Captain Stradling, 18 August 1642

⁶² Baumber, 'Stradling'

⁶³ Powell, *Navy*, p.27

accompanied by a squadron of six Parliamentary ships. His task proved fairly straightforward. He deployed his longboats to board both vessels when they were unprepared and the disaffection of the crews saw the ships pass into the Parliamentary fleet, ‘without any shot [of] resistance’.⁶⁴ Stradling managed to slip away, but Kettleby became a prisoner amongst his own men.⁶⁵ The sailors’ obvious lack of faith in their Royalist captains reflected the sentiments of those seamen who had backed Parliament earlier in the year.

These events were important because the last two ships of any significant power held by the King had been wrested from his grip: ‘his majesty was without one ship of *his own...at his devotion*’.⁶⁶ This thus made the task of transporting supplies in from abroad more problematic, although far from impossible. It meant that Charles would have to rely on merchant shipping were he to enjoy any presence at sea. The Royalists’ countermeasures to Parliament’s control of the Navy will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six.

Having lost the ships of the Royal Navy to Parliament, Charles did not give up hope that he could still deny the fleet access to the vital infrastructure without which it could not function. On 7 July, the King ordered the Principal Officers of the Navy, and all who served under them, not to obey *any* Parliamentary ordinances or warrants. He directed them to ‘take special care, that no monies or provisions whatsoever be issued or expended’ for the use of ‘Our fleet now at sea’ without his express permission.⁶⁷ Parliament soon responded with contrary instructions to the officials concerned. When they questioned which orders to obey, though, Parliament was swift to act and removed them all, replacing them with its own nominees.⁶⁸ Thus the Parliamentary takeover of the Navy was complete. The ships, dockyards and administration of the fleet were now all denied to the King.

Clarendon remarked upon Charles’ misplaced optimism that the fleet would remain loyal:

his majesty had an opinion of the devotion of the whole body of the common seamen to his service, because he had, bountifully, so much mended their condition, and increased their pay, that he thought they would have thrown the Earl of Warwick overboard, when he should command them.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ BL, TT, E.119 [24] *Speciall passages and certain informations from severall places*

⁶⁵ Powell, *Navy*, p.27

⁶⁶ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.955

⁶⁷ *LJ*, V, p.224; Charles I to Principal Officers of the Navy, 7 July 1642

⁶⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.21

⁶⁹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.950

The King was to be disappointed with the outcome. There are numerous factors behind the sailors' almost universal decision to support Parliament in 1642. There had been numerous warning signs in the years preceding the Civil War that the seamen favoured Parliament over their King. Mariners had played a leading part in some of the popular disturbances which followed the end of Charles' Personal Rule. When the King threw leading opponents into the Tower shortly after dissolving the Short Parliament in May 1640, the Earl of Warwick amongst them, riots broke out, with eager participation by mariners. Archbishop Laud's palace at Lambeth came under siege, with a young seaman called Thomas Bensted trying to break open the door with a crowbar. His subsequent execution on draconian charges of high treason made him a martyr amongst London's quayside communities.⁷⁰

There was widespread anger amongst the seamen that the fleet was failing to protect coastal communities from Barbary pirates. It reflected badly on them as Englishmen and they believed that the blame rested ultimately with the King. Whilst still angling for a Spanish subsidy, the King had even urged his Navy not to intervene against the ravages of Dunkirk privateers on the Kent and Sussex coasts.⁷¹ The Dunkirkers were at that stage operating in an informal alliance with Spain, with some of them flying Spanish colours. The King's perceived closeness to a major Catholic power, then, was something which proved costly in terms of reputation. Certainly, the seamen could relate more closely to Parliament's anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic preference in foreign policy.

England in the 1640s was a country gripped by scare stories of Catholic atrocities committed against Protestants, some true, some imagined. The climate of fear was at its highest pitch in relation to Ireland. The outbreak of the rebellion there in late 1641 had seen a cycle of violence erupt, but the reports which reached England tended to exaggerate the scale of carnage. Protestant refugees who had fled their homes in Ulster were all too eager to relate the brutality of the Catholics once they arrived on English soil. The set narrative became one of murderous Papists intent on slaughtering each and every Protestant they could lay their hands on. Invasion fears abounded.

We can gauge the virulent anti-Catholicism of the seamen during 1640s England by reference to some of the material which was printed in their name. One remonstrance, printed at the end of January 1642, reverberated with hostility to 'Papists'. There were calls for an energetic prosecution of the war in Ireland and 'not to

⁷⁰ C. V. Wedgwood, *The King's Peace, 1637-1641* (London, 1955), pp.299-300; for details of Bensted's trial see *Canterburies Amazement or The Ghost of the yong fellow Thomas Bensted* (London, 1641)

⁷¹ Powell, *Navy*, p.6

have any Papists to inhabit there'.⁷² Demands were also made for 'Popish Lords' to 'bee utterly cast cut' from Parliament.⁷³ Such views were well in keeping with the general mood of the country, but calls for bishops to be removed from the House of Lords demonstrated clear sympathies with the King's opponents. The remonstrance was full of Protestant fervour, with one passage stressing that there were 'none more readier' to defend the faith 'then wee that doth belong to the Sea'.

A petition from early January 1642 to the House of Commons from the mariners of London was similar in content. The seamen spoke of their encounters with Catholicism:

Your Petitioners having had sad experience by their Travels in Forreigne Parts, what evils and miseries, that Religion, and men of those spirits have brought forth, which doth justly occasion your Petitioners, utterly to abominate and abhorre their Religion, and most unjust practices.⁷⁴

One of the most obvious warning bells which pointed to the sailors' greater affinity for Parliament came in the aftermath of Charles' dramatic but unsuccessful swoop to arrest the Five Members in Parliament in January 1642. Having failed in his objective of imprisoning leading figures from his opposition, the King had forfeited the trust of Parliament and his popularity in the capital was seriously damaged. He soon fled London with his family. Some two thousand sailors had marched to the Guildhall pledging their support for Parliament and their devotion to the Earl of Warwick.⁷⁵ The demonstration was a powerful and emotive gesture, clearly indicative of deep-rooted unease towards the monarch. Warwick's popularity was apparent, but the King did not appear to take the message on board.

It would be unwise, however, to suggest that the seamen were diehard Parliamentarians. They were willing to place more trust in Parliament than in the King, but, as McCaughey points out, impressment was still called for after the Navy came under Parliamentary control.⁷⁶

Money was undoubtedly an important consideration for those serving with the fleet and, given the King's obvious difficulties in raising money, Parliament, with its

⁷² BL, TT. 669.f.4 [56] *The generall remonstrance or declaration of the sea-men which inhabit in London and thereabouts, dated the 31. of Ian, 1641* (London, 1642)

⁷³ BL, TT. 669.f.4 [56] *The generall remonstrance or declaration of the sea-men which inhabit in London and thereabouts, dated the 31. of Ian, 1641*

⁷⁴ BL, TT. E.131 [20] *The humble Petition of the Marriners and Sea-men, Inhabitants in and about the ports of London, and the River Thames* (London, 1642)

⁷⁵ S. J. Greenberg, 'Seizing the Fleet in 1642: Parliament, the Navy and the Printing Press', *Mariner's Mirror*, 77, No.3 (1991), p.229

⁷⁶ R. McCaughey, 'The English Navy: Politics and Administration, 1640-1649' (Unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Ulster, 1983), p.46

control of London and greater scope to collect customs revenues, appeared to be a more reliable paymaster. The state Navy, though, was never particularly popular as a source of employment. The competition to recruitment posed by the merchant service must be remembered: merchant vessels tended to pay higher wages and Charles had found in the 1630s that men were reluctant to serve in the Royal Navy. He had failed to introduce an effective method of pressing seamen, something Parliament set about changing by voting for more coercive legislation once the Navy came under its control. Naturally, though, relations between the merchant marine and the state Navy could sour when men and private ships were pressed.⁷⁷ The onset of war sparked wage increases in the merchant service, the prospect of prizes to be won at sea surely a factor.⁷⁸ Foreign fleets also competed for English sailors, with some men finding more advantage in enlisting with the better-paid French or Dutch navies.⁷⁹

It is worth noting that the mariners who backed Parliament in 1642 were already ensconced in the Navy: a flood of new recruits, enthusiastic for the Parliamentary cause, failed to materialise.⁸⁰ Rather, those men already in the service had a choice between two potential employers: the King or his Parliament. Charles I had a reputation amongst the seamen as a bad employer, something which helped to make Parliament appear as the more attractive option.⁸¹

The King, then, was outmanoeuvred comprehensively in his attempt to wrest back control of the Navy from Parliament in 1642: his several months of inaction on the matter had been fatal to his cause, with his countermeasures to Parliament's dominance coming far too late and being poorly executed. In the next chapter, the Navy's role in the opening year of the war will be discussed.

⁷⁷ K. R. Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, p.1

⁷⁸ McCaughey, 'The English Navy', p.3

⁷⁹ Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I*, p.100

⁸⁰ McCaughey, 'The English Navy', p.3

⁸¹ McCaughey, 'The English Navy', p.3

CHAPTER TWO: THE STRUGGLE FOR PORTS

Well before the English Civil War was declared, both King and Parliament were making moves to secure the country's ports. As the confrontation between both parties developed over the command of the Navy, so the control of ports became the focus of increasing competition throughout 1642. The fleet could not play an active role in the coming conflict without suitable bases from which to operate.¹ In this chapter, I will turn my attention to some of the most important ports to be disputed by both parties in 1642.

Ports were particularly important because they afforded safe harbourages and were often centres of wealth for the local area.² A well situated port could allow local naval forces to control and, intervene in, key points on maritime waterways.³ For the King, the control of suitable ports (which could provide a safe landing point) was a necessity to allow his forces to receive arms cargoes from abroad, provided they could first evade the Parliamentarian ships which patrolled the seas. As discussed earlier, Charles' inability to prevent the Navy falling under Parliamentarian control forced him into a reliance on foreign imports to supply his armies. Parliament's greater share of the kingdom's munitions stores at the outbreak of war added to that reliance.

After the outbreak of Civil War, many Continental governments tacitly backed Parliament, preferring to maintain trade and so forth, rather than risk antagonising England's ascendant party. The Prince of Orange, Frederick Henry (Stadholder for some of the United Provinces) favoured Charles I over Parliament, but his hands were tied by the pro-Parliamentarian Dutch States, thus limiting the amount of aid he could provide the English Royalists.⁴ Clarendon related such a viewpoint:

though the prince of Orange had a very signal affection for the king's service, and did all he could to dispose the states to concern themselves in his majesty's quarrel; yet his authority and interest was much diminished with the vigour of his body and mind; and the states of Holland were so far from being inclined to the king, that they did him all the mischief they could.⁵

The Dutch had taken advantage of Charles' need for allies in 1641 by securing the marriage of Mary Stuart, his eldest daughter, to Frederick Henry's son William, later William II. That served to cool England's relations with Spain, thus reducing the threat

¹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.416

² M. C. Fissel and D. J. B. Trim, 'Conclusion' in Fissel and Trim (eds), *Amphibious Warfare 1000-1700: Commerce, State Formation and European Expansion* (Leiden, 2006), p.429

³ Fissel and Trim, 'Conclusion', p.430

⁴ B. Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London, 1642-1650* (Aldershot, 2004), p.119

⁵ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.947

to Dutch interests. No political promises had been made at the time of the marriage treaty, though, and it was largely in vain that the Royalists sought to obtain significant help from the Dutch government during the Civil War.⁶ Instead, the King's party turned to merchants and privateers, both to supply and then ship weaponry to England. Writing to the Marquis of Newcastle in March 1644, Lieutenant-Colonel John Ogle outlined his perception of loyalties in the United Provinces:

Though I finde this country of Flanders very forward for the King, yet I finde that of Holland no less ready to assist [th]e Parliament both with hand & voice, & yo[ur] Royalists there are like the true people of [th]e Lord (a very little flock).⁷

It demonstrated the willingness of some sections of the United Provinces to do business with the Royalists, but also highlighted that the country was divided in its loyalties, with elements more eager to assist Parliament. The Prince of Orange, though, did offer help on occasion.

As early as February 1642, Queen Henrietta Maria departed for the Low Countries on a mission to increase the King's supplies of weaponry. The Queen began assembling supplies of arms to send back to England, having pawned the Crown Jewels and raised loans in the United Provinces. She urged the King to seize a key northern port to which the munitions could be despatched, naming Hull, Berwick or Newcastle as suitable targets.⁸ The reason for this lay in Parliament's clear control of London following the King's flight from the capital, meaning that the Royalists needed to focus their energies elsewhere. This put them at something of a disadvantage, because London was best situated to receive deliveries from abroad, being situated much closer to the Continent than more peripheral ports in the North and Southwest.

Hull was a notable early battleground, with both parties trying to ensure it did not come under the control of the other. The Royalists were confident that the King's presence alone would secure the loyalty of the key northern port, with Captain William Legge writing to Secretary Nicholas: 'if ever his majesty appear in person all will absolutely be at his disposal'.⁹

Hull was well-fortified, with a particularly useful means of defence: the town could flood up to two miles of the surrounding countryside by cutting the banks of the Hull and Humber, then removing the sluices which acted as a check on the water

⁶ S. Groenveld, 'The English Civil Wars as a Cause of the First Anglo-Dutch War, 1640-1652', *The Historical Journal*, 30, No.3 (1987), p.543

⁷ NA, SP16/501/29; John Ogle to Marquis of Newcastle, 16 March 1644

⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.16

⁹ *CSPD, 1641-3*, p.254; William Legge to Sir Edward Nicholas, 14 January 1642

sprawling everywhere at flood tide.¹⁰ Furthermore, a ditch existed beneath the walls, always filled with water. Any attacking force was thus presented with considerable obstacles, something which the Royalists were to discover. Since the Bishops' Wars, Hull had been occupied by a garrison some 1000 men strong: the withdrawal of these troops in January 1642 created a dispute between Parliament and the King as to which party controlled the precious magazine still remaining at Hull. After the weapons at the Tower, the magazine at Hull was England's foremost store of weaponry.¹¹

On 11 January, the Commons restored Sir John Hotham to the governorship of the town, a position he had enjoyed during the 1630s: his growing opposition to Ship Money had seen him removed from all commissions in early 1640.¹² His son, Captain John Hotham, duly secured Hull with the aid of the trained bands, a threat from the Royalists having come to light: the King had named Captain Legge as governor, whilst also ordering the Royalist William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, to proceed to Hull.¹³

Having missed out in their initial attempt to secure Hull, further attempts by the Royalists to seize the garrison were planned. Not long after the Queen's departure for the United Provinces, Warwick ordered a pair of armed merchantmen to maintain a watch on Hull from the Humber: the *Bonaventure*, commanded by Captain George Swanley, and the *Mayflower*, under Captain Joseph Piggott. Patrols were also posted in the North Sea to look out for the Queen's return voyage to England.¹⁴ There were concerns in Parliamentary ranks that the King might call on the Danes to send reinforcements to aid his cause in England.¹⁵ It was therefore prudent to keep a watch off Hull for a number of reasons. Civil War was still undeclared, but it was now becoming increasingly apparent that preparations for conflict were under way.

In late April 1642, the King made a personal attempt to seize the northern town, but Hotham, having assumed in person his command as governor in mid-March, refused him entry and promised to hold its vital stores of weaponry for Parliament. The King had been forced into action by Parliament's notice of intent to remove the arsenal from Hull, a weapons bounty which the Royalists were in much need of. Addressing the King, Parliament suggested that since the magazine in the Tower was 'much diminished', the stores from Hull should be transported to the capital, since in London

¹⁰ E. Broxap, 'The Sieges of Hull during the Great Civil War', *English Historical Review*, 20, No.79 (July 1905), p.458

¹¹ Broxap, 'Sieges of Hull', p.459

¹² D. Scott, 'Hotham, Sir John, first baronet (1589–1645)', *ODNB*

¹³ Newcastle was made marquis in October 1643

¹⁴ Powell, *Navy*, p.16

¹⁵ Powell, *Navy*, p.16

the weapons would be of ‘much more convenience for the service of the Kingdom of Ireland’.¹⁶ The King’s answer to Parliament’s ‘petition’ made plain his unease at the prospect of Hull’s arms being removed and also questioned the legality of Hotham’s governorship of the town, the King arguing that he had been entrusted ‘with a power unagreeable to the Law of the Land’.¹⁷ A petition to Charles from the gentry and commons of York urged him to maintain the *status quo* at Hull:

We...beseeching You to cast Your eyes and thoughts upon the safety...of this whole Countie, a great meanes of which we conceive doth consist in the Arms and Ammunition at Hull...because [amongst other things] we think it fit, that that part of the Kingdom should be best provided where your Sacred Person doth reside...¹⁸

On 22 April, Charles’ latest move to secure Hull got under way: a small party escorted the young Duke of York to the town. The visitors were recognised only once they had gained entry, forcing Hotham to receive them officially, something he would probably have wished to avoid.¹⁹ When the King, with several hundred horse and foot, arrived before the gates of the town the next day, ‘he found all the Gates shut upon him, and the bridges drawn up’.²⁰ Hotham stood firm and enunciated Parliament’s orders that the town must not pass into royal hands. The King appealed to the soldiers manning the walls, urging them to disobey their governor, but his calls failed to secure entry. Declaring Hotham a traitor, the King was compelled to withdraw to York, his troops being insufficient to storm the town’s defences successfully. The Duke of York’s party had been allowed to join with Charles earlier in the day, but only after being delayed by Hotham, ‘One Circumstance his Majesty [could not] forget’.²¹

Charles was disgusted and the episode at Hull demonstrated Parliament’s determination to prevent his becoming too well-prepared for a potential war. Hotham’s stand was recognised by the two Houses, which resolved that his being declared a traitor

¹⁶ BL, TT, E.144 [11] *The humble Petition of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, sent to His Majestie at York, Concerning the Removall of His Majesties Arms, Cannon, and Ammunition, in His Magazin at Hull* (London, 1642)

¹⁷ BL, TT, E.144 [11] *The humble Petition of the Lords and Commons in Parliament, sent to His Majestie at York, Concerning the Removall of His Majesties Arms, Cannon, and Ammunition, in His Magazin at Hull*

¹⁸ BL, TT, E.144 [20] *The humble Petition of the gentry and commons of the county of York, presented to His Majestie at York* (London, 1642)

¹⁹ Powell, *Navy*, p.16

²⁰ BL, TT, E.144 [20] *The humble Petition of the gentry and commons of the county of York, presented to His Majestie at York*

²¹ BL, TT, E.144 [20] *The humble Petition of the gentry and commons of the county of York, presented to His Majestie at York*

was ‘a high breach of the priviledge of Parliament’.²² The episode demonstrated clearly Parliament’s growing assertiveness. Soon afterwards, many of Hull’s stocks of arms and ammunition were spirited away to London, Warwick’s ships in the Humber overseeing their ‘escape’ southwards. The cargo reached the capital on 30 April. This was a prudent move, for Hull would come under renewed pressure during the summer.

Warwick’s actions demonstrated his determination to utilise the Navy decisively in Parliament’s favour and it is perhaps surprising that the King did not make an earlier attempt to ‘correct’ such a situation. The episode was a blatant affront to royal authority and Charles was paying dearly for his fumbled response to Parliament’s appointment of Warwick to command the fleet the previous month.

Matters escalated in June 1642, when Warwick ordered three ships lying off the Humber to intercept the *Providence*, an armed merchant vessel of the Royal Navy under the direction of Captain Strahen.²³ The *Providence* was sailing from Holland, loaded with significant quantities of gunpowder, arms and also (according to Clarendon) seven or eight pieces of heavy artillery for use in the field.²⁴ Henrietta Maria’s efforts to cultivate supplies of weaponry for the Royalists were now coming to fruition. The Queen had ensured that the ship had not repaired back to the Downs following her landing in Holland earlier that year, wanting to utilise it to transport arms back to England when the time was right.²⁵

Tipped off by agents in Holland, though, Warwick was adamant that the King’s party be denied the weapons bounty: Parliament ‘had so many spies there [in Holland], that the queen could do nothing they had not present notice of’.²⁶ When the *Providence* arrived at the Humber, she met with a hostile reception from the three vessels loyal to Parliament, and was promptly chased down the gateway to Hull. Met by the larger *Mayflower*, she evaded capture and, taking advantage of her smaller draught, slipped into a small creek not far from Paul, to the east of Hull. The lightness of the *Providence* meant she ‘drew not much water’.²⁷ In skirmishes between the Royalist trainbands and forces sent by Hotham, it was the Cavaliers who secured the munitions once unloaded, although the ship had to be abandoned to the Parliamentarians. The cargo, however, could now be used to arm the King’s forces in the North. The most important issue at

²² BL, TT, E.146 [1] *Five remarkable passages, which have very lately happened betweene His Maiestie, and the high court of Parliament* (London, 1642)

²³ Powell, *Navy*, p.18

²⁴ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.948

²⁵ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.947

²⁶ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.947

²⁷ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.948

stake, however, was the King's obvious loss of authority over his Navy: ships following his orders were now under threat from vessels acting under Parliamentary authority. That finally led him into taking action regarding the control of the fleet, with his attempted *coup* over the Navy coming several weeks later.

Parliament's success in holding the fleet soon paid dividends. On 6 July, Sir John Meldrum arrived by ship at Hull with crucial reinforcements of manpower and supplies to meet a fresh challenge from the Royalists. The King's army had encircled the town, in yet another effort to bring about its submission. The Royalists constructed two forts to the east and west of Hull, intending to command the Humber and thereby block the Parliamentarians from bringing in further supplies.²⁸ Meldrum, however, oversaw a strengthening of the garrison's defences. To flood the adjacent countryside, and to cause disruption to the enemy, the banks of the rivers Hull and Humber were also cut, although the Royalists could still approach along the raised banks. Further Parliamentary naval assistance, though, soon strengthened the defenders, with a further fifteen hundred troops being rushed ashore from the *Sampson* and *Jocelyn* which had sailed up the Humber, escorted by two bigger ships, the *Unicorn*, commanded by the new Rear-Admiral Trenchfield, and the *Rainbow*. Naval gunnery combined with the heavy guns of the garrison to neutralise the Royalist forts overlooking the town, before Meldrum led a sally against the King's troops and forced them out of their trenches.²⁹

Parliament's success in keeping control of the Humber and thus being able to reinforce the garrison was down to its naval capabilities. Warning was served to the King that the Royal Navy was now acting decisively to protect the interests of his opponents in Parliament. Parliament's control of Hull would prove highly valuable during the Civil War, with the town acting as a key bastion in an area which, for the opening two years of hostilities, was largely dominated by the Royalists. Naval support was central to Parliamentary power there.

The King may have been frustrated at Hull, but his commander for the North, William Cavendish, Earl of Newcastle, established Royalist control at Newcastle on 10 June 1642, thus giving the Royalists a significant port in the Northeast.

Newcastle's precious reserves of coal were a highly sought-after prize and the King hoped to tax exports to raise money for his armies.³⁰ Parliament recognised that threat: 'they will have the Power of restraining the Trade of Sea-coal, and enhancing the

²⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.22

²⁹ Powell, *Navy*, pp.22-23; C. V. Wedgwood, *The King's War, 1641-1647* (London, 1958), p.106

³⁰ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.415

Price, having the entire Command over them'.³¹ In terms of economic warfare, the King's control of Newcastle was detrimental to the livelihoods of London colliers: the interruption of the coal trade affected perhaps over a quarter of shipping at the start of the war.³² Many ships were left idle and their value declined. Compared to other provincial towns, Newcastle enjoyed an elevated importance in relation to London: this was on account of its coal supplies.³³ One should be mindful, however, that Parliamentary blockades and economic retaliation later in the war diminished the King's opportunity to exploit Newcastle's coal.

Alarmed by the Royalists' control of such a key economic centre, Parliamentary propagandists were quick to paint a horrifying picture of the Northeast of England being engulfed by hordes of Papist havoc-makers.³⁴ Cavendish's name was linked repeatedly to Catholicism, his army being cast as a ragbag assortment of sinister Catholic soldiery.

Cavendish saw to it that the town was put into a state of defence:

within [a] few days he fortified the town, and raised men daily, and put a garrison of soldiers into Tynmouth Castle, standing upon the river Tyne, betwixt Newcastle and the sea, to secure that port, and armed the soldiers as best he could.³⁵

Parliamentarian letters from those at Newcastle were full of concern:

They have got Engineers out of Germany, and Gunners for the Great Guns...[and] there is a Fort making at the Haven Mouth, that no Ships can go in or out without their Leave.³⁶

Newcastle would go on to become an important gateway for the Royalists to bring in foreign arms to supply their forces. Parliament was concerned and a tract of 9 July 1642 demonstrated the frenzied reports which circulated at that time:

For intelligence hath beene given to the House, of great store of Armes and Ammunition, to be transported to Newcastle, for his Maiesties defence, likewise diverse pieces of Ordnance, and many other things belonging to warre, likewise many Captaines are ready to be transported over to serve the King, who have taken an Oath amongst themselves that if they be set upon the way, they will fight it out to the last man.³⁷

³¹ *LJ*, V, p.170; House of Lords, 1 July 1642

³² Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London*, p.188

³³ R. Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution: A Study of the Civil War in North England* (Oxford, 1967), p.1

³⁴ J. de Groot, 'Commerce, Religion, Loyalty: Royalist Newcastle upon Tyne, 1642-1644', *Archaeologia Aeliana 5th series*, 27 (1999), p.136

³⁵ C. H. Firth (ed), *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle* (2nd edn, London, 1906), p.11

³⁶ *LJ*, V, p.170; House of Lords, 1 July 1642

³⁷ Bodl., Wing/2834:09, 'Message from the House of Commons to Robert Earle of Warwicke, admirall of His Majesties Navie Royall' (London, 1642)

Such reports were not unfounded and some large shipments did manage to evade the Parliamentarians at sea. The tract's grave warnings of the Royalists defeating Parliament with a French or Spanish army proved wide of the mark, however, and reflected Parliament's fears rather than reality. In October the same year, a declaration by the House of Lords warned those in Yorkshire to give up any thoughts of neutrality, lest the King overrun the county and tap into Newcastle's proximity 'for Supplies by Sea'.³⁸

Newcastle was important to the King, but its location was far from ideal: at considerable distance from the Continent, it was also vulnerable to a Scottish incursion and, at the mouth of the Tyne, could be subjected to a fairly effective blockade.³⁹ Charles hoped to utilise Scarborough: further north than the more favoured Hull, it nevertheless held strong strategic value.⁴⁰ The town changed hands numerous times during the war, but Parliament's control was negative: with Hull under its dominion, Parliament did not necessarily need Scarborough, but winning possession of the Royalists' second-choice North Sea port, and thus denying it to the King, made considerable sense.

The key figure at Scarborough during the war was Sir Hugh Cholmley, initially as a supporter of Parliament, and later on as a committed servant of the King. Writing to Parliament in January 1643, before his defection to the Royalists, he elucidated what he saw as the four key reasons for Scarborough's importance.⁴¹

First, he believed the castle to have a crucial hold 'over the adjacent parts' of Yorkshire.⁴² The castle could also provide good defence for the harbour, which he recommended to Parliament as a suitable place from which pinnaces might be set out to disrupt any possible Royalist arms trade coming from the Low Countries or Scandinavia. Cholmley argued that Scarborough was 'more conveniently' located for such a task than any other port in England.⁴³ Conversely, he warned, Scarborough's position 'so opposite to Holland, or Denmarke' was something which the King would exploit, were he in possession of the town: 'he might take opportunitie to send men or

³⁸ *LJ*, V, p.386; House of Lords Declaration, 5 October 1642

³⁹ J. Binns, 'A Place of Great Importance': *Scarborough in the Civil Wars, 1640-1660* (Preston, 1996), p.76

⁴⁰ For a brief survey of Scarborough in the Civil War see J. Binns, 'Scarborough and the Civil Wars, 1642-1651', *Northern History*, 22 (1986)

⁴¹ *BL*, TT, E.85 [17] *Nevves from Yorke, Being a true Relation of the proceedings of Sir Hugh Cholmley since his comming to Scarborough* (London, 1642)

⁴² *BL*, TT, E.85 [17] *Nevves from Yorke, Being a true Relation of the proceedings of Sir Hugh Cholmley since his comming to Scarborough*

⁴³ *BL*, TT, E.85 [17] *Nevves from Yorke, Being a true Relation of the proceedings of Sir Hugh Cholmley since his comming to Scarborough*

provisions from thence hither in despite of any Navy upon the Sea'.⁴⁴ That last comment alluded to the difficulty of blockading Scarborough, which was far more open to the North Sea than Newcastle. Thus a constant watch on the port would prove troublesome, particularly when conditions at sea were very poor. The Parliamentary Navy could not spare infinite ships to close-up each and every port, so opportunities for Royalist gun-runners to slip through the net always existed.

Cholmley also remarked upon Scarborough's reasonably-close proximity to York, scene of the Royalists' northern headquarters. In terms of arms distribution, then, if the King held Scarborough, he could expect to transfer any weapons/munitions deliveries with a fair amount of speed to York. The same did not apply to Newcastle, 'both in respect of the distance and ilnesse of the wayes'.⁴⁵ Scarborough's importance to the coal trade was remarked upon by the Committee for Both Kingdoms on 1 May 1645. The port's potential for shipping out supplies moved the Committee to comment that, in relation to the coal trade, it was of greater consequence than Pontefract in Yorkshire, scene of numerous coal reserves.⁴⁶

In the lead-up to war, Scarborough, like many towns, was apprehensive about allying itself too-closely or too-openly with either the King or Parliament. The King's presence at York made it difficult to avoid any commitment, but Scarborough took careful steps to avoid unsettling Parliament.⁴⁷ In the opinion of the Parliamentary Captain Trenchfield, commanding the *Unicorn* in 1642, the town's population were favourable to the two Houses, but he alluded to Scarborough's Royalist-inclined leadership as a factor preventing any open demonstrations of support.⁴⁸

The King, however, regarded Scarborough as a port favourable to his cause, ordering the *Lion* to sail there from the Downs.⁴⁹ By that stage, though, Warwick had already seized the ship. As discussed earlier, Princes Rupert and Maurice were fortunate not to be onboard. For their next attempt to reach England, they embarked on a 46-gun warship belonging to the Prince of Orange and intended to land at either Scarborough or Tynemouth. The Parliamentary *London* attempted to block their path, but was evaded,

⁴⁴ BL, TT, E.85 [17] *Nevves from Yorke, Being a true Relation of the proceedings of Sir Hugh Cholmley since his comming to Scarborough*

⁴⁵ BL, TT, E.85 [17] *Nevves from Yorke, Being a true Relation of the proceedings of Sir Hugh Cholmley since his comming to Scarborough*

⁴⁶ *CSPD, 1644-1645*, p.446; Committee of Both Kingdoms, 1 May 1645

⁴⁷ Binns, *Scarborough*, pp.73-74

⁴⁸ *LJ*, V, p.314; Captain Trenchfield to House of Lords, 4 August 1642

⁴⁹ *LJ*, V, p.213; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 14 July 1642

with Rupert and Maurice landing at Tynemouth, but sending the ship to Scarborough, laden with munitions.⁵⁰

The King believed that Scarborough could play a key role in his attempts to establish a fresh presence at sea. Trenchfield informed Parliament of Sir John Pennington's activities at Scarborough in 1642. The King's Admiral, taking the pseudonym Sir John Porter, was reported to have visited the town in an attempt to find shipping and sailors ready to serve him.⁵¹ Accompanied by two other Royalist captains, his appearance in the North demonstrated the region's importance to the King and the Royalists' willingness to recruit on a nationwide basis. The episode also showed Pennington's active role in discharging his duties: having been outmanoeuvred during the Parliamentary seizure of the fleet, he thereafter played an important role in the emerging 'Royalist' Navy.

Nevertheless, Parliament managed to secure Scarborough in September 1642, in large part due to the actions of Sir Hugh Cholmley. Cholmley composed his *Memorialls tuching Scarbrough* in the late-1640s, along with at least two other 'memorials' written to aid the future Earl of Clarendon's blossoming historical account of the Civil War.⁵² Whilst Clarendon neglected Cholmley's account of events at Scarborough, the source provides a useful insight into the port's importance during the conflict.

Cholmley had been restored to the colonelcy of a foot regiment in the Yorkshire trained bands by the Earl of Essex (acting in his capacity as the lord-lieutenant of Yorkshire) and sent north to raise the necessary men, some of whom were to come from Scarborough. According to Cholmley, he was to stay at Scarborough 'onely for securing the Towne', but upon arrival he soon managed to establish control of the castle, notwithstanding the apparent opposition of its owner, a leading burgess of the locally-powerful Thompson family.⁵³ Cholmley's pledge to pay Thompson £50 per year in 'rent' for the castle perhaps bought his acquiescence, although the absence of a strong Royalist military presence in the town, notwithstanding Cholmley's own modest cavalry force, might have inclined Thompson to caution. The Thompson family, though, were pro-Royalist, with one of their number having assisted an arms ship depart Scarborough for Newcastle, before the arrival of Cholmley's Parliamentarians.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ E. Warburton, *Memoirs of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers* (3 vols., London, 1849), I, pp.461-462

⁵¹ *LJ*, V, p.314; Captain Trenchfield to House of Lords, 4 August 1642

⁵² C. H. Firth, 'Clarendon's History of the Rebellion', *English Historical Review*, 19 (1904), p.49

⁵³ Sir H. Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough' in J. Binns (ed), *The Memoirs and Memorials of Sir Hugh Cholmley of Whitby, 1600-1657* (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 2000), p.140

⁵⁴ Binns, *Scarborough*, p.83

Cholmley was in no position seriously to erode the local dominance of Scarborough's leading families, but he did manage to stop the Royalists from utilising the harbour, as well as raising around 400 militia men for Parliament. In letters to Parliament, he expressed concern that he was not receiving sufficient support for his endeavours, but suggested that Scarborough's castle was worthy of defence, its value being recognised by himself and his captains. Parliament agreed that Scarborough was 'of great importance' and, in a clear demonstration of the negative reasons for controlling the port, mentioned that the Royalists 'had a speciall eye towards it'.⁵⁵ On 2 November 1642, the Commons welcomed Cholmley's control of the castle.

When Newcastle's Royalists made a substantial sweep into Yorkshire in December 1642, the local Parliamentarians were soon put under substantial pressure, with the King's party establishing control over much of the county. Scarborough, however, remained a Parliamentarian outpost, albeit a precarious one. Again, though, by denying the port to the King, Cholmley was making life more difficult for the Royalists. Whilst holding both Hull and Scarborough, Parliament enjoyed control over the majority of the Yorkshire coast.⁵⁶ Hull, though, always enjoyed a greater prominence.

THE KING IS DENIED PORTSMOUTH

The Royalists were anxious to control a substantial port on the south coast of England so as to bolster their chances of bringing in supplies from abroad: Portsmouth was a major target. The port had three important functions: it was a fortress, a dry dockyard (dating from Henry VII's reign) and also the gateway to the harbour.⁵⁷ It was an essential base for the fleet, and of great importance for supplies and repairs.⁵⁸

Both parties were confident that Portsmouth would be theirs to exploit during the war, this being due in no small part to the numerous intrigues of its governor, Colonel George Goring. Governor since 1639, Goring was a man of shifting loyalties. On good terms with the Queen, he seemed a natural supporter of the Royalists, having 'been bred in the court' and owing 'all he had...to the immediate bounty of the crown'.⁵⁹ His part in exposing the Army Plot in 1641, however, earned him the thanks of Parliament and the two Houses confirmed him in his governorship, whilst later

⁵⁵ BL, TT, E.85 [17] *Nevves from Yorke, Being a true Relation of the proceedings of Sir Hugh Cholmley since his comming to Scarborough*

⁵⁶ D. Cooke, *The Civil War in Yorkshire: Fairfax versus Newcastle* (Barnsley, 2004), p.18

⁵⁷ J. Webb, 'The Siege of Portsmouth in the Civil War', in R. C. Richardson (ed), *The English Civil War: Local Aspects* (Stroud, 1997), p.64

⁵⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.24

⁵⁹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.997

promising to raise him to the rank of lieutenant-general, something which the Royalists had equivocated over (possibly influencing his decision to reject the Army Plot). He was to bide his time and await a better opportunity to aid the King.⁶⁰

Despite Parliament's blessing, suspicions surrounded his allegiance and rumours abounded that he was still engaging in regular correspondence with Henrietta Maria, amongst other charges. Goring, however, 'was so rivetted in their [Parliament's] good opinion and confidence, that they would give no countenance to any informations they received...of any thing to his prejudice'.⁶¹ In stark terms, though, he *was* in clandestine contact with Charles I and the Queen, the King being assured that Portsmouth would be delivered to his party whenever the moment of truth came. In mid-June 1642, the King sent clear orders to Goring in which the governor was told to do all that was necessary to secure the port for His Majesty. Anticipating Charles' attempt to seize back the control of the Navy, Goring's instructions included mention of the *Henrietta Maria*, a small pinnace, which was to be taken over to aid Portsmouth's defence. The King was right in reasoning that Parliament would not allow his capture of Portsmouth to go unanswered and a Royalist presence in the surrounding waters would be an advantage. Charles regarded Portsmouth as a place of 'greate consequence', which, if seized, would prove 'soe important to the Safety both of us and o[u]r whole kingdome'.⁶²

Goring having been dealing with the Royalists for some time, Parliament nevertheless appeared to regard him as somebody to be counted upon. Even as late as 12 July, the Commons voted some £5,030 to be paid to him 'for the use of the Garison of Portsmouth'.⁶³ Yet the muttering against him did not abate, and his extended absence from London began to foster disquiet. On 2 August, his deception came to an end and he declared for Charles I, stating that Parliament had engaged in illegality and that 'he had received the command of that garrison from the king...and that he durst not be absent from it, without his leave'.⁶⁴ Clarendon opined that his declaration had come too early:

an accident fell out, that made it absolutely necessary for the king to declare the war, and to enter upon it, before he was in any degree ripe for action'.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ R. Hutton, 'Goring, George, Baron Goring (1608-1657)', *ODNB*

⁶¹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.997

⁶² Isle of Wight Record Office, Oglander MSS. 21/2; Charles I to George Goring, 14 June 1642

⁶³ *CJ*, II, p.668; Orders concerning Portsmouth garrison, 12 July 1642

⁶⁴ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.1003

⁶⁵ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.997

Parliament was swift to react and sent forth an army under the effective command of Sir William Waller to apply pressure to what was such a crucial south coast port. Warwick ordered Captain Richard Swanley, in the *Charles*, accompanied by seven armed merchantmen, to tighten the net from the sea, and on 8 August Parliament's naval presence made itself felt in the area.⁶⁶ Swanley's squadron landed some seamen on Portsea Island, to allow time for the land forces to reach the region. It was a decisive tactic in some Civil War engagements to call on seamen as reinforcements.

The two Houses expected a complicated struggle to win back Portsmouth, for it was reputed to be strongly defended, although in actual fact, 'the Towne itselfe [was] unfortified and very weake in many places'.⁶⁷ During his time as governor, Goring had made attempts to boost Portsmouth's defences, but despite injections of finance from both Parliament and the King, the town was made far from impregnable.⁶⁸

A hysterical report appeared on 6 August and seemed designed to rally support for Parliament's attempt to secure Portsmouth by magnifying the threat: 'it is credibly reported by those who scorne to tel a lie, that a French Army is at this instant in Portsmouth'.⁶⁹ The newssheet made the bold claim that some 5000 Frenchman had descended upon the port and come under Goring's command. By tarring the Royalists with the familiar slur of calling in foreign, Catholic aid, the report was clearly calculated to appeal to the large body of people easily influenced by perceived threats to Protestantism. The account ended with a call that 'all true Protestants raise all their forces...that the French may bee dissipated, [and] Portsmouth relieved'.⁷⁰ The report was utterly fabricated, but evidence of the fear that could be generated from an invasion threat, real or not. The French government actually refused to aid Charles I, Cardinal Richelieu rejecting Henrietta Maria's pleadings.⁷¹

The dangers lurking across the English Channel would have to be kept at bay by the Navy and on 8 August *Ioyfull News from Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight* declared that Warwick had promised 'his navy should [be] for the most part imployed to keep the incroaching enemy from them'.⁷² Referring to threats from both France and Spain, the piece expressed concern that the Isle of Wight might be targeted for landings. It is

⁶⁶ Powell, *Navy*, p.24

⁶⁷ BL, TT, E.117 [10] *A declaration of all the passages at the taking of Portsmouth* (London, 1642)

⁶⁸ Webb, 'Siege of Portsmouth', p.67

⁶⁹ BL, TT, E.109 [21] *A New discovey of a designe of the French* (London, 1642)

⁷⁰ BL, TT, E.109 [21] *A New discovey of a designe of the French*

⁷¹ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.119

⁷² BL, TT, E.109 [25] *Ioyfull news from Portsmouth and the Jsle of Wight* (London, 1642)

interesting that the Navy is referred to as Warwick's, and not the fleet of the King and Parliament. A Royalist account of the siege referred to the vessels under Swanley as 'the Kings Ships', but that claim was by now far from reality.⁷³ The Earl was obviously the dominant naval figure of 1642 and Charles I made vain overtures to him to return the fleet to royal control as events at Portsmouth unfolded. 'If he [Warwick] would condescend unto these His Maiesties desires, hee would account him a true and loyall Subiect'.⁷⁴ There was no hope of Warwick agreeing to such demands with war getting under way and he instead resolved to 'use his skill and endeavour for the redeeming of Portsmouth'.⁷⁵ The King's party was greatly irked by the Navy's blocking of ships heading northwards with cargoes of ammunition. With part of the fleet now being thrown into the recovery of Portsmouth, the Navy was hampering the Royalists on many different fronts.

The Navy having fallen into Parliamentary hands, were Portsmouth to remain under Royalist direction, then the local economy may have fared badly, for ports thrive on shipping and this the King distinctly lacked during the summer of 1642.⁷⁶ As Wedgwood points out, Portsmouth was of much less value without control of the seas, and hopes that the port would allow the King to open up communications with allies abroad proved ill-founded.⁷⁷ Perhaps recognising the commercial woes that might result from the King's prolonged hold on Portsmouth, the majority of the town's burgesses leaned towards a pro-Parliamentarian standpoint, but when Goring declared for the King, the majority of people in the town backed him, lest their possessions and homes face the wrath of the garrison.⁷⁸

Parliament's military response to Goring's treachery soon made itself felt. A significant military concentration was building up in the surrounding villages, with the effect that the Royalist reinforcements Goring hoped for found their path barred. The leading figures of Hampshire 'drew up such forces as the country could afford, and surrounded Portsmouth, so that no forces can either march in or out'.⁷⁹ The last point was not accurate, for some supplies did slip through, 'but with great difficultie'.⁸⁰

⁷³ BL, TT, E.117 [10] *A declaration of all the passages at the taking of Portsmouth*

⁷⁴ BL, TT, E.109 [28] *A Joyfull message sent from both houses of Parliament to Portsmouth* (London, 1642)

⁷⁵ BL, TT, E.109 [28] *A Joyfull message sent from both houses of Parliament to Portsmouth*

⁷⁶ Webb, 'Siege of Portsmouth', p.64

⁷⁷ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.113

⁷⁸ Webb, 'Siege of Portsmouth', p.71

⁷⁹ BL, TT, E.112 [2] *The Kings resolution, concerning Portsmouth, and Colonell Goring* (London, 1642)

⁸⁰ BL, TT, E.117 [10] *A declaration of all the passages at the taking of Portsmouth*

It was telling that the port's survival as a bastion of Royalism was threatened also by the Navy: later in the war, various besieged Parliamentary garrisons, under heavy pressure from land, were relieved or rejuvenated with aid from the sea. Portsmouth in August 1642 was increasingly becoming surrounded on all fronts and, lacking aid from the sea, the besieged could not long hold out waiting for a field army to march to their relief. The King had envisaged the Marquis of Hertford marching to Portsmouth's relief from the west, but the Royalist magnate's forces were 'driven out of Somersetshire, where his power and interest was believed unquestionable, into Dorsetshire'.⁸¹

The only vessel which Goring could call on, the *Henrietta Maria*, was insufficient to take the fight to the Parliamentary shipping under Swanley, but, nevertheless, presented an obstacle as it guarded the mouth of the harbour.⁸² In theory it could rely on covering fire from the garrison were an attack made, but a bold operation under Brown Bushell either on 9 or 10 August saw her captured with no shots fired. This owed much to surprise. Bushell 'manned out long boats upon a desperate service' and under cover of darkness slipped into the harbour.⁸³ Escaping detection, they seized the *Henrietta Maria*. Allegations of treachery on the part of the pinnace's leading officer abounded from disgruntled Royalists, the vessel falling prey to Bushell's raid 'by the treachery of Goodwin', or so some claimed.⁸⁴ The prize was speeded to safety and its rigging and guns enjoyed thereafter by the Parliamentarians. On the route back, Bushell and his men 'met with two ships laden with corn and took them', thus denying Goring crucial supplies.⁸⁵ The guns from the *Henrietta Maria* would later be set upon mounts facing the town, the Royalists having been forced to retreat inside its walls.⁸⁶

Goring and his followers were forced to conduct their defence from within the Portsmouth garrison following the Parliamentary seizure of Portsbridge, the key to Portsea Island's precious foodstuffs and livestock. The Royalists allegedly ransacked the isle before their retreat, taking as many supplies as they could. Some locals were ferried to the other side of the isle by Parliamentary seamen to protect them from the Royalist marauding, something which can only have boosted support for the Parliamentary cause in that area.

⁸¹ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1063

⁸² Powell, *Navy*, p.24

⁸³ BL, TT, E.112 [15] *Some speciall and considerable passages from London, Westminster, Portsmouth, Warwicke, Coventry, and other places* (London, 9-16 August 1642)

⁸⁴ BL, TT, E.117 [10] *A declaration of all the passages at the taking of Portsmouth*

⁸⁵ BL, TT, E.112 [15] *Some speciall and considerable passages from London, Westminster, Portsmouth, Warwicke, Coventry, and other places*

⁸⁶ Webb, 'Siege of Portsmouth', p.77

As August came to a close, Waller and his forces were gearing up for the decisive moment of the siege, the capture of Southsea Castle. The castle was a vital component in the harbour's defences, given that it overlooked the shipping channel. In the build-up to the capture, Portsmouth came under heavy fire from Parliamentary gunners based at the Gosport emplacements nearby: some of the guns had come from the fleet, another example of how the Navy was utilised to aid land forces.⁸⁷ Southsea Castle was taken on 5 September. The seamen marched towards the citadel early in the morning and scaled the walls, the governor having been summoned by Bushell, but too dazed on account of the previous night's drinking to muster a decent defence. When Southsea fell, the garrison soon erupted in mutiny, reports of the King's army coming to save them having failed to materialise.

On 7 September, Portsmouth surrendered and Goring, having obtained permission from the victors, set sail for Holland. Clarendon regarded Goring's actions as treacherous and his *History* was scathing:

when the Parliament's power was so much increased, and the king's abated, that the queen resolved to transport herself beyond the seas, the edge of his zeal was taken off, and he thought Portsmouth too low a sphere for him to move in; and the keeping a town...was not a fit portion for him; and so he cared not to lose what he did not care to keep.⁸⁸

The news of Portsmouth's fall 'almost struck the king to the heart'.⁸⁹ For Parliament, its capture was a major boon and the port was to play a crucial role in its war effort, coming under siege repeatedly from resurgent Royalist forces in the region, but never wilting. During the Royalists' succession of victories in 1643, it held out as a Parliamentary bastion.

When assessing the siege of Portsmouth, it becomes plain that Parliament's naval presence played an important role. Not only had the fleet provided heavy ordnance to be used from land batteries against the garrison, it had also provided manpower at key moments for the land operations. Its most impressive contribution, though, was clearly its part in denying supplies and victuals to the Royalists and we have many accounts of Portsmouth-bound shipping finding its path barred.

Clarendon remarked upon the importance of the Isle of Wight to Portsmouth and castigated Goring for neglecting the link:

⁸⁷ Webb, 'Siege of Portsmouth', p.81

⁸⁸ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.1013

⁸⁹ Clarendon, *History*, II, p.1012

his chief dependence was both for money and provisions from the Isle of Wight, yet he was careless to secure those small castles and block-houses, which guarded the river; which revolting to the parliament as soon as he declared for the king, cut off all those unreasonable dependences; so that he had neither men enough to do ordinary duty, nor provisions enough for those few, for any considerable time.⁹⁰

Parliament had been active in denying the Isle of Wight to the Royalists, removing the Earl of Portland as governor due to his 'being a familiar friend with...Goring and his mother a Papist'.⁹¹ Rumours that Portland was plotting with Sir Kenelm Digby to aid Goring at Portsmouth had blackened his reputation with the two Houses further.⁹² The loyal Earl of Pembroke was appointed in his place, but the Isle was not firmly Parliamentary yet. Merely changing the leadership of a key port or garrison was not sufficient to guarantee its adherence to one's party. Hence Richard Swanley's decisive campaign to secure the Isle of Wight during August 1642, apparently acting on his own initiative.

Swanley had already cultivated an agreement with some merchant ships off the Isle to intercept cargoes bound for Portsmouth, in particular being assisted by Lovis Dick's vessel the *Lion* from Leith. Under a Captain Ramsey, with the commander absent briefly in London, the *Lion* seized two vessels and 'sent both the said Barks (loaded with salt, and in one of them a Chest with Money, bound for Portsmouth) to the said Captaine Swanley'.⁹³ The *Lion* was called upon for further assistance, her captain 'having received a Warrant from Captaine Swanley', thus showing his resolution to utilise all the help available.⁹⁴

On 18 August Swanley arrived off the Isle of Wight in the *Charles* 'and presently he and Captaine Dick brought some of their Souldiers a shore, and entered the castle of Cowes' which surrendered quickly.⁹⁵ The account of these actions refers to soldiers being landed: it is possible that seamen from Swanley's ship or others might have been used and the author confused their status. With the siege at Portsmouth far from over, it is questionable whether Swanley would have had the authority to take men from Waller's forces. There is no mention of this arrangement having taken place and,

⁹⁰ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1063

⁹¹ BL, TT, E.109 [32] *His Maiesties message to Colonell Goring of Portsmouth* (London, 1642)

⁹² BL, TT, E.112 [1] *True newes from Portsmouth, Being Colonell Goring his Speech, delivered to the Soldiers in Portsmouth* (London, 1642)

⁹³ BL, TT, E.116 [40] *A true and briefe relation how, and by what meanes, the Isle of Wight was secured, in August, 1642* (London, 1642)

⁹⁴ BL, TT, E.116 [40] *A true and briefe relation how, and by what meanes, the Isle of Wight was secured, in August, 1642*

⁹⁵ BL, TT, E.116 [40] *A true and briefe relation how, and by what meanes, the Isle of Wight was secured, in August, 1642*

given that Swanley was acting on his own initiative, it seems more probable that seamen were deployed at the Isle of Wight, including men attached to Captain Dick.

Over the next days, Swanley and his allies managed to secure the major strongholds on the island, including Carisbrooke Castle, later to host the King as prisoner. Carisbrooke fell on 24 August, the governor opting to agree terms after a night of the Parliamentarians keeping watch on the castle and blocking supplies from getting through.⁹⁶ With Carisbrooke placed in the command of Bushell, the Isle of Wight was put under Parliamentary control and the Royalists at Portsmouth could expect little help from that quarter thereafter. The actions of Swanley and his men earned the approval of Warwick, with the Commons also recommending that they received ‘some Reward’.⁹⁷

The events at both Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight were certainly a blow to the King: for the time being, he lacked a port on the southern coast of England and was forced to rely on loyal ports in more peripheral locations in Wales and the North. The problem was compounded by Warwick’s fleet stationed in the Downs, which did all it could to prevent precious supplies getting through to the Royalists.

The King’s supporters enjoyed more success in the Northwest, with Chester coming under firm Royalist control. The King’s visit there in September 1642 helped ensure its loyalty. In the words of Sir William Brereton, who went on to become Parliament’s leading commander in the North-West theatre of the war, Chester was ‘the most Considerable place in this part of the Kingdome’.⁹⁸ That was because the city was the region’s key gateway to Ireland and, later in the war, it proved to be a valuable entry point for Royalist reinforcements sent across the Irish Sea to aid the King’s fortunes in England. Crucially, though, it provided the King with a Northwest port to counter Parliament’s presence at Liverpool. Chester came under immense pressure from the Parliamentarians at various points during the war, but did not finally fall until February 1646 after a lengthy siege.

Fortunately for the King, the disadvantage of having no significant ports on the southern coast of England was soon reversed. Led by Sir Ralph Hopton, the Cornish Royalists placed the county under their power in October 1642, forcing the local

⁹⁶ BL, TT, E.116 [40] *A true and briefe relation how, and by what meanes, the Isle of Wight was secured, in August, 1642*

⁹⁷ *CJ*, II, p.745; Referral to the Committee of the Navy, 30 August 1642

⁹⁸ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 60, f.393; Sir William Brereton to William Lenthall, 3 February 1646

Parliamentarians to flee to neighbouring Devon.⁹⁹ The Cornish ports, such as Falmouth, were now at the King's disposal and would prove highly valuable to the Royalist war effort over the next few years. Cornish tin could be traded in exchange for ammunition and supplies from the Continent, with Royalist-held ports in the county being ideal landing points for these weapons cargoes. The King also halted the shipment of tin to London, thereby forcing the capital to rely on more expensive imports from the Netherlands.¹⁰⁰ The King had no choice but to exploit every available source of trade, otherwise his army would be bereft of the vital weaponry with which to wage war.

On 30 July 1642, the King wrote to Francis Bassett, his vice-admiral for Cornwall, with clear instructions to utilise the local population when he needed assistance.¹⁰¹ Bassett was a loyal servant of the crown and, together with the former vice-admiral for Devon and Cornwall, Sir Nicholas Slanning, he oversaw the collection of tin.¹⁰² Slanning helped to organise a small fleet to transport the tin abroad.

The King placed great faith in the Cornish ports' front-line role in his communications with Royalist agents on the Continent.¹⁰³ Parliament, however, was far more concerned by the possibility of foreign powers landing men in the southernmost county and ordered the *Mary* and the *Happy Entrance* to patrol the seas of Southwest England to try and forestall any interventions from Irish or Welsh forces sent to aid the King.¹⁰⁴ It was not long, though, before the Royalists were active in conveying arms and munitions into Cornwall from abroad, with reports in late November 1642 claiming that significant numbers of supplies had been landed at Falmouth.¹⁰⁵

Not every shipment was able to reach its destination, however, as the Parliamentarian ships began to make their presence felt. A news tract reported that on 16 October two small vessels were seized near Falmouth by a pair of Warwick's ships, having met some small opposition when they tried to board.¹⁰⁶ The cargoes which they confiscated included numerous stores of gunpowder, ordinance and other ammunition, all of which had been sent from Holland on the orders of Henrietta Maria. Given the successes of Hopton's armies over the coming year, though, the Cornish Royalists

⁹⁹ M. Stoye, 'His Majesties Sea-Service in the Western Parts: Maritime Affairs in Cornwall during the English Civil War', in Doe, H, Kennerley, A and Payton, P (eds) *A Maritime History of Cornwall* (Exeter, 2011), p.87

¹⁰⁰ Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London*, p.149

¹⁰¹ Cornwall Record Office, Bassett MSS. B35/7; Charles I to Francis Bassett, 30 July 1642

¹⁰² Powell, *Navy*, pp.29-30

¹⁰³ For a thorough overview of Cornwall during the war see M. Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War and Interregnum, 1642-1660* (2nd edn., Truro, 1963)

¹⁰⁴ *CJ*, II, p.818; Defence of Devon, 22 October 1642

¹⁰⁵ Stoye, 'Cornwall', p.88

¹⁰⁶ BL, TT, E.126 [11] *Most joyfull newes by sea and land, the takeing of two ships at Falmouth in Cornwall, by the ships sent down by the Earle of Warwick* (London, 1642)

clearly benefited from Parliament's inability to place its ships along each and every stretch of the English Channel and the determination of the Queen to keep sending the arms cargoes to England. At the close of the year, Goring managed to slip into Newcastle with several Dutch ships and up to 4000 horse arms, twenty field guns, some wagons to carry ammunition, several hundred officers and around £20000.¹⁰⁷

The King was boosted by the sanctuary which was sometimes offered to his tin and munitions shipments by the Channel Islands. The strong fortresses of Elizabeth Castle and Mont Orgueil in Jersey, and Castle Cornet in Guernsey, were under Royalist control. To escape from the pressure of Parliamentary shipping, the Royalist cargo ships often put themselves under the protection of the fortresses' heavy guns, with their pursuers unwilling to risk the danger of coming into firing range. Parliamentary sympathies were widespread amongst the islanders, but the fortresses gave the Royalists *de facto* control of the Channel Islands.¹⁰⁸

If we consider the opening months of the war on land, the King failed in his primary objective of retaking control of the capital. The first major set-piece battle of the conflict was fought at Edgehill on 23 October, but the outcome was not decisive: whilst the Royalists inflicted losses on their opponents, they did not press home the advantage and the Earl of Essex withdrew. The King's army marched on London in the weeks thereafter, but its progress was checked at Turnham Green on 13 November when the Parliamentary forces which it had clashed with at Brentford the previous day were joined by the London trained bands and numerous armed citizens from the capital. Outnumbered two-to-one, the King chose not to give battle and retreated to Oxford, which became the Royalist capital and headquarters for the duration of the Civil War. Charles never got closer to London than in November 1642 and, when he retreated, it became apparent that hostilities would not be resolved swiftly.

Naturally, there was dismay in Parliamentary ranks that Edgehill had not decided the war in their favour. One account, though, elucidated fears that even a victory in the late battle would not necessarily have settled matters:

had we had the day at Edgehill and totally routed the Cavelleers, would that have determined the war[?] I feare rather [that the King would] have called in all the Monarches of Christendome to mentayne Monarchy, And then were wee ingaged, like the Lowe Countrys in p[er]petuall blood.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Powell, *Navy*, p.31

¹⁰⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.28

¹⁰⁹ Cornwall Record Office, Tremayne MSS. T/1608/6; Parliamentary fears outlined, 28 October 1642

The account reflected, then, widespread Parliamentary fears that the King's efforts to win support from foreign allies might succeed, with England descending into the 'chaos' which was being reported from the Continent. The need to fight on was made plain:

How great then is our streight, for if we surrender we undoe our selves[.] If the Kinge by Victory (or treachery of our Comanders) the labour is saved us, then, soe haveing refused his mercy wee must expect his Justice.¹¹⁰

As 1642 drew to a close, Parliament held a series of ports on all the coasts of England and Wales, including Hull, Yarmouth, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Dover, Milford Haven and Bristol.¹¹¹ That meant that Parliament's Navy had scope to intervene in areas of Royalist dominance in the West and North of England. Parliament could not count on total command of the seas, however, because the King soon turned to privateers willing to gun-run for his armies. The Royalist ports, too, were numerous enough to give the King opportunities to land significant quantities of arms, with reports that around ten thousand foot arms, two thousand arms for the cavalry and twenty cannon had been delivered from Europe to his armies by November 1642.¹¹²

Whilst Parliament appeared to have far more of an advantage at sea, the King's supporters were able to fight back in 1643, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹¹⁰ Cornwall Record Office, Tremayne MSS. T/1608/6; Parliamentary fears outlined, 28 October 1642

¹¹¹ An interesting study on the impact of geography during the war can be found in L. Hochberg, 'The English Civil War in Geographical Perspective', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 14, No. 4 (Spring 1984)

¹¹² Powell, *Navy*, p.28

CHAPTER THREE: THE ROYALIST FIGHTBACK

In 1643, Parliament faced a sustained Royalist challenge. The King's armies achieved greater successes on land, whilst at sea the Royalists exploited Parliamentary shortcomings. The capture of Bristol in July, twinned with the King's continuing control of Chester and the North Welsh ports, gave the Royalists an opportunity to ship thousands of reinforcements into England from Ireland when Parliament's Irish Guard was depleted. A Royalist Navy began to take shape, but it was not a fleet of state ships acting under a centralised command structure, but rather a series of privateer flotillas with divergent interests and approaches. Nevertheless, Parliament's hold over the Navy proved vital in maintaining a Parliamentary presence in the regions where Royalism ran strong. Besieged outposts were supported by sea and so Parliament managed to prevent the King from winning more widespread victories. Crucially, the King's armies suffered considerable casualties throughout 1643 and failed to inflict a knockout blow against Parliament. This chapter will consider the above issues.

Over the winter of 1642/3, both parties were involved in talks and overtures relating to peace, but no end to hostilities was agreed. As Clarendon related, whilst the possibility of peace was being discussed, 'the kingdom...felt the sad effects of war; neither the king nor the parliament being slack in pursuing the business by the sword'.¹

The year began well for the Royalists, with the capture on 17 January of 'a fleet of forty sail' near Falmouth.² Atrocious weather had driven the ships under the batteries of Pendennis Castle and the local Royalists, under Sir Nicholas Slanning, were quick to take charge of the cargoes.³ Out of this bounty, Slanning was able to equip the Cornish Royalists with arms and to settle their unpaid wages. Reportedly, there was 'such a liberal stock of money' that a fortnight's advance pay could be given to the troops.⁴ Ships set out by Slanning also captured three vessels belonging to a Plymouth merchant, with valuable stores of plate onboard.⁵ The value to the King of his Cornish ports and shipping was obvious, then.

It was not uncommon in treacherous weather for a ship to be destroyed, the wreckage washing up on shore, or the crew managing to steer a badly-damaged vessel to the coast. The sometimes volatile nature of the sea was something which no

¹ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1222

² J. Barratt, *Cavaliers: The Royalist Army at War, 1642-1646* (Stroud, 2000), p.130

³ Powell, *Navy*, p.33

⁴ *A great victory by Sir Ralph Hopton* (January 1643) in J. R. Powell and E. K. Timings (eds), *Documents Relating to the Civil War, 1642-1648* (London, 1963), p.58

⁵ Powell, *Navy*, p.33

seventeenth-century ship-designer could hope to overcome. As discussed above, the stranded crews frequently met with a harsh reaction when they reached land.

The Committee for the Admiralty outlined what often took place in the aftermath of a wreck: ‘the practice of [th]e people dwelling upon [th]e Coasts is exceeding barbarous, adding affliction to affliction & making a Prey of [th]e distresses’.⁶ The temptation to plunder any remaining cargo was especially acute in the Civil War when the battle for resources was so heightened. The Committee seemingly held the acts which regulated any contracts for salvages in low regard, referring to them as ‘not much inferiour for cruelty’ in comparison with the behaviour of the plunderers.⁷ In principal, the Admiralty wished to see those who had encountered a hostile response receive suitable compensation, urging the regional vice-admirals to do all in their power to confront any abuses. That was easier said than done, however, for no jurisdiction could police each and every strip of coast, or endeavour to track down all guilty parties. These guidelines were especially difficult to enforce during a time of prolonged conflict.

Hopton’s army, having been ill-equipped after the depredations of the war’s opening months, was now relatively well supplied for a short period and soon advanced into neighbouring Devon, having defeated the Parliamentary forces which sought to block its path at Braddock Down (19 January) and Saltash (22 January). Having failed to capture Parliamentary Plymouth in December 1642, Hopton ordered a fresh assault and invested the town once more. In the previous siege, the Cavaliers had been very confident, with one participant predicting that Plymouth would soon be ‘in ill condition’.⁸ The Royalists cut off the town’s water supply ‘and they are grown in the towne so timorous as that they dare not com[e] forth to fight with us’.⁹ Yet the Royalists were too weak to blockade the city for any sustained length of time and had been chased back into Cornwall.

Besieging Plymouth once more in February 1643, Hopton’s forces were again too weak to bring about its submission. As in the previous assault, Parliament’s Navy was decisive in keeping the town supplied and Hopton’s siege was unsuccessful. Plymouth’s defence rested, in large part, on the sea: Parliamentary warships were able

⁶ NA, SP16/512/47; Rules and Orders for Regulating Vice-Admirals, April 1647

⁷ NA, SP16/512/47; Rules and Orders for Regulating Vice-Admirals, April 1647

⁸ Cornwall Record Office, Rashleigh MSS. RS/1/1051; Peter Courtenay to Jonathan Rashleigh, 24 November 1642

⁹ Cornwall Record Office, Rashleigh MSS. RS/1/1051; Peter Courtenay to Jonathan Rashleigh, 24 November 1642

to access the port with relative ease thanks to the deep waters of its approaches.¹⁰ Hopton and his men were forced to flee back to Cornwall after being attacked by Devon Parliamentary forces and a lull in operations followed until April.¹¹

After the failure to take Plymouth, the Cornish Royalists faced an arms shortfall, but, in the words of Clarendon, ‘as if sent by Providence, an opportunity found them’.¹² Sir George Carteret, ‘after he had refused to have command’ in the Parliamentary Navy, had gone with his family to Jersey.¹³ Eager to serve the King, though, he had come to Cornwall, looking to raise a troop of horse. Upon arrival, however, ‘he was unanimously importuned by the commanders, after they had acquainted him with their hopeless and desperate want of powder, to assist them in that manner’.¹⁴ Carteret was told that the Cornish ports were ideal havens to which powder could be sent and he thereafter organised for supplies to be shipped over from France, ‘first upon his own credit, and then upon return of such commodities out of Cornwall as they could well spare’.¹⁵ According to Clarendon, the traffic was considerable and contributed to Cornwall’s continued growth into a Royalist stronghold.

The Queen’s efforts to raise arms on the Continent continued into 1643, with Parliament trying to follow developments as closely as possible. Parliamentary agents in Holland did all in their power to stay up to date with the Queen’s machinations. As Clarendon related, the Queen had been industrious in advancing the King’s interest ever since ‘her first going into Holland’ and had sent ‘very great quantities of arms and ammunition to Newcastle’.¹⁶ Fortune had not always favoured the Royalists, though: ‘by the vigilance of the parliament agents in those parts, and the power of their ships, too much of it was intercepted’.¹⁷ With much of the North having been placed under a firm Royalist footing, though, in the opening stages of the war, the Queen decided to return to England.

On 19 January 1643, Henrietta Maria sailed from Scheveningen, several miles from The Hague. According to a contemporary account, the Queen’s flotilla consisted of nine men-of-war, with five smaller vessels to transport the baggage. These had been provided by the Dutch, but the account alluded to the divided loyalties of the United

¹⁰ Powell, *Navy*, p.35

¹¹ Barratt, *Cavaliers*, p.131

¹² Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1235

¹³ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1235

¹⁴ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1235

¹⁵ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1235

¹⁶ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1244

¹⁷ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1244

Provinces: ‘notwithstanding many arts and means used to persuade the contrary’.¹⁸ For several days, though, the ships made little or no progress, violent storms confining them to the Dogger Bank. Despairing at ‘this sad and unsafe condition’, the flotilla returned to Holland, having lost two ships in the terrible conditions.¹⁹ Without a nearby English port ‘where she might safely adventure her Person’, the Queen had no alternative but a Dutch retreat.²⁰ At that stage of the war, Parliament’s hold on the majority of English ports posed numerous complications for the Royalists abroad. In stark terms, the Queen needed good weather and a dip in the Parliamentary Navy’s effectiveness to transport her cargoes to England with any success. The Queen’s difficulties highlighted the Royalists’ need to control ports nearer to the Continent: it was a key priority for the King to put that right in 1643.

Henrietta Maria spent several weeks as a guest of William II, Prince of Orange, whilst a fresh expedition was being planned.²¹ In total, thirteen vessels were made ready, including ‘seven greater ships’.²² There was a further delay, though, because Warwick had dispatched two Parliamentary warships, the *Providence* and the *Greyhound*, to keep watch over the Queen’s ‘fleet’ and these vessels soon threatened a key Royalist ammunition ship. The Queen was adamant that the ammunition should not fall into enemy hands, ‘knowing how much the King’s service, and his good subjects and soldiers in the North were concerned in it’.²³ The Royalist Army of the North was heavily reliant on imported arms to wage war in the forthcoming campaigning season: without fresh supplies, Royalist strength in the region could be undone.

The picture was soon complicated, though, by disagreements between the pro-Royalist Prince of Orange and the pro-Parliamentarian States Provincial of Holland. The Parliamentary ships were readying to capture or sink the ammunition vessel when Admiral Tromp ‘went with two men of war to fetch it off’.²⁴ He was enforcing neutrality in Dutch waters, but soon faced orders from the States Provincial to seize and

¹⁸ *A true Relation of the Queen’s return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.62

¹⁹ *A true Relation of the Queen’s return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.62

²⁰ *A true Relation of the Queen’s return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.62

²¹ The changing relationship between the Stuarts and the House of Orange is discussed in S. Groenveld, ‘The House of Orange and the House of Stuart, 1639-1650: a Revision’, *The Historical Journal*, 34, No. 4 (1991)

²² *A true Relation of the Queen’s return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.63

²³ *A true Relation of the Queen’s return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.64

²⁴ *A true Relation of the Queen’s return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.64

search the ship, with any arms to be confiscated and taken ashore. Tromp hesitated about overseeing such an affront to the Queen and deferred the decision to the Prince of Orange and the States General, the national assembly of the United Provinces. Henrietta Maria was outraged, knowing all too well the importance of the ammunition to her husband's war effort. 'Touched with the sense of so visible an indignity', she launched a fierce diplomatic offensive to regain control over the ship.²⁵

The Queen wrote to the States General and complained bitterly about what she perceived to be Dutch double standards. She referred to an order 'formerly made by the States' which forbade the trade of arms to either the King or Parliament, which in itself offended the King, because it placed Parliament 'in equal rank with him'.²⁶ She went on: 'the default of observation of that order, hath been yet more displeasing to her'.²⁷ For all the talk of preserving neutrality and showing favour to neither party, the Queen observed that numerous arms had been sent from the United Provinces to England for Parliament's service. She concluded her letter by warning of a grave breach between King Charles I and the United Provinces. The whole episode demonstrated the hollowness of Dutch pledges not to intervene in the English Civil War. There was money to be made from selling arms to both King and Parliament: no governmental policy was likely to stem the commercial influences which were at work.

The States General was convened, with the Prince of Orange in attendance and arguing vigorously in favour of his relative Henrietta Maria.²⁸ It was decided that the ship would be returned to the Queen, with Tromp's commission expanded to encompass the protection of her flotilla from any hostile forces. To save face, the States Provincial of Holland claimed to have mistaken the ship for a private vessel and it was soon released back into Royalist hands.

Tromp went to retrieve the ammunition ship and gave warnings to the Parliamentary vessels that he would fire on them if they attempted to prevent his doing so. The *Providence* 'made three shots at it', but these all missed their target, and Tromp returned fire, which persuaded the Parliamentary ships to exercise caution and

²⁵ *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.64

²⁶ *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.67

²⁷ *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.67

²⁸ *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.64

make a retreat.²⁹ Parliament did not want to become entangled in a war with the Dutch and its ships had to be careful not to provoke such complications.

Finally, on 16 February, the ammunition vessel joined the rest of the Queen's shipping at Scheveningen.³⁰ The impact of bad weather and Parliament's naval presence had brought about considerable disruption to the Royalists, but, with a degree of support from Admiral Tromp's squadron, the Queen was now more confident of landing in the North of England.

On 17 February the Queen's flotilla took to the seas once more, with Newcastle the intended landing spot. Since the Earl of Newcastle had placed the city under Royalist control the previous year, efforts had been made to fortify the settlements and also the river, 'whereby that harbour might only be in the king's obedience'.³¹ Vice-Admiral Batten and his squadron were directed by Parliament to sail there to try and block her path, but the Royalists were only able to get as far as Scarborough before the wind changed and compelled them to anchor at Bridlington Bay. On 21 February, the Queen landed and took lodgings in a house on the quay, the Earl of Newcastle's Royalist cavalry having arrived and reassured her of her safety.³²

For Batten the challenge was to try and capture the Royalist arms *without* provoking Tromp, who was still keeping guard on the Queen's ships.³³ He decided not to attack the Royalist ships which remained at anchor and instead ordered several of his vessels to fire at the village where the Queen was in residence. The Queen's house itself came under direct assault, with numerous shots forcing her to flee for safety. Tromp's patience soon wore thin, however, and he made plain to Batten that a confrontation between the Parliamentarian and Dutch squadrons was inevitable if he did not call off the cannonades.³⁴ Batten relented, keen not to risk a prolonged dispute with the Dutch. The tide soon went down and Batten's ships were forced further out to sea. In the breathing space thus afforded, the Royalists unloaded all of their ships' cargoes, the

²⁹ *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, pp.64-65

³⁰ *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.65

³¹ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1243

³² *A true Relation of the Queen's return out of Holland* (February 1643) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.65; BL, TT, E.246 [37] *A Perfect Diurnall of the Passages in Parliament* (London, 27 February-6 March 1643)

³³ Tromp usually acted with caution where Henrietta Maria was concerned, probably anxious not to offend the Prince of Orange. For example, in April 1643, he permitted a Newcastle arms ship to leave Dunkirk 'because he produced the Queen's warrant'. That was in spite of the criticisms which Parliament made about such incidents. See *HMC, Portland*, I, p.113; Walter Strickland to William Lenthall, 4 May 1643

³⁴ BL, Harleian MSS. 7397, 78; Henrietta Maria to Charles I, 15 February 1643

valuable bounty of arms finally having reached England. The weapons haul included thirty two cannon, up to ten thousand small arms and seventy eight barrels of powder.³⁵ Royalists were outraged that the Queen had been fired upon, ‘which barbarous and treasonable act was so much the more odious, in that the parliament never so far took notice of it, as to disavow it’.³⁶ The episode was a demonstration, though, that Parliament would resort to controversial measures in its attempts to try and stem the flow of arms entering England for the King’s service.

Soon afterwards, the Queen escorted the arms to the Royalist stronghold at York. The shipments which landed that February at Bridlington were crucial in equipping the Royalist Army of the North for the 1643 campaigns and also enabled the King’s main Oxford field army to maintain operations until further supplies from abroad bore fruit.³⁷ The weapons were actually intended primarily for the Oxford army and it was telling that the nearest place at which they could be landed was the Northeast of England, at considerable distance from the Royalist epicentre.³⁸ It was another illustration of the logistical problems which confronted the King.

The repercussions of the Queen’s arrival in the North were swiftly felt. In March 1643, the Royalists welcomed Scarborough into their sphere of influence, thus widening the range of ports to which they could ship weaponry. Over the winter, the town’s Parliamentarian governor, Sir Hugh Cholmley, had entertained increasing doubts about the Parliamentarian cause. He now wished for an accommodation with the King and harboured a general revulsion towards the war itself. The Queen’s proximity, and the increasing dominance of the King’s party in Yorkshire, probably also contributed to his change of allegiance.³⁹ He may also have believed that the only way to save his estate from further Royalist depredations was to support the Sovereign. Furthermore, he was not on the best of terms with the commander of Parliament’s northern forces, Ferdinando, Lord Fairfax, or his key followers.⁴⁰ Cholmley thus switched allegiances and Scarborough followed his lead. Some supporters of Parliament took their leave of the town, amongst them the Puritan John Lawson, who soon afterwards pledged his ship to the King’s enemies at Hull.

³⁵ Barratt, *Cavaliers*, p.81

³⁶ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1245

³⁷ Barratt, *Cavaliers*, p.81

³⁸ Barratt, *Cavaliers*, p.155

³⁹ J. Binns, ‘Cholmley, Sir Hugh, first baronet (1600-1657), Royalist army officer and autobiographer’, *ODNB*

⁴⁰ D. Scott, ‘The ‘Northern Gentleman’, the Parliamentary Independents, and Anglo-Scottish Relations in the Long Parliament’, *The Historical Journal*, 42, No.2 (1999), p.352

Cholmley was soon appointed the Royalist governor of Scarborough, whilst also assuming responsibility for all marine affairs from the Tees ports to Bridlington. Under Royalist-control, Scarborough became a busy hub of activity, especially with regards to the sea. Sir John Hotham ordered the re-capture of the port for Parliament and sent two pinnaces armed with ten cannon to support a land force under his son. Cholmley performed a masterstroke, though, by convincing the ships' crews that his loyalty remained with Parliament and then seizing the two vessels.⁴¹ The ships' cannon were then used to help defeat the Parliamentarian land forces, a clear demonstration of the usefulness which captured artillery could provide. Thereafter, until its seizure by Sir John Meldrum in February 1645, Scarborough was the King's most important North Sea port.⁴² Margaret, future Duchess of Newcastle, recognised the damage done to Parliament by Scarborough's falling under Royalist control: 'for by that means the enemy was much annoyed and prejudiced at sea, and a great part in the East Riding of Yorkshire kept in due obedience'.⁴³

Alongside its role as an entry point for arms for his northern armies, the King wished for Scarborough to play an active role in the distribution of munitions for his forces elsewhere. Cholmley recorded the arrival of a Scottish sergeant-major, entrusted with a bounty of arms.⁴⁴ He was under orders from the Queen to ship the weapons and munitions to Scotland, some of which were intended for the Earl of Antrim's forces. Cholmley, though, managed to persuade the Queen that the arms would be better-employed at Scarborough. One of his arguments was that sending arms into Scotland, at a time when the Scots had still not entered the war, might deter them from joining with the King, and 'if they intended to take parte with the Parliament this might give them better rise then yett they had to raise an Army'.⁴⁵ Scarborough's value as an entry point for arms was at its highest when the Royalists controlled the route to York from the east coast.

Under Parliament's control, Scarborough had been a base from which attacks could be launched against 'suspect' merchant ships. The same was true once the town defected to the Royalists. Cholmley is believed to have controlled somewhere in the region of eight pinnaces during the mid-1640s, two of which were Dutch, under Peter

⁴¹ Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough', p.146

⁴² Binns, *Scarborough*, p.99

⁴³ Firth, *Cavendish*, pp.19-20

⁴⁴ Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough', p.146

⁴⁵ Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough', p.146

Anderson and Jacob Williamson.⁴⁶ The Dutch ships were gun-runners, with the others employed mainly in attacks against Parliamentary vessels.

Cholmley's most noteworthy privateer commander was the fellow former-Parliamentarian Browne Bushell, from nearby Whitby, who took charge of the 12-gun *Cavendish*.⁴⁷ It was reported in January 1644 that Bushell had been at Newcastle for over six weeks, having previously captured the *Ipswich Sarah*, which was then loaded with coal to barter for arms in Holland.⁴⁸ Such traffic was all well and good whilst the King enjoyed control over Newcastle and Sunderland, but, once those two towns had fallen to his enemies, he could no longer rely on the precious coal reserves to buy arms. Parliament was concerned to revive regular supplies of coal to the capital. The depredations of privateers from Scarborough against coal-ships focused Parliamentary minds and it was decided that Scarborough could no longer be left unconquered. It was to come under increased pressure from Parliament from 1644 onwards.

The Cornish privateers continued their depredations, meanwhile, but Parliament's ships were not idle. In some instances, Parliament's commanders resorted to subterfuge to lure their enemies into range. A notable case in point claimed the *Mayflower*, a Royalist privateer vessel which belonged to Captain Polhill, the King's Admiral of Falmouth.⁴⁹ Polhill was a trusted agent of Sir Francis Bassett, being sent by the latter to buy boats on occasion.⁵⁰

In May 1644, Captain William Thomas, commanding the *Eighth Whelp*, accompanied by the merchant ship *Charity*, under Captain Ralph Dansk, was ordered by Warwick to escort some English trading vessels to Morlaix in Brittany. Dansk had been contracted to serve Parliament back in February, for a period of eight months.⁵¹ Thomas reached the nearby Isle of Basse on 3 June and asked English merchants if they knew any information about recent Royalist activity at sea. He soon learned that Polhill was operating with two other vessels (one of which was a prize) off the Breton coast and was lying at Morlaix.

The next day, Thomas decided to take to the sea in the hope of drawing out Polhill: to try and lull his opponent into a false sense of security, he disguised the *Eighth*

⁴⁶ Binns, *Scarborough*, p.110

⁴⁷ Binns, *Scarborough*, p.111

⁴⁸ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, pp.120-121; Examination of John Chamberlayne, 26 January 1644

⁴⁹ BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captaine of the 8th Whelp, now employed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call'd the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship* (London, 1643)

⁵⁰ Cornwall Record Office, Bassett MSS. B35/54; Payments by Francis Bassett, undated

⁵¹ NA, SP16/494/117; Thomas Smith to Commissioners of the Navy, 11 February 1643

Whelp ‘like a Merchant man’, with the guns removed from view, the crew kept below deck and the paint covered with ‘old Canvas’.⁵² The same applied to *Dansk* and the *Charity*. Before long, spies, operating on Polhill’s behalf, informed him of tempting prey and one of his lieutenants was directed to board the *Charity*. As agreed with Thomas beforehand, *Dansk* spun the lie that both vessels were merchantmen ‘laden with Wool and Iron, and being pursued by Turks men of Warre’ they were now seeking safe convoy to London.⁵³ The message was relayed swiftly to Polhill, ‘who made great haste to come out with his Ship’, having been fooled into believing the ruse.⁵⁴

Once the *Mayflower* was within close range, Thomas cut the cables and manoeuvred to windward, before opening fire. The *Mayflower* suffered from the barrage and ran aground. Thomas anchored the *Eighth Whelp* within musket range of the stranded *Mayflower* and, over the next hour and a half, unleashed ‘an hundred and twenty Pieces of Ordnance upon him’, with fire being returned ‘very hot’.⁵⁵ With their prospects bleak, Polhill and his officers fled to shore whilst the fight drew to a conclusion, the crew soon afterwards signalling their surrender by waving the white flag. Thomas was suspicious, however, that a fresh trap was being set, fearing ‘their treachery’.⁵⁶ He ordered his men into the *Charity* and told *Dansk* to burn the *Mayflower*. Eager for prize money, though, *Dansk* chose to board the ship with his men and set about repairing her leaks, enlisting the aid of her defeated crew.

‘Though she was mightily torn’, the *Mayflower* was preserved and taken as a prize.⁵⁷ Thomas reported that the *Eighth Whelp* discharged a total of 159 shots during

⁵² BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captain of the 8th Whelp, now imployed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call’d the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship*

⁵³ BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captain of the 8th Whelp, now imployed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call’d the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship*

⁵⁴ BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captain of the 8th Whelp, now imployed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call’d the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship*

⁵⁵ BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captain of the 8th Whelp, now imployed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call’d the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship*

⁵⁶ BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captain of the 8th Whelp, now imployed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call’d the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship*

⁵⁷ BL, TT, E.56 [1] *Good Newes from Sea, Being a True Relation of the late Sea-fight betweene Captain William Thomas, Captain of the 8th Whelp, now imployed for the service of King and Parliament, against Captain Polhill, Captaine of the ship call’d the May flower Admirall of Falmouth with the taking of the said ship*

the whole engagement, with one death and several injuries incurred on his side. He claimed that two or more of Polhill's men were killed, with upwards of twenty hurt. Of far more benefit to Thomas, however, was that up to forty men from both Polhill's and Jones' ships joined him, the mariners probably reasoning that their only hope of any pay and continued employment lay with the victors and not the vanquished.

THE SOUTHWEST PORTS COME UNDER ROYALIST DOMINION

Having been forced to call off the siege of Plymouth earlier in the year for want of supplies, Hopton's Royalists were equipped once again by a Bordeaux merchantman which arrived at Falmouth.⁵⁸ With Parliamentary ships plying the Channel, the Cornish Royalists had done their best to fortify the ports under their control, with permanent garrisons established at the castles of Pendennis, St Michael's Mount and St Mawes. Replicating the popular defences of numerous localities throughout the kingdom, earthworks were constructed along the coast as a further means of protection against possible attack from Parliamentary naval gunnery.⁵⁹ Falmouth was one of the strongest Royalist ports and anchorages, defended as it was by Pendennis Castle to the west and St Mawes to the east.⁶⁰

Hopton decided to launch an aggressive Royalist campaign of conquest in the Southwest and, after initial setbacks, he oversaw the defeat of the Parliamentary Western Army on 16 May at Stratton.⁶¹ This was the first of many Royalist successes in the region over the next few months: the victories by land also opened up opportunities for the King at sea, with a series of key ports being captured from Parliament. The victory at Stratton almost exhausted Hopton's supplies, but the capture of seventy barrels of powder and thirteen guns, as well as up to £5000 in ready money, served as ample replenishment and allowed the Royalists to advance into Devon.⁶² Without arms from abroad, however, Hopton would have been unable to launch his campaign in the first place and Cornwall would have been far more vulnerable to a sustained Parliamentary incursion.

Emboldened by victory, the Cornish soldiers were less reluctant to follow Hopton out of the county, something which they had previously been hesitant to do. For example, earlier in the year, Francis Bassett had received a message relating to the

⁵⁸ Powell, *Navy*, p.38

⁵⁹ Stoye, 'Cornwall', p.90

⁶⁰ Cornwall Record Office, Tremayne MSS. T/1876; Order of the Admiralty Board, 6 May 1632

⁶¹ Barratt, *Cavaliers*, p.131

⁶² Barratt, *Cavaliers*, p.132

Cornishmen and their unhappiness at being asked to cross the River Tamar into Devon: 'I think you heard how much unruly & disorder our Posse men were, upon [th]e Motion of going over [th]e Water'.⁶³

The King sent the Marquis of Hertford and Prince Maurice to join up with Hopton in the Southwest, hoping that their combined forces would be capable of placing the whole region under his control. Sir William Waller was unable to prevent it, having called off his campaign in the West Midlands to try and block that union of arms.⁶⁴ Hopton reached Chard in Somerset on 4 June, where he combined armies with Hertford, having met minimal opposition during his progress through Devon.⁶⁵

At that stage, the primary towns and ports of Devon were still in the grip of Parliament, but, whereas Hopton's previous attempts to subdue them had failed due to depleted manpower, he could now call on some of Hertford's men to boost his army.⁶⁶ His victory at Stratton had also weakened Devon's Parliamentarians enough for the latest Royalist campaign in the county to stand a greater chance of success. A crucial point to consider, though, was that Royalist assaults on the ports of Devon would depend entirely on land forces: the King's current deficit of sea power meant that double-pronged attacks could not be undertaken. In that respect, Parliament's Navy afforded besieged ports the opportunity to withstand prolonged sieges, although it could never give a guarantee of permanent safety. The threats to Parliamentary ports in Devon, though, forced Warwick to divert a number of his ships to their defence and support. That may have given the Royalist-controlled Isles of Scilly something of a breathing space, with Francis Godolphin writing on 13 June that 'we have seen noe doubtfull ships upon the coast a great while'.⁶⁷

The Royalists advanced across Somerset, with Taunton and Bridgwater falling by 7 June, with Bristol soon to become a target. During his march through Devon, Hopton had left troops before Exeter to place it under pressure and Maurice and Hertford decided to send a regiment of horse under Sir John Berkeley to assist in the blockade.⁶⁸ As Sir Bevil Grenville related in a letter of 19 June, the major priority for the Royalists was 'to follow Waller wch way soever he went'.⁶⁹ Pushing on through

⁶³ Cornwall Record Office, Bassett MSS. B35/220; Warwick Mohan to Francis Bassett, 29 January 1643

⁶⁴ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.215

⁶⁵ E. A. Andriette, *Devon and Exeter in the Civil War* (Newton Abbot, 1971), p.88

⁶⁶ Andriette, *Devon and Exeter*, pp.88-89

⁶⁷ Cornwall Record Office, Rogers of Penrose MSS. DDRP1/19; Francis Godolphin to John Rogers, 13 June 1643

⁶⁸ Andriette, *Devon and Exeter*, p.89

⁶⁹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/11; Sir Bevil Grenville to Sir Edward Seymour, 19 June 1643

Somerset, the combined Royalist forces won victories over Waller's Parliamentarians at Lansdown (5 July) and Roundway Down (13 July).

The path to Bristol was clear and the Royalists laid siege to it from 24 July, Prince Rupert having arrived to direct the enterprise the previous day. The Parliamentarian garrison was much weaker than usual, however, because Waller had recruited there after Lansdown, in an effort to bring his army back up to strength. Rupert ordered the storming of Bristol on 26 July and, after a bloody engagement, the Royalists won victory. The casualties were high, with the Cornish army sustaining particular losses, including a number of leading officers. Amongst those killed was Sir Nicholas Slanning, whose hands-on role in recruiting shipping for the King now passed to Sir Francis Basset.⁷⁰

The Royalists did not waste the opportunity afforded by Bristol's capture, the surrender terms specifying that the defeated Parliamentarian forces 'are to leave behind them all cannon, and ammunition' for the benefit of the victorious King's party.⁷¹ The loss of Portsmouth in September 1642 had been a considerable blow, denying the Royalists a port close to the southern theatre of the war and hampering supplies for the main field army.⁷² With the seizure of other ports, then, the Royalists managed to offset that loss somewhat, although it had taken time. It was essential for the King to have an assortment of ports on the South coast so as to reduce his reliance on the ports of the North, which were further removed from his headquarters at Oxford, thus increasing the difficulties of transporting arms to his main field army.

The loss of Bristol did considerable damage to Parliament's war effort. Clarendon summarised the importance of the city: 'this reduction of Bristol was a full tide of prosperity to the king...and gave him the undisturbed possession of one of the richest counties of the kingdom'.⁷³ Bristol had been a convenient base from which Parliament could victual the Irish Guard, but with the Royalists assuming control, Parliament was left with only Milford Haven on the Welsh coast as a realistic alternative. Liverpool was at that point still under Parliamentarian control, but was too far north to be viable. Yet Wales had a strong Royalist presence and it was by no means certain that sufficient supplies could reach Milford Haven for the restocking of Parliament's ships in the Irish Sea.

⁷⁰ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.234

⁷¹ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1447

⁷² J. Lynch, 'Bristol Shipping and Royalist Naval Power During the English Civil War', *Mariner's Mirror*, 84, No.3 (August 1998), p.260

⁷³ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1448

Clarendon argued that Wales ‘being freed of the fear of Bristol, and consequently of the charge that always attends those fears’ was now ‘more useful’ to the King.⁷⁴ Thus the Irish Guard was left exposed and, in order to refit, the ships would have to venture to Portsmouth, far from where they were actually needed.⁷⁵ Control of Bristol widened the King’s options, for it afforded him a prominent port much closer to Ireland than those already in his possession on the South coast.⁷⁶ He was planning a truce with the Confederate Irish to free up forces which were fighting in Ireland for use against Parliament in England. With Chester also in his grip, the King could thus target reinforcements to both the Southern and Northern theatres of the war.

The Royalists came into the possession of eight ships thanks to their capture of Bristol and, thereafter, a small fleet operated out of the port, the King appointing Sir John Pennington to command the Royalist ‘navy’.⁷⁷ Pennington was alert to the need to bring in as many ships as possible for his master’s service and recognised the potential offered by recently-captured Dartmouth. Writing to the new Royalist governor of the town, Edward Seymour, on 20 October 1643, he requested assistance, having sent a captain with commands from the King,

for the takinge of such Shippes as are fitt for his service in y[ou]r porte of Dartmouth, and the seeinge this Stated Rigged and Furnisht wth Ordyance and all maner of Ammunicon in a warlike Manor and Victualled for three monethes and comepleatly Mand...⁷⁸

Pennington explained that the captain had a commission for ‘the Pressinge of Men if there bee cause for it’ and was to take out to sea any ships already fitted for service, ‘or to send them out under the Com[m]and of some able Man’.⁷⁹ Furthermore, ‘for that purpose’, Pennington had ‘sent by him Blank Warrants and Instructions for

⁷⁴ Clarendon, *History*, III, p.1448

⁷⁵ Powell, *Navy*, p.43

⁷⁶ The siege to win Bristol had been a costly one for the Royalists and Clarendon’s account (see *History*, III, p.1448) struck a sombre note, alluding to King Pyrrhus’ famous victory against the Romans at Asculum: ‘if we win another at this price, we are utterly undone’. The cost of fighting in 1643 had been a high one for the Royalists and the failure to land a knockout blow would come back to haunt the King, his manpower being reduced to the extent that he had no choice but to call on troops from Ireland. Tarrred by Parliamentarian propagandists as ‘Irish’, these men created a further dent in Charles’ reputation, but were essential for his continuance in the war.

⁷⁷ Powell, *Navy*, p.43

⁷⁸ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/26; Sir John Pennington to Sir Edward Seymour, 20 October 1643

⁷⁹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/26; Sir John Pennington to Sir Edward Seymour, 20 October 1643

such Captaines as shall bee thought fitt to bee Employed in them'.⁸⁰ He wanted Seymour's input and advice on the matter of commanders,

wch I earnestly recom[m]end unto y[ou]r Care, incase any goes out before my cominge thether, wch shall bee (wth Gods assistance) assoone as I have dispache away this Fleete, wch I hope to doe very suddenly if the Winde will Favor us to bringe manye Shipps from Barnestaple.⁸¹

Barnstaple was a vital link between North Devon and Bristol, a prize which the Royalists were happy to exploit. The port had long been important to the wool trade and, in more recent times, had engaged in trade with the New World. It is worth remembering the importance in the seventeenth century of what we today consider to be only minor ports.

The King, eager to form a rival fleet to Parliament, issued *A Proclamation declaring his Majesties Grace to the Mariners and Sea-men* in July 1643. He attacked the Earl of Warwick and his supporters for their actions against him and made plain that they were guilty of 'High Treason'.⁸² The real purpose of the proclamation soon became apparent as he made an offer of pardon to those who would submit to his authority:

[The King] doth...grant His gracious and free Pardon to all those ...employed in any of the said ships or Vessells (the Earl of Warwick only excepted) who upon notice of this His Proclamation, shall to his Use, and in his Name, cause or assist the seising of those ships wherein they serve...and carry them to his His Majesties Port of Falmouth...⁸³

It was no surprise that Warwick was singled out for retribution, his firm support for Parliament making his potential reconciliation with the King nothing more than a fantasy. The proclamation went on, however, to make an attractive offer to the mariners and their masters who did join his war effort:

He shall take care that all the Arreerages of the entertainments and wages promised to them and every of them respectively in the names of the Houses of Parliament, and not paid, shall be well and truly paid...unto them...by His Majesty, with all convenient speed.⁸⁴

It was easy to make grand promises, but the nature of the war demanded military conquests in order to realise such ambitions and that was far from assured. Nonetheless,

⁸⁰ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/26; Sir John Pennington to Sir Edward Seymour, 20 October 1643

⁸¹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/26; Sir John Pennington to Sir Edward Seymour, 20 October 1643

⁸² J. F. Larkin (ed), *Stuart Royal Proclamations, Volume II: Royal Proclamations of Charles I, 1625-1646* (Oxford, 1983), p.928

⁸³ Larkin, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, II, p.928

⁸⁴ Larkin, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, II, p.929

the promise of pay was always an attractive means by which men might be recruited. The King's pledge to share any prizes taken at sea with the mariners was also calculated to endear him to them.

The King listed several expedients by which his promises would be funded. Charles outlined that the estates of those in arms against him 'shall be bestowed on such...of them in the said ships' which answered his proclamation.⁸⁵ Furthermore, any man who had seen his property 'Plundered, Robbed, or Spoyled of their goods or Estates', on account of previous support for the Royalists, could also expect 'satisfaction' from confiscated Parliamentary estates.⁸⁶ For example, on 30 September 1643, the King wrote to the High Sheriff and Commissioners in Cornwall, telling them to seize the estates of 'all such persons who have been Actors, Abettors or Contributors to the present horrid Rebellion against us'.⁸⁷

Pennington was named as the commander over whatever squadron of ships might form at Falmouth, but, in the light of Bristol's capture, the main focus of Royalist naval activity switched to the latter port. Successes over the summer boosted the King's sea capabilities still further, with the capture of numerous ports in Devon establishing for the Cavaliers 'almost a miniature maritime state in the region'.⁸⁸

The major part of the army which had stormed Bristol was diverted to lay siege to Gloucester, with the Southwest forces placed under the command of Prince Maurice and ordered into Dorset and Devon. An unsuccessful attempt on Lyme Regis persuaded Maurice to advance into Devon and offer support for the Royalist siege of Exeter.⁸⁹ The siege had been in progress since May and the defenders were aiming to hold out long enough for relief by their allies from within the county or from the Navy.

ROYALIST PLOTS FOILED AT HULL

Whilst the King's cause prospered in the Southwest, his fortunes were also favourable in the North. The Earl of Newcastle had overrun much of Yorkshire, with a victory over the Fairfaxes at Adwalton Moor on 30 June shattering the region's Parliamentary strength. Hull was now Parliament's last remaining stronghold in the county and the Royalists entertained hopes that it could be conquered by treachery,

⁸⁵ Larkin, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, II, p.929

⁸⁶ Larkin, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, II, p.929

⁸⁷ Cornwall Record Office, Bassett MSS. B35/22; Charles I to the High Sheriff and Commissioners of Cornwall, 30 September 1643

⁸⁸ J. D. Davies, 'Devon and the Navy in the Civil and Dutch Wars, 1642-88' in M. Duffy, S. Fisher, B. Greenhill, D. J. Starkey and J. Youings (eds), *The New Maritime History of Devon: From Early Times to the Late Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., London, 1992), I, p.119

⁸⁹ Andriette, *Devon and Exeter*, p.91

rather than force. The governor, Sir John Hotham, so resolute in defending the town for Parliament the previous year, was now in secret correspondence with Newcastle to deliver it to the King.

Word of Hotham's duplicity soon reached Captain Moyer, commander of the *Hercules*. The ship had maintained a patrol at Hull for some time and Moyer sent notice to the town's mayor that a plot was underway. He then ordered a hundred seamen to be landed to help secure the town, as the mayor put the garrison to work and arrested Hotham.⁹⁰ The loyalty of the *Hercules* paid dividends, as Hotham's plotting was thwarted. He was sent to London aboard the *Hercules* to face the consequences of his actions, later standing trial and facing the executioner in January 1644. As Fairfax was told in a letter of 10 December 1643, Hotham's son, who aided his father's chicanery, would meet 'the same doome'.⁹¹

The Fairfaxes soon answered calls to repair to Hull and reached the town on 4 July.⁹² The Royalists' lack of sufficient naval power was arguably a crucial factor behind Hull's remaining under Parliamentary control thereafter. Hull's landward defences were formidable and the best means of defeating the garrison probably lay in a blockade by sea, although the River Humber would also need to be controlled. Newcastle's Northern Army did not have a Royalist fleet with which to coordinate a joint land and sea operation, though, and the garrison could call upon Parliamentary shipping to aid them in times of necessity.

Flushed by the recent success at Adwalton Moor, Newcastle opted against an immediate assault on the town, preferring instead to focus his attentions on Lincolnshire to the south. He did, though, open up the sluices which had hitherto prevented the sea from flooding the low-lying shores of the Humber estuary.⁹³ The resultant damage to Hull's surrounding countryside meant that Sir Thomas Fairfax's cavalry could call upon few supplies and so he decided to ship them out of Hull and into Lincolnshire.⁹⁴ Parliament's ability to provide the shipping necessary for such an operation was a major boon to its war effort in Lincolnshire, then, as forces which would have been tied up with little to do in Hull were redeployed for more pressing service elsewhere.

⁹⁰ BL, TT. E.59 [2] *More Plots found out, and Plotters apprehended. A true Relation of the discovery of a most desperate and dangerous Plot, for the delivering up, and surprisall of the Townes of Hull, and Beverly* (London, 1643)

⁹¹ BL, Sloane MSS. 1519, f.37; John Lambert to Sir Thomas Fairfax, 10 December 1643

⁹² Powell, *Navy*, p.41

⁹³ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.225

⁹⁴ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.225

Newcastle's failure to sustain the immediate pressure on the Fairfaxes when they reached Hull perhaps cost him his best chance of total success in Yorkshire.

Fairfax's cavalry went on to play an important role in the Parliamentary triumph at Winceby on 11 October 1643, a victory which checked Newcastle's ambitions to advance southwards. Another factor behind his reluctance to campaign any further south was his failure to conquer Hull, which remained as Parliament's major base in the North. He feared that his enemies might land significant forces there to challenge his army from the rear. Hull withstood a siege into the autumn, supplied by the sea, and Newcastle chose to retire from the field rather than waste further resources. The Navy, then, helped to maintain a Parliamentary presence in Yorkshire, at a time when the Royalists were numerically stronger.

THE IRISH GUARD

The surviving correspondence of naval captains who served in the Irish Guard is not exhaustive, but accounts can be found. For example, a series of letters from August 1643 by Captain William Smith, at that point commanding the *Swallow*, offer a glimpse into the Irish Guard's duties.⁹⁵

Smith related the capture of two Royalist ships at Milford Haven. Having sailed from Kinsale on 3 August, the *Swallow* soon encountered a trading vessel which originated in North Yarmouth, but which was *en-route* to Milford laden with wood. The ship was stopped, of course, and found to be no threat to Parliament. Smith took the opportunity to speak with the master and find out any notable news which might be of use. In an era bereft of modern communications that was often the best and sometimes only means of keeping up-to-date with developments. Smith soon learned that the vessel had come into contact with the *Expedition*, whose Captain Jordan had discussed the recent capture of a privateer: 'she came from Rochell in France, and was bound for the reliefe of the Rebels'.⁹⁶ The ship was captured before St David's Head on the Pembrokeshire coast and contained a useful cargo of salt and some sixteen guns. Smith wanted to meet with Jordan, the latter having apparently gone on to Milford, where a

⁹⁵ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successe, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament* (London, 1643)

⁹⁶ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successe, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

number of ‘passengers’ from the privateer had seemingly fled before the ship was seized.⁹⁷ Smith was anxious that they were soon apprehended.

Smith determined on sailing for Milford, but was met by a fishing vessel as he came into the mouth of the harbour. The fishermen provided him with intelligence about two enemy ships which were before Milford: the 400-tonne *Fellowship* of Bristol and the *Hart* frigate. Four captains were aboard the *Fellowship* and were named as Burley, Brooks, Hayle and Banister, whilst a Captain Nesson commanded the *Hart*. The impact of the Royalists’ recent capture of Bristol was clearly being felt: an aggressive policy of Royalist naval expansion was being attempted. The local gentry had all been summoned aboard the *Fellowship* where they were bombarded with ominous messages of the King’s retribution if they did not support him: any failure to comply would result in plunder at the hands of Prince Rupert.⁹⁸

They were told that Parliament’s cause was hopeless, with Bristol having surrendered to a Royalist army, ‘and that all the Kingdom did now repaire unto his Maiestie to seek his gracious pardon’ before his imminent march on London.⁹⁹ The theme was obviously one of Royalist triumphalism, but did not reflect reality: Parliament was by no means defeated in the war. The captains were playing their part in the King’s propaganda war: magnifying the success of the Royalists, whilst denigrating their opponents.

The *Hart* and *Fellowship* had been sent to Milford ordered to augment the King’s fleet by recruiting any ships they could find. Pardons were promised to each and every captain and mariner who repaired to Bristol with them. Clearly, Smith could not stand by and let such actions go unchallenged.

Smith called on his men to prepare for action. To help encourage them, he made reference to the bounty said to be stored on the *Fellowship*:

the ship was rich, having aboard her divers goods belonging to the Marchants of Bristoll to preserve from plundering, all which the owners of the ship had traycerously delivered with their ship into the hands of the Cavaleirs.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

⁹⁸ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

⁹⁹ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰⁰ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

He suggested that the men would probably enjoy a direct benefit following the ship's capture: 'Parliament would acknowledge their constancy in gratifying their fidelity, according to the values of the prize'.¹⁰¹ To further bolster his men's resolve, Smith made mention of Parliament's decision to increase the sailors' wages in 1642. It was a clear attempt to link service to Parliament with financial gain, but religion was also invoked. Smith told his sailors that if they fought well, it would be a demonstration of their 'love and zeal to God's cause'.¹⁰²

On 7 August, the *Swallow* entered the harbour, but the Royalist captains had 'made us from the top of a hill, before we came in'.¹⁰³ Upon the *Swallow* coming within firing range, a small boat sailed out from the *Fellowship* to parley with Smith. Captain John Brooks boarded the *Swallow* and tried to persuade Smith to grant him a private audience, but Smith would have none of it. Brooks then did his best to alter the sailors' allegiances, by repeating the King's pledges of clemency for those who defected from Parliament. It was a brazen attempt to undermine Smith's authority, but it failed to achieve its objective. Smith soon condemned the commanders of the *Fellowship* and the *Hart*, saying that they differed little from pirates. Brooks was swift to defend the actions of himself and his fellow commanders, telling Smith that the *Fellowship* was acting under a commission from Sir John Pennington, the true Lord Admiral, whilst the *Hart* had gone to sea with a commission from Prince Rupert. Predictably, Smith attacked the legitimacy of such commissions and signalled his intention to seize the recalcitrant ships.¹⁰⁴

As the talks drew to a close, the *Fellowship* cut her cables and made a bold attempt to sail for shore. The *Swallow* quickly set off in pursuit and opened up her guns three times, before Brooks pleaded urgently for a halt to hostilities and promised to deliver the *Fellowship* if guarantees were made that the ship's company and commanders would be set free on shore or transported to Bristol. Brooks' threats that the ship would be burnt by the crew if the demands were not met failed to sway Smith's

¹⁰¹ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰² BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰³ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰⁴ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

position: 'I replied unto him, that burne she should, for I was resolved not to part with any one man of them, for I valued them more then I did the ship'.¹⁰⁵ Smith decided to make a direct offer to the master and ship's crew aboard the *Fellowship* and sent them a letter asking that they surrender the ship and hand over the remaining Royalist captains. A generous promise to pay their wages helped persuade them to bring the *Fellowship* over to Parliament 'without the losse or hurt of any one man'.¹⁰⁶

The *Hart* was nowhere near as submissive and tried to escape, travelling eight miles inland via a river, before Captain Nesson abandoned her in a creek and sped off with the majority of his men. The *Swallow* had fired on her as she headed for shore, killing two men and injuring another, before Smith sent Captain Row Williams and a small party in pursuit. Numerous shots were fired by both sides, but Williams had to content himself with capturing the vessel, not the men. The relative flexibility and speed of a frigate were demonstrated: as a shallow draught vessel, the *Hart* had the option to sail further inland via routes far too narrow for the larger, purpose-built warships.¹⁰⁷

Smith wrote to Griffith White, one of Pembroke's Parliamentarian gentry, and asked him to spur 'the rest of the Gentlemen of this County' into apprehending the escapees of the *Hart*:

It is thought some Priests and Jesuites were amongst them, and...they have jewels and money, the which I am informed they brought from Rochell in France, & were bound to the reliefe of the Rebels at Wexford in Ireland.¹⁰⁸

Surveying the events before Milford, Smith set out the challenges which Parliament would face in the autumn of 1643 and devoted his attention to the wider strategic questions:

I set sayle in pursuit of my Admirall, to acquaint him with our proceedings, and also that Bristoll was lost, and the fleet is now repairing there to command our

¹⁰⁵ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰⁶ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰⁷ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹⁰⁸ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successes, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

fleet, wherein Sir John Pennington is to come out Admirall, that so we must use our best endeavours to nip these proceedings in the bud.¹⁰⁹

Smith was adamant that Milford Haven should be given sufficient victuals with which to supply the ships of the Irish Guard. He wanted a squadron to destroy the Royalist fleet in Bristol harbour before it could get to sea, but held out hope, however small, that a peaceful surrender might take place. A newsheet printed on 5 August expressed Parliament's grave concern at Pennington's presence at Bristol and bemoaned the loss of such a considerable port.¹¹⁰ The Irish Guard already faced the challenge of guarding the Welsh coast, whilst blocking any enemies from Ireland, and with a Royalist fleet having now been established the task grew more difficult.

There was no doubt, however, that Milford Haven was a boon to the Parliamentary war effort. In a letter of 31 August 1643 to the Committee at Milford, the Commons celebrated Smith's recent capture of the two ships sent from Royalist Bristol to strike at the port.¹¹¹ The correspondence acknowledged the garrison's wish to have sufficient shipping available in the region, with a promise that the Lord Admiral had been directed to find vessels suitable for the task. Difficulties existed, however: 'for asmuch as [th]e time of victualling of those Shippes there and likewise of divers others upon [th]e Irish Coast will shortly expire', the Committee was asked to provide the victuals necessary to support an Irish Guard for winter, the problems of time and distance from London being cited.¹¹² That naturally placed significant demands on Milford itself, something not popular with the Committee, for the challenge from Royalist land forces was an ever-present issue.

SOVEREIGNTY

With numerous Southwest ports now beginning to play an active role in the Royalist war effort, and with several Northeast ports also acting in the King's interest, Parliament entertained increasing fears that the King might succeed in obtaining concrete aid from a foreign ally. For Warwick, the major priority at sea was to patrol the North Sea and the Channel in order to confront the Royalist arms shipments, but also to try and deter a foreign power, such as Denmark, from intervening militarily in the King's favour. Charles I was so eager for Danish naval assistance, in fact, that he even

¹⁰⁹ BL, TT. E.65 [29] *Severall Letters of Great Importance, And Good Successe, Lately obtained against the Fellowship of Bristow, by Captain William Smith, Captain of his Majesties Ship called the Swallow, now in service for the King and Parliament*

¹¹⁰ BL, TT. 669, f.8 (19) *A true Relation of the taking of Bristoll* (Oxford, 1643)

¹¹¹ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.315r; House of Commons to Committee at Milford Haven, 31 August 1643

¹¹² Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.315r; House of Commons to Committee at Milford Haven, 31 August 1643

offered to cede the Orkney Islands to the Scandinavian kingdom, but Denmark's own entanglements on the Continent, coupled with the threat from Warwick's Navy, put paid to the scheme.¹¹³ In April 1643, Parliament instructed Warwick to take a firm stance when encountering any foreign vessels, warning him of the dangers of supplies reaching the Royalists or the rebellious Irish: the message did not tell the Lord Admiral anything he did not already know, but reinforced the point that an aggressive approach was essential.¹¹⁴ Parliament's instructions shed light, though, on the wider issue of English sovereignty during the Civil War.

In his own instructions to Captain Swanley, sometime commander of the Irish Guard, Warwick addressed English maritime sovereignty, echoing many of the views which the King had held during the 1630s. He deemed it essential that no foreign nation be allowed to 'intrude' into 'his Ma[ies]t[ie]s hono[urable] Coasts, Jurisdiccons [and] Territories'.¹¹⁵

The Lord Admiral referred to the King's sovereignty, but, in reality, Parliament was now the principal defender of England's power at sea. Swanley was instructed that should any ship fail to acknowledge 'his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Soveraigntie' by refusing to strike its topsails and take in its flags, then he and his officers were 'to force them thereunto' to do so.¹¹⁶ Warwick's instructions on the sovereignty of the sea repeated virtually word-for-word those given to the Earl of Lindsey, commander of the Ship Money fleet in 1635, and demonstrated the continuity attached to the issue.¹¹⁷ The defence of trade was cited in both documents.

Rodger remarks on the English Navy's fixation with saluting during that period, highlighting its 'absurd' ambitions and the difficulties which could arise when rival powers encountered English ships in the undefined 'British Seas'.¹¹⁸ The Stuarts pursued the doctrine of British sovereignty of the seas much more forcefully than their predecessors: under the Tudors, a more liberal approach had existed whereby saluting, at most, was regarded as a custom rather than an acknowledgement of dominion.¹¹⁹ Charles I took English claims considerably further than they had been previously, even going as far as suggesting that the bounds of England's jurisdiction at sea extended to

¹¹³ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.213

¹¹⁴ *LJ*, V, p.694; Instructions to Earl of Warwick, 5 April 1643

¹¹⁵ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.201r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

¹¹⁶ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.201r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

¹¹⁷ H. W. Hodges (ed), *Select Naval Documents* (Cambridge, 1922), pp.45-46; Instructions to the Earl of Lindsey, 1635

¹¹⁸ Rodger, *Command*, p.12

¹¹⁹ T. W. Fulton, *The Sovereignty of the Sea* (London, 1911), p.118

the continent.¹²⁰ He regarded himself as the Lord of the Surrounding Seas.¹²¹ Boundaries, however, were never defined except in vague terms: that allowed his pretensions to maritime sovereignty to be aired, but with less risk of a confrontation stemming from their imposition.¹²²

Parliament, as mentioned, inherited the Stuarts' maritime pretensions and, on occasion, took action to enforce them. One of the most notable demonstrations of this took place in May 1647 when a Swedish fleet of 10 merchantmen (escorted by 5 ships of war) encountered Captain Owen in the *Henrietta Maria* off the Isle of Wight.¹²³ Refusing to strike their colours, the Swedes soon found themselves under a fierce attack from Owen, reinforced by Batten, with the fight not concluding until the night. Matters concluded with Swedish ships being taken to Portsmouth, although they were not kept as prizes and were released not long afterwards. The episode demonstrated Parliament's resolve not to abandon the Stuarts' claims at sea: 'the incounter of the Swedish ships' demonstrated that 'Parliament stands up the honour of the Crowne, & thinks to be in posture not to suffer any injury'.¹²⁴

Another demonstration of Parliament's determination to protect English sovereignty occurred in September 1642. A heavily-partisan newssheet expressed the fiercely Protestant mindset of Parliament and its opinion of those from abroad.¹²⁵ It referred to the 'malicious intentions of forraigne Nations' striving to 'undermine the whole Land with their Popish inventions'.¹²⁶ Relating a confrontation between five Spanish ships and the *Black Martine* and *Royal Lion* in the Irish Sea, the account took delight in describing the sinking of two of the Spaniards' vessels. There seems to have been a fair degree of firing between the competing parties, the *Black Martine* also 'being mightily pestred and brused' before her own sinking.¹²⁷ Although wounded herself, the *Royal Lion* managed to subdue the three remaining enemy ships and a useful haul of weaponry and ammunition was captured for Parliament, including 500 muskets and 53 pieces of ordnance. Thus, the Spanish ships were prevented from aiding the rebels in Ireland or 'else sayling towards England...to egge and encourage on a Civill

¹²⁰ Fulton, *Sovereignty*, p.11

¹²¹ Fulton, *Sovereignty*, p.209

¹²² Fulton, *Sovereignty*, p.20

¹²³ Fulton, *Sovereignty*, p.382

¹²⁴ BL, Add. MSS. 4200, f.46b; René Augier to Giles Greene, 15 May 1647

¹²⁵ BL, TT, E.116 [16] *Ioufvll Nevves from Sea: Or good tidings from my Lord of Warwicke, of his encounter with some Spanish Ships, with the happys successe he obtained thereby* (London, 1642)

¹²⁶ BL, TT, E.116 [16] *Ioufvll Nevves from Sea: Or good tidings from my Lord of Warwicke, of his encounter with some Spanish Ships, with the happys successe he obtained thereby*

¹²⁷ BL, TT, E.116 [16] *Ioufvll Nevves from Sea: Or good tidings from my Lord of Warwicke, of his encounter with some Spanish Ships, with the happys successe he obtained thereby*

dissention'.¹²⁸ Unsurprisingly, the tract attributed the English success to God, a clear blow against the Catholic opposition.

Yet, for all the successful interventions against 'rebel' shipping, Parliament was unable to cope with the volumes of sea traffic which embarked for Ireland. Inevitably, Parliament's Navy faced threats on many fronts and weak points could be exploited by the Royalists. Parliament's 'maritime preponderance', advantageous though it was, could never equate to the unchallenged 'command of the sea'. In the Irish Sea, Parliament was vulnerable and Warwick pleaded for more resources to be assigned to the fleet so as to confront the growing threats posed to English shipping from Irish privateers. Concerned as Parliament was with English sovereignty at sea, there was little it could do to deter the subjects of foreign powers from setting out hostile shipping on their own accord, whether forbidden to by their governments or not. It was in the Irish Sea that Parliament would face its greatest challenge at sea in 1643.

THE CESSATION

The Cessation of September 1643 was an agreement between the Royalists and the Confederate rebels which initiated a truce, originally to last for a year, but which was extended thereafter.¹²⁹ The chief negotiator for the King was James Butler, Marquis of Ormonde, one of the leading Protestant nobles in Ireland.¹³⁰ In maritime terms, the Cessation merits discussion, because it created a number of problems for the Parliamentarians. The most worrying development from Parliament's perspective was the sudden availability of thousands of English troops who were serving in Ireland and were now earmarked for transportation to England itself. The King's armies in England were in need of considerable reinforcements, with the campaigns of 1643 having taken a large toll on Royalist military manpower. With the Confederates eliminated as a threat to Royalist fortunes, for the time-being at least, Ormonde was instructed to oversee the shipping across the Irish Sea of as many regiments of soldiers as possible.¹³¹

¹²⁸ BL, TT, E.116 [16] *Ioufvll Nevves from Sea: Or good tidings from my Lord of Warwicke, of his encounter with some Spanish Ships, with the happys successe he obtained thereby*

¹²⁹ For an insight into the Confederates see D. F. Cregan, 'The Confederate Catholics of Ireland: the Personnel of the Confederation, 1642-9', *Irish Historical Studies*, 29, No. 116 (November 1995); for a detailed study of the Confederates and their military capabilities see P. Lenihan, *Confederate Catholics at War, 1641-49* (Cork, 2001)

¹³⁰ See B. Kelly, 'Most Illustrious Cavalier' or 'Unkinde Deserter'? James Butler, First Duke of Ormond, 1610-1688', *History Ireland*, 1, No.2 (Summer, 1993)

¹³¹ For a discussion of Royalist and Confederate operations in the Irish Sea see J. Ohlmeyer, 'Irish Privateers during the Civil War, 1642-1650', *Mariner's Mirror*, 76 (1990); J. Ohlmeyer, 'The Dunkirk of Ireland': Wexford Privateers during the 1640s', *Journal of the Wexford Historical Society*, 12 (1988-9); J. L. Malcolm, 'All the king's men: the impact of the crown's Irish soldiers on the English Civil War', *Irish*

Parliament was thus charged with trying to stem the flow of these troops to England, but having suffered a number of military reverses on land during 1643, maritime matters in the Irish Sea received less attention than might perhaps have been prudent. Yet it could be argued that Parliament simply had too many challenges to overcome that year and, as a consequence, was not in a strong enough position to dominate each and every coast. The Royalists chose to ship the troops across the Irish Sea during the winter because they believed that Parliament's Irish Guard would be at its weakest.¹³² That analysis proved correct.

The Cessation was controversial for a series of reasons, with the most obvious difficulty from the King's perspective being his supposed association with rebellious Irish Catholics. Some of his commanders in Ireland warned of potential trouble, with the Earl of Clanricarde referring to 'some turbulent dispositions' amongst English forces serving in Ireland.¹³³ Nevertheless, the King needed those troops to replenish his military strength in England.

Strategically, the Cessation dealt a blow to the Parliamentary Navy's freedom of manoeuvre in the Irish Sea. Parliament's ships could no longer count on access to harbours in southern Ireland, as the commanders in charge of key ports abided by the terms of the truce with the Confederates. Thus Parliament's ships could not make use of places such as Cork, Youghal or Kinsale. Murphy highlights the Parliamentary fleet's loss of access to Duncannon Fort as one of the key maritime 'gains' for the Confederates.¹³⁴ With Parliamentary ships being unable thereafter to anchor safely under the fort, nearby Waterford was harder for them to patrol. As one of the major Confederate ports, a lessening of the Parliamentary guard saw the privateers acting there given something of a freer hand. The overseas trade from Waterford increased in the aftermath of the Cessation. By losing access to a number of Irish ports, Parliament's Navy was less able to interfere with privateers coming to and from Confederate ports such as Wexford or Limerick.¹³⁵

So until several Irish ports were brought back into the Parliamentary fold in 1644, following the Earl of Inchiquin's defection from the Royalists, the Irish Guard relied on Milford Haven as its main base. Yet that dependence was, on occasion,

Historical Studies, 22, No. 83 (March 1979); K. J. Lindley, 'The impact of the 1641 rebellion upon England and Wales, 1641-5', *Irish Historical Studies*, 18, No. 70 (September 1972)

¹³² Dore, 'Sea Approaches', p.6

¹³³ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.9; Earl of Clanricarde to Marquis of Ormonde, 3 October 1643

¹³⁴ E. Murphy, 'No affair before us of greater concern': the War at Sea in Ireland, 1641-1649' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Trinity College, Dublin, 2007), p.101

¹³⁵ Murphy, 'No affaire', p.101

problematic. When the Royalists in South Wales were in the ascendant, Milford came under heavy pressure. Furthermore, with the King controlling the majority of Cornish and Devon ports by the summer of 1643, the next nearest port of any stature available to Parliamentary shipping was Plymouth. Thus, the Irish Guard often faced logistical difficulties: the distance to be covered was considerable and threats from Royalist Bristol after July 1643 also posed challenges.

Even before the Cessation became common knowledge, Royalists in England were pressing for supplies to be sent speedily to their aid. Writing on 3 October 1643, Orlando Bridgeman, one of the leading Royalists at Chester, was anxious that Ormonde put pressure on the Dublin ship owner Captain Morris, to honour earlier pledges to deliver across the Irish Sea a large piece of ordinance and as much ammunition as possible.¹³⁶ Chester had been subjected to repeated attempts by the local Parliamentarians to overpower its Royalist garrison and further assaults were expected.

The Confederates promised to supply some shipping for the transportation of the King's soldiers to England and Wales. Richard Bellings, writing on behalf of the Confederate Council, informed Ormonde that his masters intended 'to remove their residence to Kilkenny that they might be nere the greater parte of the worke wch must be don' at Wexford.¹³⁷ They hoped to give estimates of the numbers of frigates available, with an outline of all associated costs.

The Royalists, however, had reservations that Confederate promises were easily made, but infrequently delivered upon. One of Ormonde's leading commanders, the Earl of Clanricarde, cautioned him that, although the Irish were busy raising the promised supplies, 'they are soe improvident & dilatory in the manadgment of their affaires' that delays seemed a certainty.¹³⁸ On 14 October, Bellings updated Ormonde on the Confederates' progress: there were a number of ships ready to sail, including some at Wexford, but Ormonde was reminded that keeping ships in harbour was costly.¹³⁹ It was an obvious message that money needed to be found quickly to contract the ships and send them on their way. The Royalists wanted matters to be concluded as soon as possible, with suggestions that the 'busines in hand would require more expedition than hitherto hath beene used'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.14; Orlando Bridgeman to Marquis of Ormonde, 3 October 1643

¹³⁷ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.66; Richard Bellings to Marquis of Ormonde, 7 October 1643

¹³⁸ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.78; Earl of Clanricarde to Marquis of Ormonde, 8 October 1643

¹³⁹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.126; Richard Bellings to Marquis of Ormonde, 14 October 1643

¹⁴⁰ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.148r; Marquis of Ormonde to Richard Bellings, 16 October 1643

The overriding challenge which confronted Ormonde in the summer and autumn of 1643 was a shortage of shipping to convoy the much-needed reinforcements to England. Writing to Bridgeman on 19 October, he stressed that ‘this want [was] much increased’ by the presence of some Parliamentary ships near Dublin.¹⁴¹ He was apprehensive that those vessels ‘lying heere’ would hinder other ships friendly to the Royalist cause from accessing the city.¹⁴²

Ormonde did, though, agree terms with Captain Thomas Bartlett to send some ordinance to England, including 4 demi-culverins and 2 whole culverins, with a supply of shot to arm them and ‘a small quantity of powder’.¹⁴³ Yet Bartlett’s ship proved unequal to the task of carrying the full cargo and was forced to leave behind the 2 whole culverins, they ‘being soe heavy that Bartlett’s mast is not of strength sufficient to heave them’.¹⁴⁴ That highlighted the problems of smaller ships: the inability to transport significant quantities of heavy artillery. Further misfortunes dogged Bartlett’s expedition, with contrary winds and fears over Parliamentary ships both conspiring to cause delays. There were two Bartletts with whom the Royalists contracted for shipping, but there is uncertainty over whether they were brothers or father and son. John Bartlett commanded a fifth rate, the *Swan*, whilst Thomas was in charge of the *Providence*, of similar strength. The pair were active in the King’s service throughout the war and tended to operate between Dublin Bay and the ports of North Wales and the Dee.¹⁴⁵

In correspondence to Bridgeman on 25 October, Ormonde related that he was striving to have ‘powder and other necessaryes for Warr’ sent from Wexford to Chester, or failing that, to the town of Beaumaris on the North Welsh coast.¹⁴⁶ Ormonde made plain that any merchants contracted for the service would have to be paid upon arrival, a clear demonstration that the Irish Royalists could not afford to finance the expeditions on their own credit.

Ormonde was troubled by the loyalty of those men who were to be sent across the Irish Sea. He believed that ‘before their going I understand there is much industry used to perswade the Comon Souldier to serve the Parli[a]m[en]t’.¹⁴⁷ The Royalists made promises to the men that, upon landing, their arrears of pay would be put right, but Ormonde knew that a failure to honour such promises could prove costly, warning

¹⁴¹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.192r; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 19 October 1643

¹⁴² Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.192r; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 19 October 1643

¹⁴³ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.192r; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 19 October 1643

¹⁴⁴ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.195; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 25 October 1643

¹⁴⁵ Dore, ‘Sea Approaches’, p.6

¹⁴⁶ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.195; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 25 October 1643

¹⁴⁷ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.195; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 25 October 1643

that ‘wee should have much adoe to keepe them from running away’ to the Parliamentarians.¹⁴⁸ He believed that Parliament would find it ‘easy to seduce them with likely promises of haveing ther wants supplied’.¹⁴⁹ The various demands placed on Ormonde, then, were a source of grave concern: finding money for shipping and the troops’ pay were burdens which had to be shared, on both sides of the Irish Sea.

The Royalists in Chester were growing restless that they had met with ‘little shippinge as yet’.¹⁵⁰ Robert Byron referred to the city’s stores being ‘ill furnished’ and said that even small ships which came into port would now be stayed, a recent case being two Liverpool barks, laden with corn.¹⁵¹ Ormonde sent out a series of blank warrants to ‘Irish or outlandish merchants or Captains of Ships’ at Irish ports.¹⁵² The promise of their being paid upon arrival in England and Wales would, Ormonde hoped, prove temptation enough to recruit sufficient shipping. Sir Edward Nicholas had advised Ormonde that the policy was his best hope of acquiring maritime capability.¹⁵³

In terms of Northwest maritime power, Parliament could call on a small squadron of ships from Liverpool, although it is difficult to ascertain how many vessels were on hand. William Brereton, in a letter to Lenthall dated November 1643, estimated that there were half a dozen vessels.¹⁵⁴ Some accounts of the Civil War downplay the effectiveness of the Liverpool ships, but this analysis was not shared by some Royalist contemporaries. One such account, from late October 1643, informed Ormonde that the Liverpool ships were ‘verry stronge’ and had detained a number of passengers *en route* to the Northwest.¹⁵⁵

By early November, the Royalists had obtained more shipping, but considerable difficulties still remained. Castlehaven wrote to Ormonde on 7 November noting that he was directing the bulk of his efforts into finding men-of-war, rather than ‘little barkes’ which would also require a costly escort by frigate.¹⁵⁶ He had already sent a 400-ton vessel with 16 pieces of ordinance to attend Ormonde and was intending to send two similar ships later on. Furthermore, he had contracted with another 400-ton ship armed with 14 pieces of ordinance.

¹⁴⁸ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.195; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 25 October 1643

¹⁴⁹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.256; Marquis of Ormonde to John Williams, 26 October 1643

¹⁵⁰ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.208; Robert Byron to Marquis of Ormonde, 20 October 1643

¹⁵¹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.208; Robert Byron to Marquis of Ormonde, 20 October 1643

¹⁵² Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.255v; Marquis of Ormonde to John Williams, 26 October 1643

¹⁵³ Carte, *Ormonde*, III, p.252; Sir Edward Nicholas to Marquis of Ormonde, 5 March 1643

¹⁵⁴ *HMC Portland*, I, p.157; Sir William Brereton to William Lenthall, 21 November 1643

¹⁵⁵ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.287; Gilbert Houghton to Marquis of Ormonde, 28 October 1643

¹⁵⁶ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.376; Earl of Castlehaven to Marquis of Ormonde, 7 November 1643

On 7 November, Ormonde reported that a number of ships under Captain Baldwin Wake were newly-arrived from Bristol and his confidence began to grow slightly.¹⁵⁷ He told Thomas Plunkett that, for the time being, the ships requested from the Confederates were not needed as urgently.¹⁵⁸ He hoped that his notice was timely, to prevent the said shipowners from racking up unwelcome costs. Of course, had those same shipowners been swifter in mobilising, they would likely have earned far more reward from Ormonde.

George Digby found great pleasure in reports coming from the Northwest which said that the expected and imminent arrival of the King's reinforcements to the region had 'struck a great terror' amongst the Parliamentarians.¹⁵⁹ Writing to Ormonde on 10 November, his tone was one of triumphalism, perhaps reflecting his faith in exaggerated tallies of the shipping which had been sent to Ireland from Bristol.¹⁶⁰

The Parliamentarians were undertaking a vigorous campaign in North Wales in the hope of forcing Chester's surrender by cutting off the garrison's supply routes in the Principality. They already controlled much of Cheshire and so the plan was to encircle Chester before the King's army entered the region. Ormonde continued to plead that ready provisions were on hand once those troops arrived. Describing their situation as one of 'being in the greatest want that can be imagined', Ormonde advised that significant numbers of horse and foot should greet them upon arrival, 'to keepe the Comon Souldier in awe'.¹⁶¹ Reflecting on the harsh conditions of the Irish war, he warned that the troops 'will think themselves delivered from prison when they come on English ground'.¹⁶²

The Archbishop of York, John Williams, was an enthusiastic supporter of the King and was based at Beaumaris Castle in North Wales to oversee local Royalist troops. He was eagerly awaiting further deliveries of powder to aid Beaumaris' defence against a possible attack from the Parliamentarian forces which were advancing ever deeper into Wales. Shipping to transport the powder was clearly needed and Williams alluded to the lack of any intervention from Sir John Pennington, the King's Vice-Admiral 'being directed a cleare Contrarye way', according to reports from Oxford.¹⁶³ It was proving difficult for the King to satisfy each and every request for shipping which

¹⁵⁷ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.412r; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 11 November 1643

¹⁵⁸ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.391; Marquis of Ormonde to Thomas Plunkett, 8 November 1643

¹⁵⁹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.409r; George Lord Digby to Marquis of Ormonde, 10 November 1643

¹⁶⁰ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.409r; George Lord Digby to Marquis of Ormonde, 10 November 1643

¹⁶¹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, ff.412r-412v; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 11 November 1643

¹⁶² Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.412v; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 11 November 1643

¹⁶³ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.424r; John Williams to Marquis of Ormonde, 12 November 1643

reached him that summer. On the one hand, he had a brief window of opportunity in which the Parliamentary Irish Guard appeared weaker, but to commit all of his ships to that theatre risked his losing control of key ports and settlements on the English coasts.

Further warnings reached Ormonde in mid-November that payment needed to be found for two shipowners at Kinsale.¹⁶⁴ Lord Muskery was also made aware of the shortfall owed to Frederick Panchart and Jacob van Hoegarden.¹⁶⁵

Ships contracted for service did not always meet expectations and complaints came forth from disgruntled Royalists. Colonel Richard Gibson, commanding one regiment, wrote to Ormonde on 16 November with withering criticisms. He berated the lack of cooperation from some of the masters and mariners of the ships due to transport cavalry, 'whoe have left the Vessells empty & imbalanced, & hyde themself forth of the way, in Contempt of y[ou]r Lo[rds]hips Comands'.¹⁶⁶ Gibson feared that his regiment could be 'undone' as an effective fighting force if denied its horses and baggage.

According to Gibson, the position taken by Captain Baldwin Wake compounded the problem. Wake was adamant that there was no time to waste in getting to sea. This was despite pleas from both Gibson and Sir Michael Earnley entreating him to 'stay one tyde more' in the hope of the cavalry and some further men being ready to embark.¹⁶⁷ Yet Wake had pressures of his own, not least the scarcity of resources available for his own seamen. Ireland was a poor hunting ground for supplies, with Ormonde barely able to victual his own troops, let alone those of others. Wake therefore had little alternative but 'to hasteth where hee may bee better furnished', though that could compromise Gibson's regiment.¹⁶⁸ Gibson understood, however, that Wake was opting to leave behind carriages and troops, rather than 'hazard the Starving of our whole fleete'.¹⁶⁹

Ormonde was given the authority to pay shipowners by means other than direct money. He received a letter written by the King on 17 November 1643 which referred to one such case. The King discussed the *Adventure* of Dublin, under Captain Robert Smith, which had been guarding the Irish coast, but was now close to an expiry of supplies.¹⁷⁰ The King directed Smith to take his ship to Dublin, where Ormonde would satisfy his payment. Smith was to be made custodian of estates belonging to Lawrence

¹⁶⁴ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.456; Request for payment to Marquis of Ormonde, 15 November 1643

¹⁶⁵ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.458r; letter to Lord Muskery, 15 November 1643

¹⁶⁶ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.469r; Richard Gibson to Marquis of Ormonde, 16 November 1643

¹⁶⁷ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.469r; Richard Gibson to Marquis of Ormonde, 16 November 1643

¹⁶⁸ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.469r; Richard Gibson to Marquis of Ormonde, 16 November 1643

¹⁶⁹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.469v; Richard Gibson to Marquis of Ormonde, 16 November 1643

¹⁷⁰ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.478r; Charles I to Marquis of Ormonde, 17 November 1643

Bealing, a man lately attainted of treason. So Smith was to reap the rewards of Bealing's misfortune, for as long as the King chose, until the debts owed for the ship were cleared.¹⁷¹ On the face of it, then, Smith would not be paid immediately, but appeared to have a good chance of making back his money over time.

Sometimes, though, the Royalists risked alienating merchants. A petition to the King in November 1643 expressed profound distress at disruptions to trade.¹⁷² The petitioners had advanced money for the King's army in Dublin over the previous two years, but were now facing ruin. They had invested their fortunes in 5650 salt hides and had loaded them onboard the *Hope* of Weymouth and the *Martha* of London. They had paid the customs in advance, with the requisite warrants from Royalist customs officers. The ships were halted before setting sail, however, and the cargo requisitioned by Royalists for their armies. The hides were 'sold to strangers at under rates', whilst the petitioners were considerably out of pocket.¹⁷³ In addition to the customs charges, they were further damaged by facing the costs of 'dead freight' for the ships.¹⁷⁴ They estimated their overall losses at around £6000. Pleas for compensation were made, alongside the prediction that Dublin would suffer in the long-run, 'all men being by that example deterred from trading or paying custome to your Matie'.¹⁷⁵

On 18 November, Archbishop Williams gave his views on the strategic situation in North Wales and Cheshire. The uncertainty of when and where the landings would be made was a source of immense frustration for local Royalists. There were fears that the ships were actually heading for Bristol, 'wch if it be true, these partes are quite lost and will take themselves deserted by his M[ajestie]'.¹⁷⁶ Fortunately for Williams, the first landing was imminent and would precipitate a Parliamentary retreat from North Wales.

The maritime nature of the war in the Northwest was something given consideration by Bridgeman. He wrote to Ormonde on 29 November to try and gain support for the taking of Liverpool. Highlighting the 'mutuall intercourse' of England and Ireland, he pointed out that Liverpool was, at that stage, Parliament's only port in the region.¹⁷⁷ Thus its capture by the Royalists would deny the Parliamentarians the freedom of bringing in arms and ammunition to the Northwest via sea. The possession

¹⁷¹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.478v; Charles I to Marquis of Ormonde, 17 November 1643

¹⁷² Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.484; Petition of Richard Barnwell to Charles I, November 1643

¹⁷³ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.484; Petition of Richard Barnwell to Charles I, November 1643

¹⁷⁴ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.484; Petition of Richard Barnwell to Charles I, November 1643

¹⁷⁵ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.484; Petition of Richard Barnwell to Charles I, November 1643

¹⁷⁶ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.523; John Williams to Marquis of Ormonde, 18 November 1643

¹⁷⁷ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.638r; Orlando Bridgeman to Marquis of Ormonde, 29 November 1643

of Liverpool would, so Bridgeman argued, offer the Royalists opportunities to relieve nearby Chester at times of danger. He asked whether Captain Wake could spare some of his ships for the endeavour, to be added to Captain Thomas Bartlett's ship and the King's pinnace, the Swan, which were both more or less fitted and already at Chester. He believed that, if joined together, those ships would be 'able to master all the ships in Liverpoole'.¹⁷⁸

Ormonde decided to order the second landing to be made 'as neare Chester as may bee' to minimise the risks of any desertions.¹⁷⁹ He was confident that Chester was equipped sufficiently to satisfy the troops' needs, at least in the short term. He was far less optimistic when discussing the fleet, having been informed by its commander that without prompt supply, 'it will not bee in his power to pursue what hee is further directed', with the ships staying in port.¹⁸⁰

A third shipment took place in early 1644 but, by the time of its arrival at Chester, the majority of John Lord Byron's Royalist army had been defeated at the Battle of Nantwich. Most of the troops which had been sent over from Ireland were either taken prisoner or decided to join Parliament's army outright. Ormonde had written to Digby on 13 January to inform him that a shipment would soon be made.¹⁸¹ He was anxious to send over substantial numbers of men whilst circumstances allowed, telling Digby that he was hard-pressed to maintain all of the troops currently under his command. Reinforcements for the Parliamentarian Irish Guard were soon expected and Ormonde emphasised the declining window of opportunity available to the Royalists for further shipments.

In a further letter, on 16 January, he spoke in more detail of his fears that an influx of Parliamentarian shipping into the Irish Sea would end Royalist shipments of troops to Britain. He was concerned that any delays with the third shipment would lead to disaster in Ireland, with the men becoming 'such an overcharge to our little means' if they remained with his army, that both they and the rest of the soldiers would face possible starvation.¹⁸² Ormonde also feared the intervention of the Parliamentarian ships from Liverpool, if and when a stronger Irish Guard put pressure on local Royalist ships to disperse. Writing to Bridgeman on 19 January, he voiced the belief that such threats were probable and would 'hinder the sending [of] any more' aid to Britain.¹⁸³ Given the

¹⁷⁸ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.638v; Orlando Bridgeman to Marquis of Ormonde, 29 November 1643

¹⁷⁹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 8, f.3; Marquis of Ormonde to Mayor of Chester, 2 December 1643

¹⁸⁰ Bodl., Carte MSS. 8, f.3; Marquis of Ormonde to Mayor of Chester, 2 December 1643

¹⁸¹ Carte, *Ormonde*, III, pp.227-228; Marquis of Ormonde to George Lord Digby, 13 January 1644

¹⁸² Carte, *Ormonde*, III, p.229; Marquis of Ormonde to John Lord Byron, 16 January 1644

¹⁸³ Carte, *Ormonde*, III, p.232; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 19 January 1644

continual drain on finances which Ormonde experienced, he conceded to Bridgeman that he was unable to support the charge of hiring privateers, such as the Bartlett pair.¹⁸⁴

By early February, though, Ormonde had managed to send further men to the Northwest, but the disaster at Nantwich led to increasingly-frenzied requests for further shipments. By then, however, the Parliamentary Irish Guard was becoming a more serious presence and opportunities to ship over Royalist reinforcements were thereafter extremely limited. Archbishop Williams wrote to Ormonde in early March to plead for fresh supplies of arms and ammunition if and when transport became available, the bulk of his erstwhile stocks having been taken to Chester or else lost when Byron's army was routed at Nantwich.¹⁸⁵

His pleadings were somewhat illustrative of the situation facing Royalist supporters in North Wales at that stage: resources were scarce and there was minimal hope of succour from their allies in England. They therefore looked across the Irish Sea to Ormonde, placing faith in his earlier successes, but his ability to help in future was compromised by the stronger Parliamentary naval squadron which now operated in Irish waters. Digby wrote to Ormonde in early March to say that, as far as he was aware, the only two ships available to the Royalists in the Northwest were the two vessels belonging to the Bartletts. That seemed to testify to local Royalist maritime ineffectiveness. By May, Nicholas was apologising to Ormonde on account of the King's inability to set forth and maintain a significant Irish squadron of his own.¹⁸⁶ He acknowledged the reality of Parliament's stronger position in the Irish Sea, which rendered the passage to and from Ireland very difficult for the Royalists.

A stark demonstration of Royalist ineffectiveness in that regard took place when Prince Rupert captured Liverpool during his 1644 campaign in the Northwest. The town's Parliamentary shipping was able to evade capture, in large part because the Royalists lacked sufficient vessels of their own to challenge the escape.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, Rupert's victory was not exploited to its maximum potential, a valuable source of ammunition and arms being saved for Parliament. In spite of Parliament's increasing strength in the Irish Sea, there were ongoing challenges to face.

TENSIONS BETWEEN PARLIAMENT AND THE SCOTS

¹⁸⁴ Carte, *Ormonde*, III, p.233; Marquis of Ormonde to Orlando Bridgeman, 19 January 1644

¹⁸⁵ Carte, *Ormonde*, III, p.254; John Williams to Marquis of Ormonde, 7 March 1644

¹⁸⁶ Carte, *Ormonde*, III, p.302; Sir Edward Nicholas to Marquis of Ormonde, 20 May 1644

¹⁸⁷ Powell, *Navy*, pp.72-73

Following the Solemn League and Covenant of September 1643, tensions frequently flared between the English Parliamentarians and their Scottish allies.¹⁸⁸ As part of their alliance, the English had pledged some naval support for Scotland, but complaints were soon heard. On 12 December 1643, the English commissioners in Scotland wrote an exasperated letter to the Speaker of the Commons in which they outlined the need for a strong naval presence:

the necessity of having two shippes upon the Northerne Coast of Ireland hath bin very often represented unto this...House and as often promised, but hitherto they [the Scots] have not found the fruite of it in those parts, but on the contrary have sustayned greate losses for want of that Guard.¹⁸⁹

The letter drew attention to the recent treaty with England, and went on to stress that ‘it hath bin sundry times made an earnest desire from the Councell of Scotland’ that a strong naval guard be assigned to protect the waters between the northern parts of Ireland and the Scottish southwest coast.¹⁹⁰ The Committee of the Navy came in for heavy criticism, being accused of considering the Scottish pleas for naval assistance, but ‘they have hitherto taken no effort at all’.¹⁹¹

The letter continued by documenting the misfortunes of the *Paul* of London, a 180 tonne merchant vessel belonging to Robert Paul. The *Paul* had delivered key commodities to Londonderry and Donegal, ‘for the use and releife of the souldiers in those partes’, but on the return journey, freighted with a fresh cargo of salmon and leathers, disaster struck.

By stresse of weather [the ship] was driven upon an Island on the Coast of Scotland, where fifty Irish Rebels accompanying the MacDonaldis, who came lately out of Ireland, and by reason there is no ships on those Seas, passe at their pleasure in long boates from Island to Island, and are ready to draw more out of Ireland at their pleasure.¹⁹²

The *Paul* was ransacked, with all the crew imprisoned. The letter made plain that the case was far from an isolated incident, with scores of Irishmen landing in Cumberland where ‘they wander from house to house in the habitte of souldiers, and

¹⁸⁸ The tensions between Parliament and the Scots are explored in C. V. Wedgwood, ‘The Covenanters in the First Civil War’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 39, No. 127 (April 1960)

¹⁸⁹ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.439r; English Commissioners in Scotland to William Lenthall, 12 December 1643

¹⁹⁰ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.439r; English Commissioners in Scotland to William Lenthall, 12 December 1643

¹⁹¹ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.439r; English Commissioners in Scotland to William Lenthall, 12 December 1643

¹⁹² Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.439r; English Commissioners in Scotland to William Lenthall, 12 December 1643

report there are many more a coming to joyne with the King in his warres heere'.¹⁹³ The locals were warned that their houses would soon be no safer than if they were in Ireland itself. The English Commissioners in Scotland concluded by urging the deployment of several small ships, at the very least, to patrol the waters between Ireland, southwest Scotland and the far northwest coasts of England. The demands placed on the English Navy were many, then.

The MacDonalds were a Gaelic clan, with links to both Ireland and Scotland. The Ulster landowner Randal MacDonnell, the Earl of Antrim, enjoyed an influence over them, as well as numerous other clans who were opposed to the clan Campbell's control of much of the western Isles.¹⁹⁴ Antrim was a supporter of the King and pledged to help raise an army with which to invade Scotland. In 1644, Antrim managed to ship several regiments from Ulster into Scotland, evading capture by any Parliamentarian vessels. That was important because once the Royalists had the nucleus of a force in Scotland they could place pressure on Parliament's Covenanter allies. The troops sent to Scotland by Antrim were to form part of Montrose's Scottish Royalist army. Well into 1645, Montrose's army inflicted a series of reverses on the Covenanter forces in Scotland, which in turn made the Scots serving in England hesitant to advance too far south, lest they be needed back home. Parliament certainly saw it that way and it was a source of friction between both parties. The warnings of the English Commissioners in Scotland over the need for a strong naval patrol had been prudent.

As the Civil War escalated, acts of piracy became increasingly common in the Irish Sea. Numerous privateers established themselves in southern Irish ports, such as Wexford and Waterford, and caused grave disruption to shipping. In September 1643, several barque owners from Whitehaven appealed to the Lords Justices and Council at Dublin for some form of restitution for their losses at the hands of pirates.¹⁹⁵ Having sailed towards Ireland with provisions for the forces loyal to England, the barques were 'surprized by two of the Roggues of Wexford' and taken into captivity, where they were promptly 'stripped of all they had and afterwards kept in greate want and misery 14 dayes'.¹⁹⁶ Between them, they had lost at least £800 in goods, not to mention their vessels. In fact, they claimed 'to have now nothing left but [th]e Charitable benevolence

¹⁹³ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.439r; English Commissioners in Scotland to William Lenthall, 12 December 1643

¹⁹⁴ For a comprehensive study of Antrim see J. Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: the Career of Randal MacDonnell, Marquis of Antrim* (2nd edn., Dublin, 2001)

¹⁹⁵ Cumbria Record Office, D/Lons/W11/Box 1794/bundle 21; Commissioners of the Admiralty, September 1643

¹⁹⁶ Cumbria Record Office, D/Lons/W11/Box 1794/bundle 21; Commissioners of the Admiralty, September 1643

of well disposed people', and their appeal called on the Lords Justices to aid their return back to Whitehaven, so that they could once more be 'amongst their Freinds'.¹⁹⁷ That was not an isolated example: the pleas for compensation were frequent, but naturally it was not the pirates who had to deal with those demands.

The Royalists also expressed concern at privateering. In October 1643, Ormonde was angered to hear that a Flemish ship had been spied within a league of Dublin, having allegedly taken as a prize the *Fortune* of Dublin.¹⁹⁸ According to rumours, the vessel had been taken to Wexford and Ormonde made it known to the Confederate Catholics that he expected its restitution if that was the case. The Council of Kilkenny, meanwhile, was evasive on the matter and called for proof that the ship was indeed a prize, assuming that it was even at Wexford.¹⁹⁹

The Irish rebels were viewed with great distaste by the English, and, perhaps predictably, Warwick urged Swanley to take a tougher line towards the Irish than he might perhaps have extended towards any captured English:

As for the Irish Rebels you are to use Martiall Lawe on them both by Sea & Land, and all those that shall assist or abett them with men, Armes, Amunicon, Victualls or otherwise etc You are to use a more free and liberall hand over them in executing Martiall Lawe upon them as you in your discretion shall see...²⁰⁰

Swanley certainly abided by that direction and is most widely remembered for his strong-handed treatment of captured Irish prisoners. He was known to lapse into anger when matters reached a head. In June 1644, following the capture of Carmarthen, he oversaw a brutal punishment for some of the enemy. The strongly pro-Parliamentarian chronicler John Vicars recorded how Swanley ordered some seventy-two 'Irish' prisoners to be cast into the sea to drown:

because they [the Irish] were good swimmers, he caused to use their natural art, and try whether they could tread the Seas as lightly as their Irish-bogs and quagmires, and binding them back to back, cast them overboard to swim or drown, and to wash them to death, from the blood of the Protestants that was upon them.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Cumbria Record Office, D/Lons/W11/Box 1794/bundle 21; Commissioners of the Admiralty, September 1643

¹⁹⁸ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.5; Marquis of Ormonde to Lord Muskery, 2 October 1643

¹⁹⁹ Bodl., Carte MSS. 7, f.42; Nicholas Plunkett to Marquis of Ormonde, 6 October 1643

²⁰⁰ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.203v; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

²⁰¹ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.136; John Vicars, 9 May 1644

The episode served as a stark demonstration of Swanley's resolve to establish Parliamentary dominance in the Irish Sea. It also endeared him to the hardcore element amongst the English Protestants.

Rodger, however, points out the contradiction in Swanley's mass execution of the so-called 'Irish'. They had lately been serving in the Marquis of Ormonde's army, which until the Cessation had fought hard to protect Protestantism in Ireland.²⁰² The Marquis was outraged, not least because the Royalists in Wales were deprived of valuable reinforcements. Furthermore, the episode harmed the Royalists' ability to bring loyal cargoes out onto the seas. Writing to the Archbishop of York, he related events:

When Colonel Trafford was ready to embark, himself and 300 good well-armed men, above 20 barrel of powder, with match proportionable, and six pieces of iron-ordnance well-fitted, being aboard of Capt. John Bartlett, all for the defence of Anglesey, here arrived two Parliament ships and a frigate to hinder this preparation made at my very great and particular charge. I have since tried from other ports to send them away, but the two good intelligence those ships have from their friends on shore of all our motions makes me unwilling to hazard so good men and provisions. The unfortunate taking of Col. Willoughby with about 150 men bound for Bristol, by their fellows, and their inhuman throwing over board of 70 men and two women, under the name of Irish rebels, making the men also very fearful to venture upon the voyage, it being very well known to them that most of the men so murdered had served with them against the Irish, and all of them lived during the war in our quarters.²⁰³

Swanley's actions met with approval at Westminster, the Commons voting in June 1644 'that the Committee of the Navy do take care, that a Chain of Gold, of Two Hundred Pounds Value, with some Medal unto it, be provided and bestowed on Captain Swanley'.²⁰⁴ It was all too common in the 1640s for troops coming from Ireland to be labelled as 'Irish', and English public opinion rarely questioned such a convention. It is unsurprising, however, that Warwick encouraged a more liberal use of martial law when dealing with the Irish rebels: viewed as part of a wider, European-wide Catholic conspiracy to extirpate Protestantism, the rebels attracted outrage in England for their actions and harsh treatment of the Irish was commonplace. Warwick's loathing of the Irish was illustrated plainly in a letter to the Commissioners in August 1644.²⁰⁵ An Irish man-of-war had captured the Colchester merchantman *Margaret and Phoebe* and the company were being held as prisoners at Wexford and Limerick. Word reached London that, in return for the captives, the Irish were demanding the release of some of their

²⁰² Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.418

²⁰³ J. R. Phillips, *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales and the Marches, 1642-1649* (2 vols., London, 1874), II, p.161; Marquis of Ormonde to John Williams, 27 May 1644

²⁰⁴ *CJ*, III, p.517; Order to the Committee of the Navy, 4 June 1644

²⁰⁵ NA, SP16/504/77; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 21 August 1644

own side being held in the capital. For Warwick, the whole episode was one of intense irritation:

It wilbe a worke of Charity to get our Men from under the hand of soe base an enemy...it is Pitty the Irish should be released, yet wth all the suffering & hazard of soe many English & Scotts must not be forgotten.²⁰⁶

A Parliamentary ordinance of October 1644 made explicit the approach favoured by the two Houses towards the Irish:

The Lords and Commons...do Declare, That no Quarter will be given hereafter to any Irishmen, nor to any Papists whatsoever born in Ireland, which shall be taken in Hostility against the Parliament, either upon the Sea or within this Kingdom...²⁰⁷

Furthermore, any Irish taken prisoner were not to be accorded any terms following an act of surrender, with Parliamentary commanders being compelled to 'put every such Person to death'.²⁰⁸ The officers of the Navy were included in the provisions of the ordinance, along the same lines as their counterparts on land:

every Officer and Commander by Sea or Land, that shall be remisse or negligent in observing the Tenour of this Ordinance, shall bee reputed a favorer of that bloody Rebellion of Ireland, and shall be liable to such condign punishment as the Justice of both Houses of Parliament shall inflict upon him.²⁰⁹

The Navy was an important instrument with which the act could be enforced, with Parliamentary ships regularly coming into contact with Irish rebel vessels. Swanley was a man perfectly in tune with its aims, but is the only naval officer recorded as having carried out the ordinance.

From 1644 onwards, Parliament's war effort began to reap greater rewards than the King's. Royalist ports were subjected to increased pressure, both by sea and by land, as Parliament sought to overturn the King's gains from 1643. Yet Parliament's Navy faced fresh challenges and the Earl of Warwick came under attack from those on his own side. These themes will be discussed in the next chapter.

²⁰⁶ NA, SP16/504/77; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 21 August 1644

²⁰⁷ 'An Ordinance Commanding that no Officer or Soldier either by Sea or Land, shall give any Quarter to any Irishman, or to any papist born in Ireland, which shall be taken in Arms against the Parliament in England' in C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (3 vols., London, 1911), I, pp.554-555

²⁰⁸ Firth and Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances*, I, pp.554-555

²⁰⁹ Firth and Rait (eds), *Acts and Ordinances*, I, pp.554-555

CHAPTER FOUR: PARLIAMENT BEGINS TO ASSERT ITS ASCENDANCY

In 1644, Parliament established a clear ascendancy in the Civil War, but failed to inflict a knockout blow against the King. The Navy was an integral factor in Parliamentary success, but the fleet also suffered its own difficulties. Parliamentary victories on land took their toll on the King's armies, particularly in the North, where the Battle of Marston Moor (2 July) confirmed Parliament's dominance in the region.¹ Events in the Southwest in 1644 demonstrated the importance of the Navy to the Civil War and present an excellent framework in which to discuss some of the key issues.

NAVAL SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTHWEST

One of the Navy's chief functions during the war was to provide support for land-based operations. In particular, the fleet offered much-needed assistance to besieged outposts. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Navy's intervention was a key factor behind Parliament's successful defence of Hull in 1643, against a furious onslaught from Newcastle's Royalist army. The same was true at Lyme Regis in 1644, when the Parliamentary garrison withstood a forty-six day siege from Prince Maurice's Cavalier troops. In the spring and summer of 1644, the Navy played a prominent role in the south western theatre of the war, and this chapter will examine those events.

The events at Lyme might have been very different had naval support not been forthcoming for the Parliamentarians. Lyme was an important port and its fall to the Royalists would have compromised the Parliamentary route into the west. Its location at the Channel-end of a series of Royalist fortresses, running from Minehead through to Langport, meant that its capture would complete the King's line in the region.² Furthermore, following the Royalists' successes in the south-west throughout 1643, with numerous ports coming under their command, Parliament could ill-afford the loss of another position on the south coast. In Clarendon's view, Lyme 'was a little vile fishing town'.³ Such an analysis was unfair, however, for the port was an important centre for the cloth trade and enjoyed some prosperity.⁴ Warwick outlined the port's value in strategic terms:

¹ For a detailed study of Marston Moor, and the campaign which preceded it, see P. Newman, *The Battle of Marston Moor, 1644* (Chichester, 1981)

² Powell, *Navy*, p.63

³ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1755

⁴ M. L. Baumber, *General-At-Sea: Robert Blake and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution in Naval Warfare* (London, 1989), p.33

If Lime be lost, it will have a very ill influence, the inclination of these parts depending on the successe of that Towne, which the Enemy values not so much for it selfe as for the men that are in it, who if at liberty, will quickly get a strength together, which the Country will be well disposed to close withall.⁵

Prince Maurice arrived before Lyme on 20 April 1644. Whilst in Exeter, he had received a deputation from some Dorset Royalists who had persuaded him that an attack on Lyme would be a straightforward endeavour and that the town would fall easily.⁶ Once captured, Maurice was assured that bountiful numbers of men from across the county would flock to his army. His primary orders were to march to Oxford with as many men as possible to join with the King's major field army and the prospect of volunteers signing up in large numbers convinced him that an attack on Lyme was worth carrying out.⁷ Lyme was the base from which Parliamentary raiding parties could be sent into the surrounding counties and, particularly in Dorset itself, damage was being inflicted upon Royalist territory.⁸ Thus its capture would neutralise an important Parliamentary raiding base. Yet Maurice's health in 1644 was far from robust: when he reached Lyme he was still recovering from a bout of influenza which had threatened to claim his life.⁹ Whether or not he had the energy to direct a long siege was open to debate.

One of the advantages which Lyme possessed was its ancient harbour, or Cobb, which was protected by three forts. Designed originally to help the town withstand a sea attack, it was to prove its worth as an entry point for ships transporting supplies and manpower to the garrison. A Royalist account of the siege made reference to Lyme's strategic advantages:

the towne...[is] befreinded on the East syde by the sea, and fortified on the South parte with a strong fort (called St. Davies forte) from whence was a lynce made extendinge it self to the sea on the North part.¹⁰

Lyme's land-facing defences, however, were far from impenetrable, something not lost on Robert Blake, the future General-at-Sea, who played a key role in the siege. Although Colonel Thomas Ceeley, the town's Mayor, was the titular commander of

⁵ BL, TT. E.50 [25] *A Letter From The Right Honourable Robert Earle of Warwicke, Lord High-admirall of England: To The Speaker of the House of Peeres. With an exact Diurnall of all the most speciall and remarkable passages which have hapned during the siege of Lyme in Dorsetshire by Pr. Maurice his Forces, from the 21 of February to this present* (London, 1644)

⁶ Baumber, *Blake*, p.33

⁷ Baumber, *Blake*, p.33

⁸ J. R. Powell, *Robert Blake: General-at-Sea* (London, 1972), p.33

⁹ Powell, *Blake*, p.34

¹⁰ 'Shipton's relation concerninge the siege of Lyme' in A. R. Bayley, *The Civil War in Dorset, 1642-1660* (Taunton, 1910), p.138

Lyme, Blake became the *de facto* Parliamentary leader during the siege. Blake's popularity with Lyme's Puritan community accounted for much of his support.¹¹

Blake had been present when Bristol fell to the Royalists in July 1643, the city's lines being too extended for the Parliamentarians to defend. Taking that lesson on board, Blake decided that Lyme's defences should be contracted: there was no use in spreading the limited number of troops too thinly over a wider front. Lyme's defences were originally geared towards an attack from the sea, the town's guns pointing seawards. The land defences consisted of hastily-constructed blockhouses of turf or soil, which were connected to each other via earthen ramparts.¹² Such defences were common in small towns during the Civil War, the walls of Nantwich in Cheshire being just one of many other examples. Lyme was overlooked on three sides by clay slopes and the lines of defence extended for only a mile at most, with the sea never more than five hundred yards away. So Lyme was compact in defensive terms. The ground declined steeply towards the shore, however, which was of advantage to the Parliamentarians: the Royalist artillery would not be as effective firing down a slope. The Royalists' guns were far from easy to manoeuvre, their considerable weight making placement difficult.

The opening stages of the siege witnessed steadfast resistance from the garrison, although virtually all of the town's ammunition was expended in a desperate bid to fight off Maurice's Royalists.¹³ Blake sent out counter-attacks and the Royalists sustained much greater losses than their opponents, but it was not long before Lyme was surrounded on land. The only route by which the town's much-depleted supplies could be replenished was by sea.

Just a couple of days into the siege, entreaties were made to the Parliamentarians at Poole for assistance. Those at Poole had already heard something of Lyme's difficulties, however, and had despatched a small sloop to sail there and gather further information. The garrison at Lyme sent out a pair of small vessels to investigate, suspecting a Royalist plot to land arms at nearby Charmouth for Maurice's army. The Poole sloop retreated back to base, its crew convinced that the small vessels they had spotted were in fact Dunkirk frigates.¹⁴

The episode served as an example of the climate of suspicion which existed at sea and the confusion which sometimes prevailed. It might, however, have helped

¹¹ Baumber, *Blake*, p.35

¹² Powell, *Blake*, p.34; Baumber, *Blake*, p.33

¹³ Wedgwood, *King's War*, p.325

¹⁴ E. Drake, 'Diary of the Siege of Lyme Regis' in Bayley, *Civil War in Dorset*, pp.143-144

Lyme. The threat to Lyme was seemingly magnified in the eyes of those at Poole, with pressure apparently coming from the sea as well as by land (no matter how unsubstantiated the threat level actually was). It helped to spur those at Poole into arguing the case for reinforcements to be sent to Lyme.

Before the arrival of significant succour from the Navy, an embarrassing episode befell the garrison. Around fifteen Royalist prisoners managed to escape. They had been taken captive during the opening exchanges of the siege, and were subsequently held onboard a small ship in the harbour. A member of the garrison, Edward Drake, kept a diary of the travails facing Lyme during that period and he related the prisoners' escape:

The aforementioned ship...with the 15 prisoners therein was either betrayed by some of those who had the charge of them or else so negligently kept by the master of the ship that on a sudden the late prisoners became the keepers of their keepers[,] and so hoisted sail[,] brandishing their swords in sign of victory[,] bidding the Town farewell they steered their course towards Weymouth[,] where they arrived the next day.¹⁵

Had the town's pleas for naval support been met earlier, then the prisoners' chances of escaping would have been much lower. They were fortunate in their timing, then, for naval assistance was soon forthcoming.

On 26 April two privateer ships were sighted coming towards the harbour. A sloop sent out from the garrison soon established that they were not hostile, and 'the joy that was in the town was inexpressible'.¹⁶ There was dismay in Royalist ranks, for Maurice's forces had initially reckoned the ships to be part of the Earl of Marlborough's fleet which had come to tighten the screw on Lyme. Captain Man was exercising the command, however, with letters of marque from Parliament 'and was ready to supply the Town with anything it stood in need of and that was aboard him'.¹⁷ The Royalists placed great faith in Marlborough's ability to provide an effective fleet for the King, but, with the Parliamentary naval presence on the increase before Lyme, the Earl was unlikely to complete any encircling manoeuvres in concert with Maurice. Of course, had the Royalists carried out such a plan, they would have faced considerable challenges.

On 27 April, the Committee of Both Kingdoms sent Warwick correspondence from the governors of Lyme and Poole, detailing the 'distress' in which the former town found itself.¹⁸ The importance of Lyme to shipping in the west was also highlighted and Warwick understood that ships would need to be despatched as soon as possible to

¹⁵ Drake, 'Diary', p.147

¹⁶ Drake, 'Diary', p.147

¹⁷ Drake, 'Diary', p.147

¹⁸ *CSPD, 1644*, p.137; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Earl of Warwick, 27 April 1644

ensure Lyme's resistance was maintained. Lyme soon received fresh supplies from the *Mary Rose* under Captain William Somaster and the *Anne and Joyce* commanded by Captain Thomas Jones.¹⁹ Cannonades had been heard as far off as Portland and the two ships speeded to Lyme's relief. The ships came from Portsmouth, but the governor of Poole, Colonel Sydenham, had been the driving force behind their despatch. The garrison was restocked with powder from the ships' own reserves, as well as foodstuffs and wood.

Tellingly, 100 men were taken from the vessels to bolster Lyme's manpower, something 'the townsmen welcomed'.²⁰ With Maurice's Royalists outnumbering the town's Parliamentarians by perhaps six-to-one (depending on which figures one considers) a fresh contingent of fighting men was of great importance. When the siege began, the Parliamentarians may have had somewhere in the region of 1000 men, with Maurice's army perhaps as strong as 6000.²¹ The seamen were soon put to the test, taking part in sallies the day after landing.²² Every man was needed.

Drake's diary made regular mention of correspondence sent by sea between Lyme and nearby Parliamentary garrisons. Given the close proximity of Maurice's Royalists by land, it was clearly the best way for Lyme's Parliamentarians to remain in contact with their allies. Sydenham, at Poole, demonstrated a strong willingness to act as Lyme's mouthpiece with other Parliamentary forces, at one point pledging to do all he could 'to negotiate on the Town's behalf with Sir William Waller'.²³ It was vital to keep the sea routes to Lyme's garrison open to enable a safe and reliable means of communication.

In early May, 'the weather being turbulent[,] the townsmen doubted of the riding of the ships in the Road yet they remained safe at anchor'.²⁴ Their fear was evident: without shipping in close proximity, the town could be vulnerable to an incursion by Dunkirkers or other hostile shipping. Mr Harvey, a merchant from Lyme, and brother-in-law to the governor, had been captured *en route* to Portsmouth 'by a man of war belonging to the harbour of Weymouth'.²⁵ Having apparently never been in arms, he was nevertheless a valuable prisoner and Maurice refused to exchange him in return for the body of the Royalist Francis Blewett. His case demonstrated the sometimes

¹⁹ Drake, 'Diary', p.149

²⁰ Drake, 'Diary', p.149

²¹ Baumber, *Blake*, pp.33-34

²² Drake, 'Diary', pp.149-150

²³ Drake, 'Diary', p.149

²⁴ Drake, 'Diary', p.150

²⁵ Drake, 'Diary', p.152

indiscriminate nature of capture at sea: civilians were not exempt. Harvey had, however, been accompanied by a Mr Alford, a suspected Royalist, and he may have been taking him as a prisoner to Portsmouth. Presumably, Alford was only too happy to see Harvey taken captive.

Further shipping arrived in May to keep the garrison supplied. An armed merchantman, the *Mayflower*, arrived at Lyme on 8 May, having provided an escort to a supply ship.²⁶ The vessel also supplied ‘some p[ar]ticulars’ to the garrison.²⁷ With fresh manpower required, some 300 soldiers from Waller’s forces were divided between six transport vessels, protected by the *Achilles* and the *Expedition*, and were landed at Lyme on 11 May. The soldiers in question were greeted by numerous volleys of ordinance from the Royalists ‘as they were landing’, but the barrages were ineffective.²⁸

There had been arguments on the Parliamentary side, however, as reports from 6 May indicated:

The three hundred Foote...are not yet come, by reason the Ship Commanders pretend Want of Authority to land them there. It seemes they cannot go on at Sea, as at Land without Command, though the winds be faire, and the opportunity fit. A good Commander will take an opportunity of advantage without a Command, but wherever the fault is, my Lord of Warwick gave Command long since to some of the Ships to land these...Souldiers, and they deserve to be cast overboard, that have wilfully neglected the service.²⁹

It was no help to the Parliamentary war effort to have ship commanders hesitant to carry out their orders on account of protocol. The soldiers were required urgently at Lyme and Warwick’s orders testified to that. During the transporting of soldiers by sea, there was sometimes confusion, and even a measure of tension, over who exercised command. The ship captains were sometimes forthright in arguing that anyone onboard their vessel came under their own personal authority, a view which was on occasion challenged by land commanders.

On 15 May, a further 150 men were added to Lyme’s Parliamentary strength, again brought by shipping. Given the cumbersome nature of early-modern artillery, it was much quicker to transport cannons and other heavy projectiles via sea. Supplies of shot and powder could also be transported far more swiftly by sea than by land. As access to Lyme via land was blocked anyway, it was obvious that the town’s artillery supplies had to be augmented by shipping. That was the case, with a culverin being

²⁶ Drake, ‘Diary’, p.155

²⁷ NA, SP16/504/55r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 30 May 1644

²⁸ Drake, ‘Diary’, p.156

²⁹ BL, TT. E.47 [19] *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer* (London, 7-14 May 1644)

taken from the *Mary Rose*, and a demi-cannon being delivered by the *Mayflower*, which 'was mounted on a new platform' to augment the garrison's firepower.³⁰

As May wound on, though, the Royalists appeared to be establishing more of an ascendancy. They had advanced further towards Lyme and finally realised that, if they could destroy the Cobb, then supplies and relief for the town would be much more difficult to land, thus compromising the Parliamentarians' chances of holding the town.

The Royalists moved a number of their guns to the cliffs overlooking the Cobb, although initially the Parliamentarians failed to understand the scale of the threat and busied themselves with attacking the weakened Cavalier positions.³¹ On 22 May, the Royalists unleashed a fierce assault upon the Cobb and managed to inflict serious damage, in 'a very fatal day to the shipping of the town'.³² The day began with some townsmen endeavouring to unload a cargo from a small vessel, whilst under constant fire from the Royalists' artillery, but 'a very good gunner...sunk it in a very short time' and many of the goods were spoiled.³³ That was merely a precursor to events during the evening.

At around seven or eight o'clock the Royalists again opened up their guns, firing heavily on the harbour, before a party of sixty Royalists stormed the Cobb in person and set fire to numerous barges lying there. Sallies from the garrison failed to stem the tide and, when the fighting relented, some twenty barges were left in flames, ruined beyond repair.³⁴ Some of the Parliamentarians, having been posted to guard the Cobb, were able to escape by boat once they realised the odds were too-heavily stacked against them. In Drake's words, however, it 'was a sad spectacle to behold the burning of so many ships that formerly brought into the kingdom so great commodity'.³⁵ The livelihood of small ports such as Lyme depended on a steady stream of trade via shipping, and the destruction of so many vessels represented a grave blow to the local economy.

Yet the Royalists lacked the warships to block fresh supplies from reaching Lyme and were unable to seize the Cobb. According to Colonel Were's journal, however, the town had suffered depredations by sea earlier in the siege: 'this day also two Dunkirk men of Warre looked on us, this day our ship was betrayed, wherein we

³⁰ Drake, 'Diary', pp.156-157

³¹ Baumber, *Blake*, p.37

³² Drake, 'Diary', p.159

³³ Drake, 'Diary', p.160

³⁴ Powell, *Blake*, p.40

³⁵ Drake, 'Diary', p.161

lost prisoners of some worth'.³⁶ The privateers were obviously out for loot and were ready to exploit any confusion in the port. The steady stream of Parliamentary vessels, though, did limit the scope for regular attacks from Dunkirkers, although there was no means of preventing each and every danger.

Following the Royalists' violent attack on the Cobb, the garrison's situation appeared desperate, but, the next day, Warwick was sighted sailing down the Channel aboard the *James*, accompanied by a small fleet of six warships, a massive boon to Lyme's prospects. The Lord Admiral was optimistic that his intervention would prove positive: 'the presence and assistance of our ships hath I hope saved the Towne'.³⁷ Anchoring his flotilla safely out-of-range from the Royalists' artillery, Warwick received Blake and Ceeley on the *James* and discussed Lyme's requirements. The Lord Admiral's arrival did not prevent the Royalists from destroying several ships left 'unburnt' by the carnage of the previous day.³⁸ When some townsmen sailed out in one of the barges, they became targets, and the vessel was only narrowly saved. Those ships left behind, however, were soon in flames.

In a relation of events at Lyme from June 1644, Warwick drew attention to the town's difficult situation when he arrived:

Having not in it at his Lordships comming, above two dayes bread, and a small quantitie of Ammunition. There are in the Towne 4000 Soules, whereof 1000 in Garrison, who though they want Shooes, Stockings, Clothes and pay, and have not departed from Lime since the beginning of the siedge, yet are all of them resolved to stand out to the last man, and when they can doe no more, to breake through the Enemie with their Swords.³⁹

His account highlighted the considerable demands which the town's population placed upon the available supplies. Warwick recognised that, without further powder, Lyme would not be able to defend itself and so nearly forty barrels were sent ashore.⁴⁰ The seamen appeared to sympathise greatly with the town's hard-pressed inhabitants, as Warwick explained:

³⁶ BL, TT. E.50 [25] *A Letter From The Right Honourable Robert Earle of Warwicke, Lord High-admirall of England: To The Speaker of the House of Peeres. With an exact Diurnall of all the most speciall and remarkable passages which have hapned during the siege of Lyme in Dorsetshire by Pr. Maurice his Forces, from the 21 of February to this present*

³⁷ NA, SP16/504/55r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 30 May 1644

³⁸ Drake, 'Diary', p.163

³⁹ BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire* (London, 1644)

⁴⁰ BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire*

out of their poore overplus, they sent them above 30 paire of Boots, 100 paire of Shooes, 160 paire of stockings, some Linnen and old clothes, and some quantitie of Fish and Bread, that they had formerly saved out of their Sea allowance. They did also unanimously give one fourth part of their bread for the next foure moneths, amounting to 9000 weight, which their hard labour and constant dutie might advise them to have reserved rather for their own bellies.⁴¹

Writing to the Speaker of the House of Lords, Warwick outlined that the seamen hoped that they would receive compensation for their sacrifice later on.⁴² Whether or not the ships' crews were actually ordered by the Lord Admiral to share some of their rations or whether their actions were self-motivated will remain unknown, but the help it provided to the garrison was very welcome.

The travails facing the garrison had been outlined in detail to Warwick before his arrival off the coast. Having arrived at Lyme, and hearing from Blake and Ceeley the distressed position which the garrison found itself in, Warwick might have reasoned that, without wide-ranging charity from the seamen, the besieged population would be faced with unnecessary hardship. Given that the accounts from which I have quoted were printed by Parliament, the information about the sailors' generosity might have served as useful propaganda, urging supporters to make sacrifices of their own for the greater good. Such instances could also provide a morale boost to those struggling under difficult circumstances, the image of Parliamentary solidarity perhaps offering some hope.

Despite being able to offer assistance to the garrison at Lyme, Warwick's ships were not without their own difficulties. One particular concern was a good supply of water to keep the crews from dehydrating. In a letter of 30 May, Warwick complained to the Commissioners of the Navy about their failure to supply him with the water cask he had requested. He painted a gloomy picture of his situation, highlighting that the 'Countrey is all in a posture of opposicon to the Parliam[en]t, so that I cannot supply my selfe wth fresh water'.⁴³ The consequences could be troublesome, he warned, for, without fresh water, 'my Ships Company are in danger of contracting sicknesses'.⁴⁴ Warwick spelt out that his having to return to harbour for water supplies might imperil

⁴¹ BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire*

⁴² BL, TT. E.50 [25] *A Letter From The Right Honourable Robert Earle of Warwicke, Lord High-admirall of England: To The Speaker of the House of Peeres. With an exact Diurnall of all the most speciall and remarkable passages which have hapned during the siege of Lyme in Dorsetshire by Pr. Maurice his Forces, from the 21 of February to this present*

⁴³ NA, SP16/504/55r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 30 May 1644

⁴⁴ NA, SP16/504/55r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 30 May 1644

Lyme, a place to which he evidently attributed high importance, remarking that ‘noe Towne of England is of more publique importance’.⁴⁵

The garrison requested that 300 seamen be sent ashore to bolster the strength of sallies being sent out to disrupt the Royalists. Initially, the landing was postponed, a violent assault by the Cavaliers leaving little scope for other matters to be dealt with, but after a day’s delay the 300 men were sent safely ashore. A handful of troops were killed, however, whilst the landing preceded, the Royalists no doubt opening fire when they sensed vulnerability.⁴⁶

On 25 May, the Royalists increased the pressure on the Cobb by placing further artillery in batteries overlooking key positions, including one gun ‘which played directly on [the] landing place’ for shipping.⁴⁷ As a consequence, it became too risky for the Parliamentarians to land provisions during daylight, as witnessed by one of the Lord Admiral’s shallows being compelled to wait until midnight before it came on shore. When it did arrive, however, it brought good news: a coal ship bound for a Royalist port had been seized by one of Warwick’s ships and its valuable cargo was to be given to Lyme instead. With the landing place in the Cobb now in the Royalists’ direct firing line, however, the challenge of getting what was needed to Lyme’s inhabitants was further complicated. The Navy’s emergence in strength before Lyme did not automatically guarantee that the town would be supplied easily.

Part of Warwick’s solution was to land seamen to hold the garrison, whilst some of the soldiery were sent to ‘beat up the enemy’s quarters on that part that stopt the loading of provisions’.⁴⁸ Further reinforcements came on 28 May, with a landing at around ten in the evening, and under cover of darkness the landing boats were much harder for the Royalist gunners to strike and no losses were incurred.⁴⁹ To a certain extent, then, the Royalists dictated the times when landings could take place, but found it difficult to cut off totally the town’s ability to receive supplies.

Warwick intended the Navy to play an active role in the defence of Lyme and devised a plan with which he hoped to fool Maurice. The Lord Admiral sent two of his ships, accompanied by ‘all the ship-boats fitted with men’ in the direction of Charmouth, Bridport and other garrisons away from Lyme, so ‘that the Enemies opinion of our landing men in those parts, might draw off the horse’, thus depleting the

⁴⁵ NA, SP16/504/55r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 30 May 1644

⁴⁶ BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire*

⁴⁷ Drake, ‘Diary’, p.164

⁴⁸ Drake, ‘Diary’, p.165

⁴⁹ Drake, ‘Diary’, p.165

Royalists' strength before Lyme itself.⁵⁰ A shot was fired to signify the departure of the vessels, the Parliamentarians wanting the Royalists to follow their miniature fleet. As many as five troops of horse and hundreds of infantry did indeed shadow the ships, shots being fired at them in such volume that the Royalists were forced to 'cast up a brest-work by the sea side for their owne defence'.⁵¹

The Parliamentarian garrison was hoping to sally out and attack a weakened Royalist force facing the town, before the rest of Maurice's men could return. Events took a different turn, though:

The enimie mistooke the intention, supposing that these boats had in the night taken men out of the Towne, with purpose to set them on shore, for getting of provisions into the Towne, or to fall on the reare.⁵²

Believing Lyme to be weakened, the Royalists launched a ferocious attack later that evening. Some three waves of assault were undertaken, but the defenders managed to withstand the pressure, the Cavaliers losing hundreds of men. The seamen played their part in the defence, their colour bearer Edward Moizer rallying them in the heat of battle when the temptation to break ranks and flee was strongest.⁵³

The Navy was undoubtedly crucial to Lyme's withstanding the Royalist onslaught, but Warwick recognised that the best means of forcing the enemy to raise the siege was for forces to be sent by land. The Royalists were very close to the garrison and the fleet's capabilities were not limitless. In letters to Parliament, he urged them to send a relief army, suggesting that 1000 horse and half as many dragoons might be enough to compel Maurice to call off proceedings at Lyme.⁵⁴ What that highlighted was that victory in the war would ultimately be decided on land: the Navy could help to define the terms of combat, by landing men and supplies at key points, but what happened between the competing armies would ultimately have the most impact. Blockades against Royalist positions, though, could seriously hurt the enemy, as I will discuss in a later section.

Warwick's pleas for help had been a factor behind the Earl of Essex's marching into the west to begin his disastrous summer campaign of 1644. The Lord General had

⁵⁰ BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire*

⁵¹ BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire*

⁵² BL, TT. E.50 [23] *An Exact and True Relation In Relieving the Resolute Garrison of Lyme in Dorset-Shire*

⁵³ Powell, *Blake*, p.42

⁵⁴ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.148; Earl of Warwick to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 1 June 1644

also been assured by Parliamentarians from Devon and Cornwall that the arrival of his army into the region would trigger the collapse of the local Royalist ascendancy. The King was under immense pressure near Oxford, his forces depleted with Rupert's army away in the North, and the Committee of Both Kingdoms was urging William Waller and Essex to strike at the Royalist headquarters. Essex ignored the Committee's orders and proceeded to Lyme. Maurice, upon hearing of the Lord General's imminent arrival, decided to avoid a pitched battle and the Royalists retired from the siege.

Lyme would have fallen to the Royalists weeks before had naval support not been provided: the regular deliveries of arms, foodstuffs and occasional reinforcements of manpower provided the garrison with the resources to hold out until relief could arrive by land. The Royalists' positions high up on the cliff slopes overlooking the town had, however, left them out of range of the fleet's gunnery. The whole episode demonstrated the importance of a strong naval *and* land-based capability. Warwick's ships could not anchor before Lyme indefinitely and so, without the approach of Essex's forces, Lyme might have wilted under the pressure of Maurice's besieging army.

Maurice had, though, wasted several months in a futile attempt to conquer a small town which was not crucial to the Royalist war effort. He had been diverted unnecessarily from his primary purpose, which was to bolster the King's army near Oxford. Lyme also compromised the Parliamentarian war effort, however, for it drew Essex into the southwest, potentially squandering an opportunity to besiege the King's headquarters.

In spite of the undoubted assistance which the Navy provided to besieged outposts, Warwick was nevertheless concerned about their becoming dependent on the fleet, thus tying down warships vital to the defence of the seas. He well-recognised Lyme's need for help, but was critical of any ships being employed for the defence of a particular port or town on the orders of a mayor or local committee, rather than the Lord Admiral's own express instructions. He warned that a ship's being in constant attendance to a port might make the crew less able to meet the demands of a sudden action, the relatively static nature of riding at anchor possibly enervating the sailors. Furthermore, Warwick warned of the dangers of ordnance being utilised by the land garrison. If the port or town was then captured by the Royalists, the Navy would also be deprived of key weaponry or artillery. Warwick's preferred policy was for any places which required protection at sea to construct suitable land-based defences, strong enough to repel any seaborne attack. Warwick was wary of his ships being tied down in the defence of ports, thus limiting the scope for the Parliamentarian Navy to patrol the

seas and intercept Royalist shipping.⁵⁵ He also cautioned against an over-reliance on the Navy to transport land troops to their posting, bemoaning their consumption of victuals and the additional strain which that placed on the fleet, such as the necessity of repairing to port earlier to restock. Of course, in the case of Lyme, the reinforcements had to be landed by sea, but Warwick clearly preferred troops to travel by land when possible. That route was, however, often slower.

THE EARL OF ESSEX AND HIS CAMPAIGN IN THE WEST

Having relieved Lyme, and reinforced the garrison with some of his own troops,⁵⁶ the Earl of Essex continued to ignore pleas from the Committee of Both Kingdoms to depart from the southwest and apply pressure on the King's main field army. He decided, instead, to embark upon a major campaign in the region, pushing on further south. Waller, no friend of Essex, was exasperated that a strong opportunity to strike at the King was being negated on account of the Lord General's course of action. In a barely-disguised critique of Essex he outlined the situation as he saw it on 15 June:

The King's army is in a most discouraged, broken condition, and if it be well plied will be utterly broken. I humbly suppose, if my Lord General would speedily advance into these parts, the work would be easy.⁵⁷

In mid-1644, the King was left exposed by a relative shortage of troops, with Prince Rupert having gone north to try and raise the siege of York. The Royalist capital of Oxford, then, was under threat. At one point, Essex and Waller could have united their forces and applied determined pressure on the King's smaller Oxford army, but their lack of respect for one another proved costly. Put simply, they did not cooperate.

In May 1644 the pair had at least agreed to move against Oxford, albeit with each commander directing his own army. Such squabbles and divisions amongst the Parliamentary military leadership were behind the formation of the New Model Army a year later, under a unified command. Forced to bolster his Oxford army, the King had depleted subsidiary garrisons of manpower. In the case of Reading, the fortifications themselves were dismantled and the garrison abandoned, with Essex occupying it on 19 May.

By the end of May, Oxford was on the point of being surrounded. Forward detachments of the armies of Essex and Waller were little more than five miles apart.

⁵⁵ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick's Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

⁵⁶ *BL*, TT, E.252 [50] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament* (London, 24 June-1 July 1644)

⁵⁷ *CSPD*, 1644, p.238; Sir William Waller to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 15 June 1644

An opportunity to land a decisive blow against the Royalists presented itself, but on 30 May communications from the Committee of Both Kingdoms to Essex altered the situation. Essex was asked to send sufficient forces to relieve Lyme from Maurice's onslaught, but decided instead to take command of the operation himself: 'I durst not undertake [the relief] with less than my [whole] army'.⁵⁸ The Committee was, however, under the false impression that Charles planned to travel to London and negotiate a peace agreement. Woolrych argues that the Committee must take its share of the blame for having encouraged Essex to march westwards.⁵⁹ Writing on 6 June, the Lord General outlined that the relief of Lyme, which had been 'so earnestly recommended' to him by the Committee, was taking up 'the best of my care and endeavours to fulfil'.⁶⁰

The same day, however, the Committee appeared to have grown more resolute in its desire for the King to be confronted head-on. Writing to Essex (who by then had resolved upon the march to Lyme) the Committee remarked upon the precarious defences at Oxford, with victuals and shot both believed to be in short supply. There was no mention of Lyme, rather an emphasis on the importance of 'taking or blocking up Oxford'.⁶¹ By that stage, however, it was too late to persuade Essex to maintain his army near Oxford: he had been heavily-influenced by the Committee's earlier advice, in which it was suggested that the relief of Lyme would be the first stage in a successful campaign 'to recover the whole West'.⁶² Waller was tasked with shadowing the King, whilst Essex chose to march westwards.

There were numerous factors behind Essex's choice of campaign in June 1644, with naval objectives having influenced Parliament's Lord General to a significant extent. At that stage, Plymouth remained Parliament's only safe harbour in the southwest, and the imminent arrival of Essex's forces could relieve the constant pressure under which the port was suffering. Furthermore, it was hoped that an advance into the west would enable the Parliamentarians to recapture those ports lost to Royalist-control the previous summer, such as Dartmouth. It was well-known in Parliamentary circles that privateers thrived at such Royalist ports and so their capture would therefore help to disrupt Parliament's enemies at sea. He also recognised that the region was a major source of manpower for the King: the plan was to cut off this advantage to

⁵⁸ *CSPD, 1644*, p.211; Earl of Essex to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 6 June 1644

⁵⁹ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, pp.282-283

⁶⁰ *CSPD, 1644*, p.211; Earl of Essex to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 6 June 1644

⁶¹ *CSPD, 1644*, p.212; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Earl of Essex, 6 June 1644

⁶² *CSPD, 1644*, p.182; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Earl of Essex, 30 May 1644

Royalist recruitment.⁶³ Essex even harboured ambitions to retake Bristol, in the event of a successful push in the southwest.⁶⁴

Writing to the Committee of Both Kingdoms on 14 June, and rejecting their reservations about his westward march, Essex cited the dangers of Royalist ports, such as Weymouth, sending out garrison troops to disrupt Parliamentary field armies.⁶⁵ Weymouth itself was one of his initial targets, following the end of the Royalist threat to Lyme. Essex directed a detachment of horse to secure the port, and it was quickly placed under Parliamentary control. Some sixty ships were found in the harbour and, by losing the port, the Royalists were thus deprived of substantial maritime resources.⁶⁶ Many of the captured ships were trading vessels and these would have been central to the Royalists' attempts to barter for weapons on the continent. The Parliamentary *Perfect Diurnall* reported that many of the ships had been laden with Spanish wool and were bound for France. That bounty was instead to be utilised to fund fresh arms for Parliamentary forces in Hampshire.⁶⁷

Essex's whole campaign that summer was conceived as a grand exercise in combined operations, with the Navy to play a crucial role. Warwick was, at the outset, fulsome in his support for his cousin's campaign. He promised to send sufficient shipping to shadow the Lord General's forces as they marched past Dartmouth and into Royalist Cornwall, believing that circumstances called 'for a constant attendance of ships on the west Coast'.⁶⁸ Soon after the fall of Weymouth, Warwick promised to 'hasten againe more Westwards to assist for the getting in of the Portes that yet stand out'.⁶⁹

By the end of the campaign, however, with Essex having failed miserably to achieve his objectives, Warwick was greatly disheartened and even angered.⁷⁰ A Parliamentary newsheet explained part of the *rationale* behind Warwick's naval support for the Lord General's land forces: his ships could transport the army's magazine, 'the better to expedite his Excellencies march'.⁷¹ Cumbersome artillery could slow down a land force, but for Warwick's ships to make available the magazine, Essex needed to ensure that he had a clear path to suitable ports.

⁶³ G. Davies, 'The Parliamentary Army under the Earl of Essex, 1642-1645', *English Historical Review*, 49, No.153 (January 1934), p.44

⁶⁴ T. Royle, *Civil War: The Wars of the Three Kingdoms, 1638-1660* (London, 2004), p.302

⁶⁵ *CSPD, 1644*, p.233; Earl of Essex to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 14 June 1644

⁶⁶ Powell, *Navy*, p.70

⁶⁷ BL, TT, E.252 [52] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament* (London, 1-8 July 1644)

⁶⁸ NA, SP16/504/60; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 22 June 1644

⁶⁹ NA, SP16/504/60; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 22 June 1644

⁷⁰ Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.170

⁷¹ BL, TT, E.252 [50] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*

Another reason behind Essex's progress into the southwest was his desire to capture the Queen, who was recovering from giving birth to a daughter at Exeter. Unsurprisingly, her pleas to be left undisturbed, on account of her 'very weake estate of Body', failed to influence Essex.⁷² Appealing to the Lord General for a safe conduct to Bath, the Queen received the reply that he would happily consent to her being conducted to London, 'when she might enjoy the principall meanes of her recovery'.⁷³ Predictably, the Queen declined.

Once it became plain that Parliamentary forces were intent on striking at Exeter, the Queen decided to make good an escape. It would have been very damaging had she fallen into Parliamentary captivity. She had decided that Exeter's fortifications would offer no barrier to a determined Parliamentary assault.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Parliamentary ships were applying pressure to Exeter's Royalist garrison by blocking fresh supplies of arms from being landed. In early July, a privateer set forth by the London merchants seized a ship, bound for Exeter, 'with 3000 Armes'.⁷⁵ The Parliamentary press celebrated each and every prize captured by the Navy, and was not averse from portraying the fleet as supreme. One newsheet praised Warwick's tactics: 'he hath so placed the Navie in all parts, that the enemie cannot either go out or come in to doe us much hurt, through God's blessing'.⁷⁶ Of course, such a bold statement was not accurate, but was made as part of the ongoing propaganda war with the King.

Warwick determined that the Queen should not be allowed to sail for France, as was her intention. Writing to the Committee of Both Kingdoms on 11 July, Warwick explained that he had despatched Batten in command of three ships to keep a watch on Falmouth, the port from which the Queen was expected to sail.⁷⁷ A Parliamentary newsheet reported that the Queen and key counsellors would await their embarkation at Pendennis Castle, 'for the Papists hold the very walls'.⁷⁸

Six days later, however, Warwick wrote to Parliament with disappointing news: Henrietta Maria had escaped.⁷⁹ Warwick referred to the Queen's having been assisted

⁷² BL, TT, E.252 [50] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*

⁷³ BL, TT, E.252 [52] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*

⁷⁴ BL, TT, E.252 [49] *Perfect Occurrences of Parliament, And chief Collections of Letters* (London, 21-28 June 1644)

⁷⁵ BL, TT, E.252 [52] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*

⁷⁶ BL, TT, E.252 [53] *Perfect Occurrences of Parliament, And chief Collections of Letters* (London, 5-12 July 1644)

⁷⁷ *CSPD, 1644*, p.342; Earl of Warwick to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 11 July 1644

⁷⁸ BL, TT, E.252 [49] *Perfect Occurrences of Parliament, And chief Collections of Letters*

⁷⁹ *CSPD, 1644*, p.356; Earl of Warwick to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 17 July 1644

by ten ships: some of those vessels would have been needed to transport her attendants. With a member of the Royal Family risking the journey to sea, the need for a strong defence was imperative also. The Queen set out aboard the Dutch vessel *George*, but the voyage was not an easy one. Batten gave chase in the *Reformation* and fired ten shots, but to no avail and the *George* managed to establish a lead.⁸⁰ The Parliamentarian *Warwick* then came into range and more shots were exchanged, the *George* being hit in the rigging off Jersey and being forced to slow its progress.⁸¹

The Queen's fortunes were rescued by the appearance of a number of ships from Dieppe: Batten, unsure whether the vessels were Royalist or not, advocated caution and called off the pursuit. He was placed in a difficult position: if the Dieppe ships were not part of the King's fleet, he was laying himself open to charges of letting the Queen escape unnecessarily. On the spot, though, he probably reasoned that, being outnumbered, the risk was too high and could not be justified. The *George* eventually landed at Brest, but received a far from friendly welcome: the locals mistook the party as pirates and it took the Queen's best efforts to assuage such fears. The Breton coasts were frequent victims of piracy and it was hardly surprising that a climate of suspicion gripped the natives.

The Lord Admiral was apologetic that Henrietta Maria had been allowed to slip through the net, and bemoaned the lack of shipping at his disposal in those parts. He reminded the Committee that four ships (the *Saint Andrew*, *Mary*, *Unicorn* and *Convertive*) had been kept in harbour, against his advice.⁸² It was another episode in the long-running correspondence between Warwick and the Parliamentarian leadership in which he expressed frustrations over the preparedness of the fleet in times of duress.

Warwick's letter is valuable not only for an account of the Queen's escape, but also for an insight into his operational quandary: without the four aforementioned ships which he had urged Parliament to set forth, he had to make do with eight vessels to patrol a large swathe of the southwest. With three ships posted near Falmouth, Warwick sent a pair of vessels to guard Topsham, with the *Providence* to attend to Salcombe, where Royalist frigates threatened to break-out to sea unless stopped. The *Dreadnaught* and *Mary Rose*, 'being but heavy ships', were maintaining a watch on Dartmouth, and he mentioned the recent capture of two French vessels.⁸³ He referred also to threats

⁸⁰ Powell, *Navy*, p.73

⁸¹ Powell, *Navy*, p.74

⁸² Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.164; Earl of Warwick to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 17 July 1644

⁸³ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.164; Earl of Warwick to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 17 July 1644

against Guernsey Castle, highlighting the multifarious problems that required attention that summer, in the English Channel alone. He himself was riding before Torbay, ready to move where he was needed. On 3 July 1644, Parliament resolved that the Committee of the Navy ‘do make Allowance of the Tenths of all Prize Goods, to the Lord Admiral’.⁸⁴ That was in recognition of the ‘great charge and disbursements’ of the Navy, a theme Warwick imparted to them with regularity.⁸⁵

Essex continued his progress and soon came to the relief of hard-pressed Plymouth. Soon after, on 27 July, his army crossed the Tamar into Cornwall, something which some Parliamentarian contemporaries regarded as an ill-judged decision.⁸⁶ On 2 August, Essex marched the bulk of his army to the market town of Loswithiel, in large part because it was a place from which communications with the fleet could be maintained.

From there he wrote to the Committee and detailed his resolution to press on with the western campaign.⁸⁷ Relating the outcome of a Council of War, in which he had been heavily-influenced by the advice of local Parliamentarians, he expressed the opinion that the best way to pacify the region was to stay firm and continue ever-further into Cornwall. With a significant Royalist military presence, however, drawing nearer, he suggested that supplies would have to be landed at a nearby port to restock his army: he was depending on the Navy. The nearby port of Fowey was raided by Warwick’s fleet soon after, with five Royalist ships being captured.

The Committee replied on 10 August that provisions would be shipped, under the command of Swanley, to aid Essex’s army.⁸⁸ With the proximity of Royalist forces growing closer by the day, however, it was far from clear whether the vital supplies would arrive in time.

Essex’s army was finding itself in an increasingly precarious position: several Royalist armies had united, under the command of the King, and now blocked any potential escape route, by land, back towards London. They would thus have to be fought, but Essex had found, to his great distress, that the local inhabitants of Cornwall were very reluctant to help supply his army with provisions, or volunteer to bolster his manpower.

⁸⁴ *CJ*, III, p.550; Naval affairs, 3 July 1644

⁸⁵ BL, TT, E.252 [52] *A Perfect Diurnall of Some Passages in Parliament*

⁸⁶ V. F. Snow, *Essex the Rebel: the Life of Robert Devereux, the Third Earl of Essex, 1591-1646* (Lincoln, 1970), p.444

⁸⁷ *CSPD, 1644*, pp.398-399; Earl of Essex to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 4 August 1644

⁸⁸ *CSPD, 1644*, p.420; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Earl of Essex, 10 August 1644

As Essex began to comprehend just how bleak the situation was, he resolved to cut his losses. The Royalists had his army penned in at Lostwithiel and he decided to withdraw the foot to Fowey, leaving the remnants of his army to suffer the humiliation of surrender to the King. From Fowey, Essex had hoped to ship his infantry to safety, but the Navy was not there to help. Contrary winds put paid to any naval landings and so the foot could not be evacuated. Essex himself managed to commandeer a fishing boat and sailed for Plymouth, his reputation having suffered a considerable blow. The episode highlighted the Navy's dependence on favourable weather conditions: in the age of sail, a ship was hard-pressed to manoeuvre into land against the wind. The King's victory at Lostwithiel was a major propaganda coup and restored some confidence to the Royalist party just months after the disaster of Marston Moor. Warwick's standing may have suffered from his association with Essex's failed campaign, although the Navy backed him to remain as Lord Admiral following the Self-Denying Ordinance of 1645. That he was not granted an exception from the Ordinance may have been partly due to his involvement with the misfortunes of 1644. As Essex's cousin, he was an easy target for the Lord General's rivals in Parliament, no matter how valuable his own contribution was to naval affairs.

THE NORTH

Whilst Parliament's fortunes had suffered in the Southwest, its situation in the North was far more promising. The arrival of the Scottish army, under General Leslie, into the region in January had challenged the previous Royalist ascendancy. The capture of Newcastle by the Scots denied the King an important port and meant that nearby Scarborough took on greater importance for the Royalists.

As a result, Scarborough began to come under mounting pressure from Parliament. In May 1644, Sir William Sandys (at Dunkirk) wrote to Cholmley with a gloomy outlook. Many merchants were highly hesitant to sail to Scarborough, with a variety of factors inducing caution on their part. The threat from Dutch vessels was one concern, as also was the strong challenge posed by Parliamentary warships, 'wch you will understand the number'.⁸⁹ Sandys also cited the better weather conditions and extended hours of daylight (natural features of summer) as disadvantageous to the King's cause: Parliamentary warships would be more likely to stay longer at sea and travel more widely, and so had more opportunities to intercept any privateers. It was becoming more difficult to pay merchants for their services, with the Scots' continuing

⁸⁹ NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

advances into England cutting off many potential avenues. The mouths of the Tyne, Wear and Tees had all been cut off by the Covenanting forces.⁹⁰

Sandys made mention of a valuable shipment of arms being seized by Zealanders *en-route* to Newcastle, whilst bemoaning the loss of two Danish ships near the same port. He was highly critical of the time it had taken the local Royalists to load the ships for the return journey (Sandys having specified that they be stocked with coal). They finally set sail after ten weeks in port, ‘by wch [time] the Sea was full of rebells Shippes’.⁹¹ The various delays reflected badly on Sandys personally, but more worryingly, the episode put off a number of merchants who had previously been ‘well disposed’ to supplying the Royalists, but had subsequently ‘Grown cold, wch hath done the King’s service and mine in particular a very great p[re]judice’.⁹² Sandys displayed a sense of irritation with Cholmley, sniping ‘be pleased that these men may not likewise bringe back complaynts of me for undertaking more than what shalbe p[er]formed by y[ou]’.⁹³ If Sandys’ promises were not met, his credibility would obviously be dented. Shipowners wanted as much security as possible.

Earlier in the same letter, he had highlighted the importance of reputation, urging Cholmley to deal fairly with two musket traders, declaring that the sooner they were sent back ‘to declare to others a good voyage, you will soon[er] find the Advantage for yo[ur] service’.⁹⁴ Merchants were alert to the increasing risks of serving Charles I, with many unable to find insurance for their voyages.

In a further letter, to the Dutch Admiral van Tromp, Sandys discussed the *Sunflower* of Wivenhoe, which had been sent north with supplies to reinforce Cholmley’s garrison at Scarborough. Stressing that the *Sunflower* was loyal to the King, Sandys then urged Tromp to ensure that no Dutch ships prejudiced the vessel’s voyage, saying that if anything remiss did occur it would be an ‘unfittinge omission of such regarde as is due to the Allyance’.⁹⁵ The King liked to consider the Dutch as allies at sea, but Parliament entertained similar notions. Nevertheless, Sandys’ reference to an ‘alliance’ demonstrated an acknowledgement of the help which the Dutch had, on occasion, afforded the Royalist party at sea. Yet as his earlier letter to Cholmley revealed, the reliability of the Dutch at sea was being questioned by those in the ‘front-line’. Sandys had advised Cholmley to try and raise several thousand pounds at

⁹⁰ Binns, *Scarborough*, p.105

⁹¹ NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

⁹² NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

⁹³ NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

⁹⁴ NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

⁹⁵ NA, SP16/501/122; Sir William Sandys to Admiral van Tromp, 12 May 1644

Scarborough to buy more frigates, which he believed were a necessity for the better defence of merchant shipping.⁹⁶

Following the Royalists' devastating defeat at Marston Moor on 2 July 1644, Scarborough attracted numerous Cavaliers eager to leave the country. The most noteworthy was the Marquis of Newcastle, the King's commander for the North having decided that he could no longer continue in the post having lost such a key battle. Newcastle 'was noe sooner shipped but the Governor beganne seriouslie to consider his condition': Cholmley, however, chose to remain where he was.⁹⁷ The Parliamentarians made minimal attempts to subdue Scarborough for some time thereafter, presumably wanting to avoid a costly siege at a time when Rupert was still at large, the Prince having fled after Marston Moor.

With that in mind, Parliament was open to Cholmley's overtures for a truce around Scarborough in August 1644. Fairfax was the man appointed to oversee Parliament's response to Cholmley. Tellingly, Cholmley's first clause specified that Scarborough's inhabitants should be left free to trade 'both by sea and land', the Governor recognising that a thriving local economy would put the town in a much-better condition to withstand any future pressure. Another clause paid more attention to marine affairs:

That all and everie person that hath interest in anie Shipp now lying in the harbour or belonging to the towne, may have power and libertie to disspose of the said shipp and ordinance, tackling, and all things belonging to her, as they please to th[eir] best advantage.⁹⁸

Cholmley, then, was reluctant to allow Parliament a say over Scarborough's shipping: that was understandable given its importance to the town's prosperity and security. Parliament was prepared to consent to the provision, on the proviso that shipowners could guarantee pacific employments, although how that was to be gauged was not specified. It is doubtful that Parliament expected much from the agreement, but both sides had their reasons to play for time. Ultimately, some of Cholmley's demands, including his wish to be restored to the Commons and cleared of treason, were unacceptable to Parliament. Attempts at a truce came to an end. Cholmley only informed the Parliamentarians that he was abandoning the negotiations once large stocks of corn, and other provisions, were brought into the town. That perhaps indicated his real motives.

⁹⁶ NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

⁹⁷ Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough', p.148

⁹⁸ Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough', p.150

Fairfax was naturally angered and the routes to Scarborough were blocked, 'soe that there began to be a great want of coales, salt, and corne'. The importance of the sea then revealed itself once more, as provisions were brought in, 'sometimes by shippes which brought in prizes, sometimes by shippes forced into the harbour by Tempest'.⁹⁹

Scarborough did not fall to the Parliamentarians, however, until February 1645, when Sir John Meldrum oversaw operations. Some 120 prizes were discovered in the harbour, a clear demonstration of the town's success as a base for Royalist privateering. Amongst the prizes was the *Blessing of Cramond*. It had been captured in April 1644, having been ordered by Parliament to ship provisions to the Scottish army in Northern England.¹⁰⁰ That demonstrated that, even as much of the Royalist North came under attack from the combined forces of the Scots and the Parliamentarians, Scarborough had given the King's party opportunities to disrupt the enemy.

Marston Moor had established a lasting Parliamentary dominance in the North and, as a result, Warwick was able to focus naval energies more forcefully in regions of greater Royalist strength. Despite setbacks in the Southwest during 1644, Parliament's Navy made an important contribution to the capture of Royalist ports in the region in the next year and those events will be considered in more detail in chapter seven.

⁹⁹ Cholmley, 'Memorialls tuching Scarbrough', p.153

¹⁰⁰ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.110; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Committee of the Admiralty, 3 September 1645

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PARLIAMENTARIAN NAVY

The Royalist defeat in the North during 1644 restricted the King's naval capabilities for the rest of the Civil War, with the Scots capturing Newcastle in October and Scarborough finally falling in 1645. Therefore, Warwick's Navy had greater scope to take action against the King's remaining ports and shipping. In 1645 and into 1646, the King's previous strongholds such as Bristol (September 1645) and Chester (February 1646) surrendered to Parliament. Yet Parliament's victory in the First Civil War was not without further drama. The industrious Earl of Warwick was forced to stand down as Lord Admiral on account of the Self-Denying Ordinance, thus depriving the Parliamentarian Navy of his hands-on leadership at sea. William Batten replaced him as commander of the fleet.

Voted by the Commons on 3 April 1645, the Self-Denying Ordinance decreed that no member of either the Commons or the Lords could exercise a military or naval command. Those who championed its introduction were eager to press on with the war against the King, hoping to achieve a total victory in order to negotiate from a position of strength if and when a peace could be agreed. Men of a more radical nature, such as Cromwell, were growing increasingly critical of those Parliamentarian commanders, such as the Earl of Manchester, who were perceived to be prosecuting the war less vigorously than was possible. The Self-Denying Ordinance, then, was highly political in nature: it was designed to remove from command those who were deemed ineffective and lacking in energy. Yet such was its scope that some able commanders were caught in its net, with Warwick amongst them.¹

Although Warwick's reputation had suffered somewhat by his association with Essex's disastrous western campaign in 1644, he had nevertheless provided strong leadership to the fleet throughout the war thus far, overseeing the reinforcement of numerous Parliamentarian outposts and centres of resistance in Royalist-dominated regions. His past record was not enough, however, to win him exemption from the Self-Denying Ordinance. This was despite there being notable exceptions to the rule, with Cromwell, for example, maintaining his seat in the Commons *and* retaining his military command. Warwick did, however, continue to play an active role in Parliament's Navy, albeit as a member of the Admiralty Committee, which was reconstituted after the post of Lord Admiral was placed in commission. Batten, appointed to command the fleet on 15 May, could not take the title of Lord Admiral himself because precedent dictated that

¹ *LJ*, VII, p.313; Warwick surrendering his commission, 10 April 1645

it could only be bestowed upon a peer of the realm.² By definition, then, he was subject to more ‘supervision’ from Parliament than Warwick had been. Batten’s instructions as commander-in-chief emphasised that there was no agreement on the appointment of a Lord Admiral and that he was to hold his post until further notice.³ The Navy as a whole, though, was not affected by the Self-Denying Ordinance to the same extent as the army, with the naval commanders who had served Warwick remaining in place.⁴

There was some dispute, though, between the Lords and Commons over the command of the fleet in 1645. On 28 April, the Commons decided that the forthcoming summer fleet should be under the control of a committee of three members, from both Houses, with Warwick named as one of them, alongside the MPs Peregrine Pelham and Alexander Bence. With Parliament increasingly divided into factions, the plan to have three men in command of the fleet was probably intended to placate each group. Warwick was identified with the Presbyterians, whilst Pelham was associated with the Independents and it was probably hoped that Bence would maintain some balance.⁵ The plan soon foundered, though, with the Commons rejecting Bence and the Lords objecting to Pelham. The House of Lords, in fact, was adamant that the fleet’s style of command should remain much the same as before, with a single commander being appointed. For many, the ideal candidate remained Warwick. The Commons, however, ordered the Committee for the Admiralty to grant Batten the post of commander-in-chief, largely because time was running out and no agreement could be reached with the Lords over a mutually acceptable Lord Admiral. Batten would be in command for several years, with no further discussion of a joint command of the fleet being put forward until the tumultuous events of 1648.⁶

The radical voices in Parliament, such as Henry Vane Junior, were eager for the armed forces, both by land and sea, to be under greater Parliamentary control. There was unease at the independence which Essex had exercised as Lord General, with his lack of cooperation with Waller a glaring example of divisions in the field. It was feared that Essex held his own agenda and might seek favour from the King if he was able to open private negotiations.⁷ Some in the Commons were concerned that a peace between Essex and the King would see a monopoly of power by his allies in the Lords, with his

² McCaughey, ‘The English Navy’, p.140

³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. C416, f.26; Instructions to William Batten, 1645

⁴ D. E. Kennedy, ‘The Establishment and Settlement of Parliament’s Admiralty, 1642-1648’, *Mariner’s Mirror*, 48 (1962), p.278

⁵ Rowe, *Vane*, p.127

⁶ Kennedy, ‘Admiralty’, p.280

⁷ Baumber, ‘Parliamentary Naval Politics’, pp.402-403

cousin Warwick amongst them. With the Self-Denying Ordinance, Essex was removed and the New Model Army put into being, with Sir Thomas Fairfax appointed commander, albeit subject to orders from Parliament.

The same principle of greater Parliamentary control, then, was applied also to the Navy when Warwick was replaced as commander of the fleet. Warwick's close links to Essex did him few favours in the eyes of the radicals and undoubtedly played a part in his replacement by Batten. By 1645, Warwick's predecessor as Lord Admiral, the Earl of Northumberland, was growing closer to the Independent faction, having been left exasperated at the failure of peace negotiations (in which he had played a leading role) with the King in 1642 and 1643.⁸ Northumberland had harboured hopes of regaining the Lord Admiralty, but the King had refused to promise him the office upon the possible resumption of peace. Pym's decision to make Warwick Lord Admiral in December 1643 had further dashed his ambitions. In Clarendon's words, Northumberland 'was the proudest man alive'.⁹ By 1645, he was lobbying *against* Warwick's continuing as the commander of the fleet. As Baumber suggests, Northumberland, realising that his chances of regaining the Lord Admiralty were minimal, was keen to deny it to Warwick.¹⁰ The Navy, then, was not immune from rivalries and jealousies amongst the Parliamentarians.

It is worth pausing at this juncture, though, to consider some of the issues confronted by the Parliamentary Navy under Warwick's command of the fleet. In particular, some individual cases or examples will be used to illustrate wider points pertaining to Parliament's Navy. As discussed in previous chapters, the seizure of the fleet had been a major advantage to Parliament, but the Royalists had been able to mount effective challenges in certain circumstances, such as the period in late 1643 when Parliament's Irish Guard was under-financed. To a large extent, the shortage of finance during 1643 was a legacy of Parliament's lack of impetus with regards to naval funding at the end of 1642. There had been disagreement between the Lords and Commons over whether or not Northumberland should be restored to the command of the fleet, with many peers viewing his return as a good means of enticing the King into renewed peace talks.¹¹ Warwick's allies in the Commons had prevailed, but the whole issue has disrupted the process of financing the Navy into 1643. The summer fleet of

⁸ Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics', p.403

⁹ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1864

¹⁰ Baumber, 'Parliamentary Naval Politics', p.403

¹¹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.416

1642 continued in commission as the 'Winter Guard' because Parliament decided to avoid paying off the ships, which would have required the raising of further money.

John Pym recognised the problems which excessive Parliamentary bickering and interference had on the fleet and pushed hard to make Warwick Lord Admiral, the appointment being finalised in December 1643. The previous month Parliament had introduced the 'Excise on Salt and Flesh', an unpopular duty on food, to help fund the Navy.¹²

Despite such action, however, shortages of finance were a recurring problem for the fleet. Warwick was never a man to shy away from confronting Parliament when he believed that the Navy was under-funded or under-strength. In a lengthy remonstrance to the House of Lords on 10 February 1644, he voiced the opinion that the Navy's finances had been neglected, and that if Parliament failed to respond to his repeated warnings, there would be severe consequences.¹³

Warwick began by saying that a minimum of fifty ships were required to defend England, to be manned by some six thousand men, but that victuals sufficient only for four thousand men had been provided.¹⁴ Obviously, it was essential that the remaining two thousand men receive their due supplies, but, during the war thus far, there were numerous instances of a ship's company being ill-provisioned. Stressing the need for the Navy to maintain a guard across the British Isles, it being impossible to guarantee where a foreign invasion or substantial enemy fleet might choose to make an incursion, Warwick went on to argue that a further ten ships might be needed to augment the Parliamentary fleet.¹⁵ The numerous squadrons, posted to various localities, were a necessity, but by virtue of the Navy's ships being dispersed, its full strength could never be concentrated at the moment of greatest danger. Of course, it was a balancing act: Warwick had to choose carefully where to deploy his ships and in what number, with the Downs often being the most-heavily defended region, given the importance of London to Parliament's war effort.

Warwick was highly critical of what he saw as a delayed and even indifferent response to his repeated warnings of 1643 concerning the Navy's deficit of provisions. Pointing out that the stores were 'near totally exhausted', he bemoaned the high cost and lengthy time which would be required to address the issue, arguing that the setting to sea of a fleet able to meet the manifold challenges of the coming year was being

¹² Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.416

¹³ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick's Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

¹⁴ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick's Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

¹⁵ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick's Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

compromised.¹⁶ This was ‘notwithstanding my frequent Remembrances in that Behalf’.¹⁷ He suggested that little had been done since his significant warnings of the previous December, a situation he clearly found intolerable. He did qualify his criticisms, however, by demonstrating an awareness of the many pressing issues which Parliament faced as it fought the war, but his message was stark: no respite could be allowed, lest the Navy suffer. There would always be an unrelenting torrent of business with which the two Houses would be confronted, but, Warwick argued, the failure to respond to his latest remonstrance might be highly prejudicial to the whole Parliamentary war effort.

Warwick listed five serious threats which England would face were speedy preparations not taken to bolster the Navy. He cautioned against an invasion from foreign states, highlighting the Royalists’ attempts to curry favour with continental powers, which he described as the ‘Malice of the common Enemy’.¹⁸ An under-equipped Navy, he warned, would be powerless to stem the tide of arms shipments which the King needed to continue the war on land, which would lead to the ‘shedding [of] much more Blood the next Summer’.¹⁹ The Lord Admiral drew attention to the dangers which were posed to trade at sea, a strong Navy being vital to its defence. In the present state, he said, the ‘Merchandize’ of England might be ruined, thereby damaging the income from the Customs and Excise, which levies were used to fund so much of Parliament’s war effort.²⁰ Furthermore, a loss of trade to other powers would not be easily recovered, nor the skills of navigation which had become central to England’s seaborne success.

Warwick then raised the possibility of the mariners switching their allegiance to the King, possibly taking Parliamentary ships with them. Such grave threats as these were obviously mentioned in an attempt to focus minds in Parliament, but they were not idle warnings either. The defections of 1648 would later add credence to his earlier warnings. Warwick’s remonstrance concluded by making plain the need for a speedy resolution of the Navy’s shortcomings, the Lord Admiral saying that he was unable to perform ‘beyond the Proportion of my Enablings’.²¹

Warwick experienced particular irritation when the Commissioners of the Navy sent out under-equipped shipping or did not respond to his pleas for victuals for his own

¹⁶ *LJ*, VI, p.419; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

¹⁷ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

¹⁸ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

¹⁹ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

²⁰ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

²¹ *LJ*, VI, p.421; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

vessel. His feelings were enunciated starkly in a letter of May 1644. Warwick had called for another twenty men to be added to the strength of his flagship, the *James*, pointing out that four years previously some 300 men had been allotted to Pennington in the same ship, ‘at such time as there was not halfe the occasion to use men as now there is’.²²

By highlighting the crew numbers which Pennington had commanded before the Civil War, Warwick was obviously hoping to spur the Commissioners into action. As he rightly pointed out, the Navy was considerably busier during a conflict. His wrath had increased when a ketch arrived to attend him, but was low on supplies. Warwick vented his dissatisfaction:

if you expect [that] I should both man & Victuall him out of my ship you are deceived, for I have found the inconvenience of Victualing of Catches [ketches] and other small Vessells, that I was forced afterwards to take provision out of other ships to supply mine...²³

Having complained that the *James* was in need of twenty more men, it was of little surprise that Warwick would not want his flagship further weakened by having to supply a smaller vessel.

The maintenance of sufficient naval manpower was another key issue which Parliament had to confront during the war. As Lord Admiral, Warwick set out guidelines for recruitment. His instructions were alert to the damage which could be done to England’s trade if an over-reliance on pressing men from the merchant marine was permitted to flourish:

Unles the Fleet shalbe soe divided as my Consent cannot bee obtained...your selfe and all the officers of the said Shipp in case of a warrant for pressing to you or them granted, are to be verie sparinge in pressinge of men out of Merchant s shippes, especiallie outward bound, least such disorderly courses of pressing of men p[re]judice the trade of the Kingdome, wch is by all good meanes to bee advanced & cherished...²⁴

Warwick stressed that without a ‘speciall warrant from mee’ the officers were to avoid the pressing of men.²⁵ Rather, they were to ensure that the Lord Admiral was acquainted regularly with any ‘defects of men, [so] that order maie bee taken for...supply’.²⁶ Warning was also given that the proportion of watermen serving onboard should not grow too high, with the number not to exceed ‘tenn to everie

²² NA, SP16/504, f.42; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 9 May 1644

²³ NA, SP16/504, f.42; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 9 May 1644

²⁴ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

²⁵ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

²⁶ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

hundred' of a ship's manpower, unless permission was received from the Lord Admiral.²⁷ Watermen were not especially popular with officers, their maritime skills generally extending only as far as rowing: nevertheless in the early Stuart era they had been drawn upon to plug recruitment shortages.²⁸ Warwick recognised that watermen could play a role in manning the Navy, as seen by a letter to Lenthall on 15 December 1643. He highlighted a recent petition presented to him 'by divers Watermen upon the river of Thames' in which they pleaded that 'they may not bee impressed to any but Sea service for wch they have been usually reserved'.²⁹ Warwick then went on to support their case:

The truth is there being kept in readines to serve in [th]e Fleet is a considerable advantage to the State & I would wish there persons might not bee diverted to any other employment, yet I shall not deter...anything therein, but wth the approbacon of the house.³⁰

Warwick's position was one of pragmatism: if men were willing to serve the Navy then it was prudent to allow them to do so. His preference was to keep the proportion low, but he was open to the possibility of more watermen being recruited with his agreement. In some cases perhaps, there might have been little choice.

Before the war began, Henry Vane Junior managed to persuade Parliament that impressment for the Navy needed to be introduced. After some initial hostility to the plan, a bill was passed in the lower chamber on 11 May 1641, the King agreeing to the measure soon afterwards.³¹ Vane had been insistent that men needed to be forced to join the Navy, lest numbers diminish too far. The Ordinance was renewed various times during the war and Warwick's correspondence to the Commissioners in February 1645 outlined its necessity:

Whereas a fleete is now abroad, and another fleete is now p[re]paring [for the summer, the Navy] may require a greater proportion of men, then shall voluntarily offer themselves to the said service. These are therefore by virtue of an Ordinance of...Parliam[en]t...to enable authorize & require you from time to time...to raise & Impresse and leavy by such persons as you shall in that behalfe appoint, such & soe many Mariners, sailors, watermen, Churgeons [surgeons], Gunners, Ship Carpenters, Calkers & Hoymen (other then such as are excepted in the said Ordinance) as alsoe Carremen for carriage of victualls...³²

Parliament was adamant that the Ordinance be adhered to:

²⁷ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

²⁸ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.398

²⁹ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.451; Earl of Warwick to William Lenthall, 15 December 1643

³⁰ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 62, f.451; Earl of Warwick to William Lenthall, 15 December 1643

³¹ Rowe, *Vane*, pp.118-119

³² NA, SP16/509, f.29; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, February 1645

If any such persons shall wilfully refuse to be impressed, or shall hide or absent themselves at the time of such press, or having received their conduct money do not appear at such places and times as by the ticket are appointed they shall suffer imprisonment for the space of three months without bail.³³

The naval officers were ordered to press men from merchant shipping as sparingly as possible, especially in the case of outward bound vessels, so as to minimise any disruption to trade.³⁴

One tactic which Parliament employed in an effort to sign-up more mariners was to promise fair and prompt pay, hardly an original proposition, but one that provided a measure of hope to those who might join the fleet or were already serving. On 31 October 1642, Giles Greene wrote to the Commissioners of the Navy informing them of a recent vote in the Commons:

it is ordered that there shall be allowed unto the Com[m]on Marrin[er]s of the Severall Merchant Shippes ymployed in the last Somers Fleete and unto such inferior Officers as receive not above Twenty Shillings p[er] moneth wages, One moneths pay over & above their ordynary wages to bee allowed them by the same Rule that the Marrin[er]s in the Kinges Shippes were paid their moneths gratuity.³⁵

Obviously, such a measure was aimed at those men already assisting the Navy, the need to retain manpower at sea clearly focusing minds in Parliament. Of course, how to award the gratuity was a matter to debate. Recognising the need to curry favour with merchant shipping, it was decided to follow the convention which applied to the state ships:

The Rule of payment of the Marriners in the Kinges Shippes is to any Marriners wch hath served out this full eight monethes a full monethes pay. And to such as have served fower [four] monethes a proporconable [amount] of the monethes pay.³⁶

That was the promise, at least. In practice, Parliament was not as generous. The withholding of the gratuity was, on occasion, used in an attempt to force ships to recruit. In November 1642, the Commissioners of the Navy ordered the Victualler to provide enough supplies to last three hundred men around thirty days. Furthermore, they ordered

That the said principall officers so soone as the Money now in [th]e Storehouses att Chatham bee put on board [th]e said Shipes doe cause the Company of Souldi[er]s that are now there for guard thereof to bee dispersed on board [th]e

³³ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.336; Parliamentary Ordinance, 7 February 1646

³⁴ BL, Sloane MSS. 1709, f.56r; Instructions for the Fleet to William Penn, 2 May 1648

³⁵ NA, SP16/494, f.25; Giles Greene to Commissioners of the Navy, 31 October 1642

³⁶ NA, SP16/494, f.25; Giles Greene to Commissioners of the Navy, 31 October 1642

Shipes to guard them. That for the compleating the said number of 300 men, the said princepall officers doe use their best endeavours by...promises to get such seamen in as they can meet with, and particularly they are to stop the monethes gratuity of the Victories Company now paying off at Deptford. And...to doe the like with the Marchands Ships Men who are lately come in and were employed this last summer in the service of the state and are to have the like gratuity.³⁷

That Parliament deemed it necessary to send soldiers to protect the money aboard the ships was a telling recognition of the unease which delayed or abandoned bonus payments could unleash from the sailors. Throughout the Civil War, Warwick was adamant that the fleet's personnel deserved their wages: 'it is very great disservis to the State and ill husbandry to keep the men on so long unpaid'.³⁸

Parliament's standing with the sailors, whilst high in 1642, deteriorated as the war took its toll, the familiar complaints about poor victuals and lack of pay resurfacing. The sailors did, on occasion, demonstrate their unrest, as the events of March 1643 aboard the *St George* testify. The ship 'having but 12 days victualls is suddenly to come in, her Men beeing refractory [and] will not take victualls, till the Ship bee p[ai]d off and new ballasted'.³⁹ Specifically, the Committee for the Navy was informed by Batten that 'men belonging to [th]e *St George* and *Entrance* have refused to take in the Beere lately sent downe in a hoy and do absolutely resolve not to take in any more victualls in the Downes'.⁴⁰ Batten saw that the beer was not wasted, sending it instead to the *St Andrew*. Had the mariners accepted delivery of fresh victuals, without their other complaints being met, then they would effectively have agreed to the ship's continuance in service. As sailors received their pay once a ship was discharged, the matter carried considerable importance. It was a familiar tactic for ships to be continued in service, with the men being forced to wait for their wages and, naturally, they did not like such expedients. In February 1643, Parliament had voted to increase the seamen's wages, but, with no money available to fund the pay rise, the fleet had continued in commission.⁴¹

Men were often forced to wait a significant time for their wages to be paid. Not every case was the same, however, as some were denied pay on account of bad conduct at sea. One man who was forced to plead for his wages was Thomas Millard, a gunner's mate aboard the *Swallow*. The ship had been employed for ten months off the coast of

³⁷ NA, SP16/494, ff.34r-34v; Commissioners of the Navy, November 1642

³⁸ NA, SP16/504, f.135; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 14 December 1644

³⁹ NA, SP16/494/171r; Thomas Smith to Commissioners of the Navy, 14 March 1643

⁴⁰ NA, SP16/494/166; Thomas Smith to Commissioners of the Navy, 13 March 1643

⁴¹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.416

Ireland and had returned safely to the Thames, the company being discharged upon arrival.

Petitioning the Committee for the Navy in March 1643, Millard explained that he had not collected his pay, having returned to Ireland for his wife, whom he had married there, and their children, his family allegedly being in ‘great distresse’.⁴² Millard failed to mention, however, that his pay had been withheld as a result of his having engaged in ‘abusive carriage in the ship’, and his having directed ill language against the State and the *Swallow*’s master.⁴³ The Commanders of the Navy related the charges and suggested that were he to submit and acknowledge his offences before the Committee, then he might receive his pay. The Committee called for Captain Brookes, the offended master, to answer for Millard’s submission and to ascertain whether he was sincere in his reformation.⁴⁴ Brookes, though, was unavailable to provide the required certification, having gone to Portsmouth to take charge of the *Expedition*.

Millard was keen to have matters resolved swiftly, as he had been appointed to serve aboard the *Hind* pinnace, his lack of funds meaning that he could not ‘p[ro]vide himselfe wth Clothes & other necessaryes’ for the expedition.⁴⁵ Robert Bramble, whom Millard was to serve under, promised to hold his wages until such time as the Committee decreed he should receive them. Presumably, Bramble undertook to provide some clothing and other essentials to enable Millard to carry out his new appointment, with the balance to be restored from Millard’s frozen wages. Millard’s pleas to the Committee had emphasised the costs of bringing his family to safety, but perhaps his failure to address the abuse he had given to Brookes delayed his case.

The difficulties of finding sufficient labour to man the Navy extended beyond the recruitment of sailors. The Committee for the Navy bemoaned the lack of caulkers, carpenters and other skilled ship workers who were coming forward to join the fleet. Notwithstanding the ‘utmost indeavour’ of the Navy Commissioners and principal officers in trying to find men who could carry out the ‘repair and setting forth’ of the ships, shortages of labour were still experienced.⁴⁶ The officers complained that

they have not bin able to p[re]vaile wth any persons of the said professions to come willingly to [th]e workes, these alledging there is now no power to presse

⁴² NA, SP16/497/48i; Petition of Thomas Millard to the Committee of the Navy, 14 March 1643

⁴³ NA, SP16/497/48ii; Petition of Thomas Millard to the Committee of the Navy, 14 March 1643

⁴⁴ NA, SP16/497/48iii; Petition of Thomas Millard to the Committee of the Navy, 14 March 1643

⁴⁵ NA, SP16/497/48iv; Petition of Thomas Millard to the Committee of the Navy, 14 March 1643

⁴⁶ NA, SP16/494, f.72r; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 2 January 1643

them, by wch refusall of theires the whole business is like to stand still, to [th]e extraordinary prejudice if not hazard [and] total Ruine of this Kingdome.⁴⁷

The Committee's suggested solution involved the principal officers calling before them 'all such inferior officers and other Seamen whatsoever as are necessary to attend the present services of [th]e Fleete'.⁴⁸ They were to 'use their best perswacons wth the said inferior officers and Seamen to undertake [th]e Worke and to be Cordiall in this greate affaire'.⁴⁹ Part of the persuasion was to offer a pay rise to those serving in the fleet, as well as an advance of at least a part of their salary. As we have seen, though, promises were sometimes more easily made by Parliament than honoured. Lacking the manpower, however, left Parliament with little option but to demand more from those already recruited, albeit with pledges of better conditions to act as an incentive.

Throughout the war, numerous petitions to Warwick from those in the 'ordinary service' expressed fears that money might be in short supply or redirected away from the Navy. One such example occurred in 1645, when those belonging to the ordinary establishment at Chatham, such as boatswains, masters attendant and 'shipkeepers', wrote to Warwick to outline their concerns: they were 'very doubtfull that the money intended & hitherto promised for the ordinary' service would be used for its stated purpose.⁵⁰ They feared that the funds would be 'through pressing necessities...directed another way' and pleaded that such a course of action be prevented, 'our wants being growne to such an extremity, that wee know not how to subsist any longer'.⁵¹ Bemoaning the 'sadnes of the times & the vast expence this kingdome is at daily', the petitioners nevertheless felt compelled to call for 'seaven or eight thousand pounds', such a sum being deemed sufficient to pay them all off.⁵² The petition concluded by saying that, if paid off, all of those who 'have relation to the ships' would be 'unanimously encouraged to further the dispatch of the ships' due for use at sea.⁵³ The clear implication, of course, was that men would be highly unwilling to speed the ships to sea without their complaints being answered. Interestingly, the petition was addressed only to Warwick, as one of the Commissioners for the Admiralty. That perhaps demonstrated the high regard in which he was held by those serving in the Navy, the petitioners trusting that he would personally intervene on their behalf.

⁴⁷ NA, SP16/494, f.72r; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 2 January 1643

⁴⁸ NA, SP16/494/72r; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 2 January 1643

⁴⁹ NA, SP16/494/72r; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 2 January 1643

⁵⁰ NA, SP16/511/97; Petition of the Ordinary at Chatham to Earl of Warwick, 1645

⁵¹ NA, SP16/511/97; Petition of the Ordinary at Chatham to Earl of Warwick, 1645

⁵² NA, SP16/511/97; Petition of the Ordinary at Chatham to Earl of Warwick, 1645

⁵³ NA, SP16/511/97; Petition of the Ordinary at Chatham to Earl of Warwick, 1645

On 24 May 1645, John Wells, the clerk of the stores for the Navy at Deptford, petitioned for the settlement of numerous debts which he had incurred in the service, dating back some five and a half years. Writing to the Committee for the Navy, he outlined how, in theory, he was entitled to an annual salary of £78 5s 10d, but ‘by reason of the onstruccon of the tymes’, he was now owed some £430 12s.⁵⁴ Most petitioners followed the trend of referring to the ‘troubled’ or ‘distracted’ times of the war, obviously wanting to demonstrate an acknowledgement of the difficulties facing the country, but nevertheless hoping to have their own complaints addressed. Wells explained that he depended on the salary for the greater part of his income, and was also left uncompensated for the employment of two further clerks to assist him in the onerous task of delivering provisions and freighting ships for Chatham, Portsmouth, the Downs or elsewhere. Urging the Committee to see that his arrears were paid, he pleaded that thereafter he wanted his salary to be paid yearly, as promised, ‘wthout wch hee is not able to support himselfe in the service’.⁵⁵ The Committee, considering the case, expressed concern that a loyal servant such as Wells had been denied his rightful wages from the Exchequer, and praised his contribution to the Parliamentary fleet, he having ‘carefully executed’ all orders.⁵⁶ It was ordered that his wages be settled from the Treasury of the Navy, in the hope that Wells could continue in his job and not be forced to leave the service out of hardship. His arrears dated, of course, from the final moments of the Personal Rule, the delays in payment perhaps mirroring the declining domestic situation and demonstrating the disruption which the growing conflict had had upon those serving the Navy.

Whilst a lack of finance was sometimes to blame for wages or victuals being in short supply, on occasion the shortages and delays related to inefficiency or, worse, corruption. It was clear that for the fleet to operate at maximum effectiveness, ships needed to be supplied with sufficient victuals by honest men, but complaints to the contrary were frequent. In April 1644, Captain Moulton expressed frustration at the lack of victuals aboard the *Lion*. Warwick raised the case with the Commissioners of the Navy:

Wherein hee [Moulton] acquainted mee, that his Purser never appeared unto him, since hee came aboard the Lyon and hee informed mee that there is wanting of the provisions for the shipp, both Butter Cheese Beefe Porke and

⁵⁴ NA, SP16/507/86; John Wells to Committee of the Navy, 24 May 1645

⁵⁵ NA, SP16/507/86; John Wells to Committee of the Navy, 24 May 1645

⁵⁶ NA, SP16/507/86; John Wells to Committee of the Navy, 24 May 1645

Fishe. I pray examine the cause of his staying for longe from the Shipp, and hasten him Speedily away with such provisions as are wanting in her.⁵⁷

If basic necessities such as food were in short supply, unrest could understandably spread. Pursers attracted Warwick's ire on a regular basis: 'I receive continually complaints of the miscarriages of pursers'.⁵⁸ Pursers often issued less than the full ration to which a ship's company was entitled and that was a particularly unpopular gripe amongst the seamen. Amongst the purser's arsenal of dishonesty, he would sometimes accept only seven-eighths of what was due to him from the victualler, taking a cash sum in place of the final eighth.⁵⁹ The victualler could then sell on the spare provisions, thus also benefiting from the arrangement. On occasion, the purser might see fit to divide rations at fourteen ounces to the pound rather than sixteen, thus keeping hold of a fair proportion of the weight which could be sold on for personal gain elsewhere.⁶⁰

There may perhaps have been less corruption from pursers had their salaries not been so paltry in real terms. Their wages left little scope for both personal profit *and* their carrying out their jobs with complete honesty. One of the factors which led many of them to issue lesser rations was the inevitable wastage which took place in the distribution. Each delivery of food was weighed on deck and it was inevitable that spillage would occur, but the purser was obliged to account for the full weight for which he had signed. The shrinkage of meat when stored in cask was also an unavoidable event. Thus the purser was not entirely to blame for his issuing lesser weights than those stipulated.

In a petition of 1645 to the Committee of the Admiralty, a number of pursers berated the meagre 6d allowance granted to them by the victuallers to supply each man in the Navy.⁶¹ Highlighting that the allowance was similar to that granted in Tudor times, the pursers complained of the inflation of prices since then, with such essentials as candles and lanterns now costing them far more than in previous times, making it difficult to defray the cost. As Kemp points out, however, the vigorous competition for a purser's warrant suggests that there was a good living to be made for those who obtained it.⁶² Hugh Salisbury, purser to the *Providence*, was tarred with the charge that 'he hath abused the State'. Warwick wanted him to be given a strong punishment if

⁵⁷ NA, SP16/504/17; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 14 April 1644

⁵⁸ NA, SP16/504/38; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 8 May 1644

⁵⁹ Kemp, *British Sailor*, p.25

⁶⁰ Kemp, *British Sailor*, p.25

⁶¹ NA, SP16/511/99; Petition of the pursers to Committee of the Admiralty, 1645

⁶² Kemp, *British Sailor*, p.26

guilty: 'you must make him an example to others by inflicting such exemplary punishment upon him, as others may beware in committing the like'.⁶³

Unscrupulous gunners sometimes used the salute as an opportunity to steal gunpowder.⁶⁴ In Rodger's words, gunners had an 'evil reputation' for profiting from such actions in the seventeenth century.⁶⁵ Warwick's instructions reflected that unhappy tradition, with the Earl insisting that during 'necessary Salutes...a kene note...bee kept of the number and kinde of every shott, that the Gunners maie bee thereby examined'.⁶⁶ More generally, as for all victuals, 'weekelie Accompts' were to be taken from the master gunner 'of the expence of Powther, shott, and all other maner of Amunicon' with a caution against 'any part thereof [being] sold, wasted, or imbezzilled'.⁶⁷ For other stores, it was important to examine 'Receipts, expences & Remaines', primarily to stop waste.⁶⁸ The requirements laid down for the master gunner by Warwick were perfectly in tune with those issued by Northumberland in 1640, and subsequently reissued in 1646: the master gunners were

to receive by Indentuers all their p[ro]visions for Artillery, for present use...from the Office of the Ordnance, to whom at their returne from Sea, or at the end of the yeare, they are to accompt for the same, and receive the approbation of that Office for the equite of their expence upon the ballance of their Accompts.⁶⁹

The obvious safety risks posed by a ship's gunpowder warranted 'due watch & order' being carried out, the master gunner ultimately responsible for the ensuring that 'the candles & fire [were] seasonably and carefully put out' when the day was at an end.⁷⁰

Some gunners, though, were far more interested in personal gain. Allegations of improper conduct by gunners were recorded. In October 1644, Warwick commented on the issue in an address to the Commissioners:

Whereas I have received sev[er]all Informacons, that much of the stores of Powder and other Ammunicon belonging to the Navy are purloyned and sold

⁶³ NA, SP16/504/38; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 8 May 1644

⁶⁴ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.407

⁶⁵ Rodger, *Command*, p.54

⁶⁶ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁶⁷ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.200r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁶⁸ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.199v; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁶⁹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.38r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

⁷⁰ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.38r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

away by the Gunners of his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Shippes contrary to the trust reposed in them.⁷¹

A particular case involved a gunner serving on the *Tenth Whelp*:

Upon informacon of Edward Edmunds Cheife Searcher to [th]e Committee for Powder that Rice Thomas, Gunner of the 10th Whelp, hath [conveyed] two Barrels of Gunpowder and Tenn Grannadoes [and] Thirty great shott, delivered him out of [th]e Shipp unto [th]e house of Richard Whitehall, a Shipp Chandler dwelling in Rood Lane, London, & that the said Edward Edmunds hath seized [th]e said Amunicon & left itt in [th]e Custodie of [th]e said Whitehall.⁷²

The Committee for the Navy was charged with investigating the truth of the matter, which, if true, was to result in Thomas' dismissal. Warwick was to be kept up-to-date, a demonstration of his keen, hands-on, approach to commanding the Navy.

Northumberland's instructions to the fleet, still relevant after his dismissal from the Lord Admiralty, directed that all naval officers 'haveinge before their eyes the way marked out, for their direcons in their Severall duties may walke the more perfectly, or become the more inexcusable if they erre'.⁷³ The officers were expected to circulate the orders to ensure 'that no man whome it concernes may have cause to pretend ignorance'.⁷⁴ The running theme of Northumberland's instructions was accountability. Everything and anything which involved the Navy's paying out money needed to be accounted for. Where victuals, or indeed shipping, were lacking the Navy was to contract 'with Merchants for supply of what is wanting of the full Magazine'.⁷⁵ Regular reports on the costs associated with the fleet were to be sent to the treasurer 'and thereby all Clamour from poore men for want of their pay be prevented'.⁷⁶

Another potential avenue for corruption was the muster. The role of the muster-master was an important one. Warwick described the duties required when writing to Giles Barrow, who was to occupy the position in 1644. Barrow was to 'keepe an exact and true Muster of all the Men apportayninge to all his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Shippes and Pinnaces in the fleete for prevencon of many abuses that may bee Com[m]itted through defective musters'.⁷⁷ If false musters went unnoticed then the Navy would be squandering money needlessly. It was not unheard of for an early-modern muster to be

⁷¹ NA, SP16/504/108; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 21 October 1644

⁷² NA, SP16/494/169; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 14 March 1643

⁷³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.1r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

⁷⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.1r; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

⁷⁵ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.3v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

⁷⁶ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A462, f.4v; Earl of Northumberland, 'Instructions for the Principal and Inferior Officers of the Navy, for the Rectifying and Preventing Abuses', 1640

⁷⁷ NA, SP16/504/5; Earl of Warwick to Giles Barrow, 5 April 1644

fabricated. If an unscrupulous muster-master claimed for more troops or sailors than were actually in service, he could earn an illicit income, provided he was not caught. With the Civil War devouring finance (the Navy in particular placing a strain on the exchequer) it was imperative that as many avenues of corruption be closed off as possible.

Warwick demonstrated concerns over the trustworthiness of some serving the Navy. Writing to the Commissioners of the Navy in April 1644, he referred to the *Tiger* which had recently docked and which contained ‘divers blocks of Tinn’, which he stressed should be accounted for as soon as possible, or ‘they wilbe else imbesled’.⁷⁸ His assumption that foul play would rear its head was perhaps a telling sign that corruption was widespread.

Whilst the Parliamentary Navy faced a series of challenges during the Civil War, day-to-day operations at sea were reflective of seventeenth century naval norms. The priority for officers was to keep their vessels operating in good order with a compliant labour force and minimal disruption. Warwick set clear guidelines for how to deal with troublemakers, decisive measures being favoured. His exhaustive outline of potential misdemeanours covered many aspects of life at sea. He cautioned against men raising ‘Tumult’, quarrelling and fighting amongst each other.⁷⁹ Outbursts of bad language, particularly blasphemous utterances, were condemned as unacceptable in the Navy, as were instances of drunkenness. The maintenance of a clean cabin, so essential to prevent the unnecessary spread of infection, was deemed essential. Sailors were not free to come and go as they pleased, with permission being required from the commanding officers on all occasions. Any man found sleeping at his watch or thieving from the rest of the crew could expect stiff consequences. Warwick ordered his officers to ‘use due severitie’ and to act ‘without delay’ in the punishment of miscreants.⁸⁰

Essentially, any challenge to the officers’ authority or to the cohesiveness of the ship was to be stamped out swiftly. The phrase ‘due severitie’ leaves little doubt that Warwick expected discipline to be maintained above all else. The seamen were expected to make do with their rations and keep any grumbles to themselves, lest order be undermined. Numerous accounts of seventeenth-century naval life pointed to a lack of provisions. It is worth treating many of these accounts with caution, however, when studying the 1640s. It is widely agreed that conditions during the naval expeditions of the 1620s were very poor, and profiteering was widespread, but conditions had

⁷⁸ NA, SP16/504/24r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 21 April 1644

⁷⁹ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.199r; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

⁸⁰ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, ff.199r-v; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

improved during the Personal Rule, with Northumberland's appointment as Lord Admiral seeing some positive steps taken. Nevertheless, problems still persisted.⁸¹

Public instructions would conform to the tradition of warning the sailors that any indiscipline would meet with a harsh response. An element of pragmatism would always be required to deal with some scenarios, however. We are given an insight into the practical governance of a ship by the private instructions which Warwick addressed to Swanley in 1644. The Lord Admiral ordered that in the event of any sailors threatening mutiny aboard Swanley's vessel or any other under his command, he was to call a Council of War and then to consider proceeding against the miscreants with martial law.⁸² Warwick soon qualified that advice, though:

But in this case I would have you to bee both sparinge and tender, and not to use Martiall Lawe on any of y[ou]r Mariners, but in case of great necessitie, and for the avoydeing of greater inconveniences & mischeifes that might happen thereby for want of y[ou]r soe doeinge. And I hope one example or two wilbe sufficient in this case.⁸³

The message seemed clear: martial law was a device to be employed only in times of urgency. Warwick's preferred method appeared to be that Swanley attempt to deal with any troubles by targeting the key ringleader or deviant in any unrest. The Lord Admiral perhaps believed that an example being made of one or several troublemakers would be enough to deter any further outbreaks of indiscipline. Clearly mindful that manning the Navy was always a challenge, he knew that it would be impractical for each and every offence to be treated in a draconian fashion. Men needed to be retained to serve aboard the ships. Perhaps maintaining martial law as a last resort could be considered a means of helping it to retain its impact: called upon in special circumstances, it might have carried a higher weight. The death penalty was a sentence virtually unknown aboard state ships, but punishments tended to be heavier for those serving on privateers.⁸⁴ Under Parliament's control, the Admiralty was sometimes inclined to overlook cases of over-zealous discipline, the necessity of having the ships running efficiently at sea winning the day.⁸⁵

Warwick struck a firmer line when discussing opponents of Parliament in the Navy:

⁸¹ A good case study of the 1620s can be found in I. G. Powell, 'Seventeenth Century "Profiteering" in the Royal Navy', *Mariner's Mirror*, 7 (1921), pp.243-250

⁸² BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.203v; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁸³ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.203v; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁸⁴ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.406

⁸⁵ Kemp, *British Sailor*, p.29

You are to be carefull that noe practise bee amonge your men by any to oppose the Parliam[en]t nor to suffer any of the Irish or English Enemy there to come over hither to make disturbances amongst us.⁸⁶

He was clear that a court martial was the required course of action to deal with any 'hostile' factions onboard, with the officers to punish those deemed guilty, 'wherein you must bee very strict in your Justice, that soe you may have obedience in all y[ou]r com[m]ands'.⁸⁷ Outside influences spreading 'poison' on the ship would certainly represent a severe threat and have the potential to destabilise the morale of the crew. Both sides in the war were guilty of attempting to coerce elements of the opposition into an understanding and change of loyalty: that was a constant aspect of the conflict. Warwick recognised the threat which such instances could pose and made plain the need for their swift termination.

The need to stamp out challenges to Parliament's authority on-board the ships was the topic of a letter from Warwick to the Speaker of the Commons, William Lenthall, on 28 March 1645. Warwick's letter spoke in favour of martial law being enforced:

The Ordinance for Martiall Lawe being so absolutely necessary for p[re]venting of mutinies, plundringe, and disorder amongst the Seamen & p[re]serving the Navie in due obedience...to the Parl[iament] and deterring of malignants, and evill affected persons from daring to attempt any Lewd, or wicked practise.⁸⁸

He went on to warn that strong legislation to enforce martial law was needed 'for divers delinquents remayne now in prison, and cannot bee tried, till the ordinance passe'.⁸⁹ Warwick believed that the example which would be set to others would act as 'a good meanes to keepe the fleete firme'.⁹⁰

Warwick was quick to berate any captains whom he felt were underperforming, a Mr. Peach coming in for heavy criticism in April 1644 for not having set out to sea some ten days after receiving his orders. Warwick wanted a justification for such a delay and warned that if Peach continued to be 'blameworthy' then he would be removed from his post: 'it being of speciall Consequence to have none present in this imployment but such as shall testifie their fidelitie by their being active'.⁹¹

Another to experience Warwick's displeasure for poor service was Thomas Cook, boatswain of the *Garland*. The Rear-Admiral, Captain Richard Owen, had

⁸⁶ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.205r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁸⁷ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.205r; Earl of Warwick, 'Instructions for the Fleet', 1643

⁸⁸ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 60, f.31; Earl of Warwick to William Lenthall, 28 March 1645

⁸⁹ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 60, f.31; Earl of Warwick to William Lenthall, 28 March 1645

⁹⁰ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 60, f.31; Earl of Warwick to William Lenthall, 28 March 1645

⁹¹ NA, SP16/504/19; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 16 April 1644

complained of Cook's poor record of service, stating that 'He loves his bed to[o] well, by reason whereof the Company of the said Ship are not soe regular and orderlie as they ought to bee'.⁹² An effective chain of command was needed onboard the ships, lest any bad practices become endemic. Cook was demoted to a smaller ship, swapping places with the boatswain of the *Adventure*, John Barnett. As Owen was himself commanding the *Garland* that summer, he was particularly alert to Cook's shortcomings.

Warwick had his favourites, though, and unsurprisingly these were the captains who demonstrated a strong work-ethic. Reeve Williams commanded a frigate and served Parliament as a privateer, letters of marque acting as his contract. Warwick was adamant that Williams be paid promptly any money due to him, 'for hee is an ingenious active Man and one whome I doubt not but will doe good service to the State', going on to praise him as 'one I much valew'.⁹³

As discussed elsewhere, the Royalists responded to Parliament's control of the Navy by setting to sea numerous privateers, armed with letters of marque from the King. Parliament could not afford to ignore a similar course of action and, in response, also authorised privateers to augment the State Navy. A Parliamentary Ordinance of 30 November 1643 confirmed the policy, which signalled a heightening of the offensive at sea.⁹⁴ It referred to the continuing ability of the Royalists to ship arms and so forth to their numerous ports, mentioning Newcastle, Falmouth, Dartmouth, Weymouth and Bristol, as well as others.

Various pro-Parliamentarian subjects had come forward and pledged to equip their vessels and pinnaces for warlike purposes against the enemy, with the proviso that they might reap the benefits of any captured prizes. The Ordinance declared that such ships should be brought into the Parliamentary fold, with allowances from the Treasurer of the Navy to be paid to their commanders for their upkeep and victuals whilst in service. The Lord Admiral was to authorise any ships so employed, whilst any prizes had to comply with standard regulations, being adjudged at the High Court of Admiralty in the same manner as any prizes taken by State ships. Nevertheless, the 'adventurers', as they were so-called, were afforded significant liberties, including the right to sell their prizes wherever they saw fit (provided, of course, that no assistance was given to the King). They were also to enjoy a fair degree of operational independence, but were warned against impeding innocent shipping, being commanded only to strike against hostile vessels.

⁹² NA, SP16/504/39; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 8 May 1644

⁹³ NA, SP16/504/38; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 8 May 1644

⁹⁴ Firth and Rait, *Acts and Ordinances*, I, pp.347-351

Warwick spoke of the need to combat foreign shipping in the service of the King, supporting the issuing of public declarations to foreign states that their vessels would be seized if in the employ of the Royalists.⁹⁵ In an attempt to maintain some firm influence over the ‘adventurers’, the Ordinance specified that they must enter into a bond of upwards of £2000 with the High Court of Admiralty, the sum to act as a surety for their good conduct. A certificate under the Admiralty Seal was also deemed essential.

A further Ordinance of July 1645 emphasised Parliament’s desire to allow free trade. Referring to the Ordinance mentioned above, it then went on to state that Parliament’s wish was for good relations with foreign princes and pledged that ‘nothing might bee done during these our owne domestick troubles, whereby their Subjects may receive the least losse, dammage or prejudice’.⁹⁶ Such sensible aims, of course, would never be allowed to interfere with Parliament’s war effort.

The Ordinance laid out a number of conditions which ships from foreign states had to comply with if they were to be permitted free travel to England. Amongst the most noteworthy provisions listed, was a requirement that the ships did not ‘carrie or beare any monies, Ordnance, arms, ammunition, Contraband goods’ or any materials exceeding the necessary needs of the voyage.⁹⁷ It was further stipulated that any ships operating under the pretext of friendly trade which were found subsequently to be carrying goods or merchandise contrary to Parliament’s interests would be seized and deemed prize by the Admiralty. The central themes of the Ordinance, then, demonstrated continuity with earlier directives and tied in with Warwick’s commands for neutral shipping to be left unmolested:

You are not suffer any of your Fleete to pillage any Merchant men that trade not wth our Enimies, nor to doe any insolencies to our Freinde, except [those who] trade unto our Enimies, and them to make prize of them but acompte to bee kept of them...soe the states may have their parte as you may have yours.⁹⁸

The opportunity to augment Parliament’s war chest with prizes was apparent, but there was always a danger that unscrupulous parties might seek to diminish Parliament’s share of the bounty. That threat was recognised by Warwick as he set out guidelines for the capture of prizes. When a pirate vessel was apprehended, it was to be transferred as soon as possible into ‘safe custody’, with due care given to the

⁹⁵ *LJ*, VI, p.420; Earl of Warwick’s Remonstrance, 10 February 1644

⁹⁶ NA, SP16/510/3ii; Parliamentary Ordinance, 8 July 1645

⁹⁷ NA, SP16/510/3ii; Parliamentary Ordinance, 8 July 1645

⁹⁸ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.205r; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

preservation of whatever goods were held in cargo.⁹⁹ Special care had to be taken that ‘noe part thereof bee spoyled, wasted or imbezelled’.¹⁰⁰

Naval guidelines called for all goods to be recorded in an inventory, in theory by ‘honest and indifferent sworne men’.¹⁰¹ The honesty of some involved in that process, though, or the sale of the ship itself, was often very dubious, as Warwick testified:

I am informed that those [responsible for prizes at Portsmouth] doe sett upp Bills in the morning, and in the afternoone sell the said goods to whome they thinke fitt, in soe short a time, that there can bee noe notice given, for Buyers to come and bidd for the said goods, which may prove very p[re]judiciall to the State.¹⁰²

Warwick was referring to the practice whereby prizes would be sold at below market rates to men known to the sellers, or, in some cases, bought by the seller himself.¹⁰³ Historically, the seamen had had no guarantee of a share from any captured or destroyed men-of-war, the officers frequently taking what they could lay their hands on, and the government, whether Crown or Parliament, reaping the major benefit.

In 1644, Parliament ordained that the officers and sailors serving aboard state ships receive a third share of any prizes.¹⁰⁴ The measure was no doubt an attempt to encourage them to be as aggressive as possible in combating the threat posed by piracy, but the division of the prize was open to dispute. The officers frequently continued the convention of taking the major share.

Merchants were eager for any prizes to be dealt with swiftly, no doubt hoping for equally speedy financial rewards. Warwick received a letter in November 1643 suggesting that two Bristol ships, carrying wine from Bordeaux, and taken to the Isle of Wight by Captain William Hodges of the frigate *Lion*, be despatched soon, to better encourage others. Cunningham drew attention to the ‘tedium’ which many shipowners experienced when chasing up administrative matters, and speculated that some might be disheartened from assisting Parliament on account of such travails.¹⁰⁵

Sometimes a dispute over cargoes arose between the naval authorities and the buyers of prize ships. One such case involved a Mr. Vickers who had purchased the *William and Thomas*, a vessel captured in the Irish Sea by the Parliamentarian ships *Jocelyn* and *James*. He had been directed to deliver up the provisions from the ship,

⁹⁹ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.201v; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

¹⁰⁰ BL, Add. MSS. 4106, f.201v; Earl of Warwick, ‘Instructions for the Fleet’, 1643

¹⁰¹ NA, SP16/512/47; Rules and Orders for Regulating Vice-Admirals, April 1647

¹⁰² NA, SP16/504/45; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 10 May 1644

¹⁰³ NA, SP16/504/55r; Earl of Warwick to Commissioners of the Navy, 30 May 1644

¹⁰⁴ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, pp.127-128; Parliamentary Ordinance, 13 March 1644

¹⁰⁵ NA, SP16/498/45; Mr Cunningham to Earl of Warwick, 11 November 1643

‘wch hee refuceth to doe’, his reasons being that ‘having laid out moneys for keeping her all this while [six months], [he] conceives it reasonable, hee should bee satisfied for his disburstm[en]ts’.¹⁰⁶ As Thomas Smith, one of Parliament’s most-active commanders in the Irish Sea, related to the Committee of the Navy in 1645, the vessel had been judged a prize and a third of the proceeds were due to the State, with other shares for the Lord Admiral, and, in theory, a third-part share for the mariners themselves, although, as mentioned earlier, the sailors often failed to see any return. Vickers was eager to employ the ship for his own purposes, and unhappy that the matter was in dispute.

It was not always possible to raise money from the sale of captured ships at a local level. In September 1645, the Committee of the Navy received word from Swanley and Moulton that ‘divers ships, Barcques & other small vessells & their lading taken by way of Reprizall on the Irish and Welch Coasts, & remaine their undisposed of’.¹⁰⁷

Moulton wanted guidance from the Committee on that matter. The Committee returned orders that he should try and sell prizes locally where possible. They went on to suggest that ‘such other prizes as cannot be vended in those p[ar]ts’ should ‘wthout p[re]judice be’ sent ‘with some safe convoy to London’.¹⁰⁸ It clearly made sense for unsold prizes to be forwarded to the capital. London offered a much-wider market for the sale of ships, although it was perhaps preferable for prizes captured in the Irish Sea to be sold locally, the better to avoid the potentially hazardous voyage past Royalist ports on the south coast of England. By September 1645, of course, the Parliamentarians had overwhelmed a number of the Royalists’ ports, but some still held out. Any voyage, though, was always open to danger, piracy still being an ever-present threat in the 1640s. Provided a fair price could be negotiated, it was also more cost-effective to sell prizes locally, charges for transportation being considerably lower thanks to the shorter distance being travelled.

The delivery of prizes to London brought with it a responsibility from Parliament to provide victuals for those who had transported the ships there. An order from the Committee of the Navy to the Commissioners of the Navy in March 1643 illustrated the point:

Whereas there are sent up into the River Thames from Capt. Haddock, and the other Commanders of those 4 Shipes in the North...prize vessells wch are delivered into [th]e custody of Mr Solomon Smith. And for that the Mariners,

¹⁰⁶ NA, SP16/507/47i; Thomas Smith to Committee of the Navy, 4 May 1645

¹⁰⁷ NA, SP16/509/96; Committee of the Navy, 10 September 1645

¹⁰⁸ NA, SP16/509/96; Committee of the Navy, 10 September 1645

wch brought up those vessells beeing to stay here some short time, till they can be dispatcht back againe doe in the interim want victualls. These are therefore to pray & require you to cause allowances for victualls to bee made unto such Mariners as Mr Solomon Smith shall certifie are employed in the service aforesaid.¹⁰⁹

London's defence being such a priority, it was useful for Parliament to employ captured prizes or foreign merchant vessels to guard the city by sea. In November 1642, the Committee for the Navy asked for an estimate to be made of the monthly charge which would be incurred by setting out a 'Hulke', with around forty men, to 'secure the River of Thames'.¹¹⁰ That was in addition to eight 'Shallopes wth twenty five men in each of them, wch are to be employed as aforesaid'.¹¹¹ The Committee also referred to the charge of the 'French friggat employed in the like service with twenty men'.¹¹²

Whether or not the French frigate was a prize being redeployed or whether it was hired by Parliament is unknown, but its use demonstrated the necessity of looking beyond the state Navy to protect the Thames. Small ships, such as the 'Shallopes' mentioned, were ideal for riverine-type operations in shallower water, bigger ships coming into their own in deeper waters further along the Thames. Defending the Thames was certainly no straightforward task, its considerable size making it impractical for every particular stretch to receive full protection. In February 1643, the officers and commanders of Essex Fort, opposite Gravesend, outlined some of the problems which they faced and asked for further aid:

finding that in dark nights many suspected vessells may pass in the night to and fro from Gravesend side [we] doe therefore desire...one of the Pinnaces made for the Scotch service, [to assist the defence of the fort].¹¹³

In February 1643, Thomas Rabnet, master and captain of the *Henrietta*, received comprehensive instructions for the defence of the Thames.¹¹⁴ Rabnet's most obvious order was to do all in his power to prevent anything 'p[re]judiciall to [th]e service' from occurring, by 'never lying still in any place when you may be stirring abroad'.¹¹⁵ Parliament expected any vessels on its payroll to be industrious and active. Rabnet was tasked with blocking any provisions 'wch you shall have cause probable to suspect to

¹⁰⁹ NA, SP16/494/177; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 28 March 1643

¹¹⁰ NA, SP16/494/41; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 10 November 1642

¹¹¹ NA, SP16/494/41; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 10 November 1642

¹¹² NA, SP16/494/41; Committee of the Navy to Commissioners of the Navy, 10 November 1642

¹¹³ NA, SP16/494/131; Commanders and officers of Essex fort to Commissioners of the Navy, 16 February 1643

¹¹⁴ NA, SP16/497/22; Instructions to Thomas Rabnet, 2 February 1643

¹¹⁵ NA, SP16/497/22; Instructions to Thomas Rabnet, 2 February 1643

have bin imbezelled' from the Navy Stores.¹¹⁶ Thames pinnaces were on the frontline in the fight against naval corruption: the challenge for Parliament was finding masters effective, honest and committed-enough to investigate any suspect cargoes. It was essential for pinnaces 'not to suffer any Pickeroons or petty men of warre of what Country soever' to disturb England's trade.¹¹⁷ Needless to say, any intrigues against the Parliamentary Navy were to be reported as soon as possible. Parliament was especially determined to stop any arms or letters of intelligence from reaching the King via the Thames, the port best-situated to receive shipments from the continent.¹¹⁸

In spite of Warwick's being forced to resign as Lord Admiral in 1645, he continued to play a highly influential role in the Navy as the principal figure on Parliament's resurrected Admiralty Commission.¹¹⁹ The various committees which Parliament appointed to oversee the fleet had a large crossover in membership, with many serving on adjacent committees or retaining their positions as and when a commission acquired a new title. For example, Giles Greene was a member of the Navy and Customs Committee, the Navy Commission and both Admiralty Commissions (created in 1642 and 1645 respectively).

Critics, however, were concerned at the close links between those in naval administration and the merchant marine from which they contracted private shipping to supplement the Navy. For example, the privateer *Constant Warwick* was owned jointly by Warwick, Batten, Moulton and Swanley. It was in constant Parliamentary service, earning over twelve thousand pounds between 1645 and 1647. Those involved in naval administration, then, were sometimes making a direct profit from contracts which they, or close allies of theirs, awarded to them. Yet Parliament reaped the benefit of their expertise in naval affairs, even as they sometimes enriched themselves. As Rodger put it, 'the Parliamentary naval administration was not technically corrupt', with monies and so forth being handled by the proper persons, 'only those persons were all the same, or friends, relatives and business associates of one another'.¹²⁰

Despite its difficulties, however, Parliament's Navy was more effective than the multifarious shipping which the Royalists were able to put to sea. Royalist sea power will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

¹¹⁶ NA, SP16/497/22; Instructions to Thomas Rabnet, 2 February 1643

¹¹⁷ NA, SP16/497/22; Instructions to Thomas Rabnet, 2 February 1643

¹¹⁸ NA, SP16/497/13; Parliament to Lord Mayor of London, 26 January 1643

¹¹⁹ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.422

¹²⁰ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.422

CHAPTER SIX: ROYALIST SEA POWER

This chapter will consider the Royalists' attempts to counteract Parliament's grip on naval power and the various attempts made by the King to create a new fleet. Charles was compelled to rely mostly on privateers, often from abroad, to provide any Royalist presence at sea. Through such methods, the Royalists were sometimes able to dispute Parliamentary 'maritime preponderance', albeit on a local level.

Amongst the most noteworthy merchants with whom the King dealt was John van Haesdonck of the Low Countries. For men such as Haesdonck, the primary motivation for assisting the King was money-related: the Dutch government, in fact, believed that Haesdonck's only interest was financial.¹

Haesdonck first contracted with the King to supply arms in December 1642, agreeing to supply 3000 muskets, 2000 pairs of pistols, 3000 sword blades and 1000 carbines with fire-locks, the cost to the King to run to around £12000.² He was to deliver the arms to Tynemouth either at the haven or at the castle. Haesdonck had also been made captain of a troop of eighty cuirassiers and harquebusiers by the Earl of Newcastle.³ As the war progressed, though, his focus switched to privateering.

An indenture between the King and Haesdonck was agreed on 20 December 1643. The lengthy document sets out in detail what was expected of Haesdonck in his service to the King and how he and his associates could profit from the arrangement. Haesdonck was to 'set forth to Sea as many able Shipes & Frigates of Warr' as possible,

to bee employed against all his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Subjects in Rebellion or any of his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Subjects whatsoever (Trading without his Ma[ies]t[ie]s particular Licence) to any Cittie, Towne, Port, Creeke or place not in his Ma[ies]t[ie]s possession.⁴

The King promised to grant commissions to men 'recommended to him by his Nephew Prince Rupert Count Palatine and...Haesdonck'.⁵ It was telling that Rupert was accorded such powers to nominate Royalist naval appointments, his star being very much in the ascendant at the close of 1643, before the disastrous loss at Marston Moor the next July heralded the collapse of the Royalist cause in the North and broke his aura of invincibility. His prominent role in the capture of Bristol in July 1643 had earned him

¹ Edwards, 'Logistics and Supply', p.255

² NA, SP16/493/17; Contract between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 21 December 1642

³ NA, SP16/493/17; Contract between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 21 December 1642

⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁵ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

considerable respect from the King. Charles clearly wanted somebody he could trust to take an interest in those who would serve his war aims at sea.

A more obvious reason for Rupert's inclusion in any decision-making related to an agreement he himself had made with Haesdonck for the latter to bring 200 soldiers from the Low Countries in order to supplement a regiment of foot on 18 November 1643.⁶ With the King's blessing, Rupert was to be colonel of the regiment, with Haesdonck being made his lieutenant-colonel (he was also to command a company) with the authority to nominate two captains and half of the other officers. Haesdonck was accorded such patronage so as to encourage the men to enter his service, presumably allowing him to choose officers known to the troops and thus better able to command their loyalty. The troops were to be taken to Weymouth if possible, but any other Royalist port would suffice if conditions did not allow for that landing.⁷ In terms of which officers Haesdonck would employ at sea during his service to the Royalists, one notable appointment was Baldwin Wake, one of the captains who had refused to acquiesce to Warwick's control of the Navy in 1642. In March 1646, Wake commanded one of Haesdonck's frigates to spirit the Prince of Wales and his followers away from mainland England to the Isles of Scilly.⁸ Parliament by that stage of the war was firmly on the rampage and the threat of the heir to the throne being captured was a real one.

The terms of Haesdonck's agreement of December 1643 with Charles I specified that 'before any Ship or Frigate goes to Sea the Captaine thereof shall take' the King's oath.⁹ The oath promised that Royalist shipping would do no harm to

any of his Ma[ies]t[ie]s good Subiects trading from & to any Port within his Royall possession...or trading to any other Port by his Ma[ies]t[ie]s Speciall Licence.¹⁰

The subjects of foreign states 'in Amity' with the King were also to be left unmolested, but the distinction between those were who loyal and those who were not was often confused.¹¹

⁶ *CSPD, 1641-1643*, p.500; Articles of agreement between Prince Rupert and John van Haesdonck, 18 November 1643

⁷ *CSPD, 1641-1643*, p.501; Articles of agreement between Prince Rupert and John van Haesdonck, 18 November 1643

⁸ R. Ollard, *This War Without an Enemy: A History of the English Civil Wars* (London, 1976), p.156; Clarendon mentioned a frigate of 'Mr. Hasdunck's' which had been on standby for some time to speed the Prince of Wales away to safety, see Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.2013

⁹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

¹⁰ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

¹¹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

Whilst the King's express instructions stated that neutral shipping be left free to conduct its trade, there were instances where foreign ships found themselves detained by the Royalists. One such case occurred in 1643. Heinrich Reck, the master of the *Neptune* of Hamburg, petitioned Prince Rupert to complain that the vessel, 'beinge driven by stormy weather' into the Severn and entering into Hung-road, had been 'seized by some of S[i]r John Pennington's officers' and detained for a month causing 'very great damage'.¹² He pleaded that the various goods onboard belonged to merchants from Hamburg and Lübeck, and that everything was accounted for in various documents, such as bills-of-lading. He also made plain that the vessel was bound only for Hamburg. Reck referred to the King's promises of protection to 'all forraigners tradinge in this manner' and requested that Rupert help secure the release of said ship, goods and money.¹³ Pennington's Royalists in 1643, of course, were doing all in their power to build-up a fleet, and the temptation to take a dim view of any stranded vessels must have been strong.

Foreign traders were angered by losses suffered on account of the Royalists. In January 1643, some thirty-six merchants subscribed to a petition to the House of Commons in which they complained bitterly of the Royalists' behaviour.¹⁴ A number of ships had been forced to put into Falmouth because of dreadful weather, all of which were laden with goods bound for London. The petition expressed grave concern for further shipments, expected any day from Spain, which were carrying somewhere in the region of £200,000 in silver to settle merchants' accounts.¹⁵ Further warnings were given that if these vessels were forced into Falmouth due to storms, and then seized by the 'Cavillieres', a number of merchants in London might be ruined as a result.¹⁶ The petitioners called for a series of pinnaces to be deployed near Falmouth in an attempt to neutralise its threat.¹⁷ The Falmouth Royalists had stripped the sails from the captured ships, whilst unloading the cargoes. For the King there was a double benefit: the obvious boost to his own local forces, with the denying of the same resources to London's Parliamentarians an additional bonus. Ships bound for London could expect little quarter from the King if captured: he had lost the capital and so damage to its trade was, for the time being, of little concern to him.

¹² NA, SP16/498/92; Petition of Heinrich Reck to Prince Rupert, 1643

¹³ NA, SP16/498/92; Petition of Heinrich Reck to Prince Rupert, 1643

¹⁴ NA, SP16/497/4; Petition of Spanish merchants to House of Commons, 6 January 1643

¹⁵ NA, SP16/497/4; Petition of Spanish merchants to House of Commons, 6 January 1643

¹⁶ NA, SP16/497/4; Petition of Spanish merchants to House of Commons, 6 January 1643

¹⁷ NA, SP16/497/4; Petition of Spanish merchants to House of Commons, 6 January 1643

Where ships were armed, they required a licence from the King. An oath of loyalty, however, was not something which all mariners were willing to take, but that did not always preclude their serving the King. An interesting case occurred in July 1644, when Sir John Berkeley, the Royalist governor of Exeter, wrote to his counterpart Sir Edward Seymour at Dartmouth, questioning why the *Virgin Queen*, a vessel belonging to George Porter, an Exeter merchant, was still being ‘deteyned’ there.¹⁸ Porter, ‘who hath bene one of the best subiects in generall assistanse given to his Ma[ies]tie’, already possessed Seymour’s blessing for the ship to leave port, but evidently Captain William King,¹⁹ its commander, was still waiting to depart.²⁰

Wee hiare it is for that some of those that [are] in the shippe doe refuse to take the protestacon, wch wee concyve may be well spared to be offered to them, they being employed in his foreyn employm[en]ts, & not necessary to be stayed heer for our defence.²¹

Sheer pragmatism seems to have been the order of the day in that particular case. Porter had a sound record of service to the King and Berkeley was seemingly willing to trust to his reputation, whatever the sailors’ possible reservations. He perhaps placed less of an emphasis on the oath when applied outside of England. It was vital to have shipping loyal to the King employed at sea, rather than residing on the sidelines. A letter several days later from Prince Maurice to Seymour pressed the case further. He demanded that the ship be given immediate leave to depart Dartmouth, ‘on her voyage to Newfoundland, wth all her Tackes, Men, Municon, Gunns, merchandize, goods, victualls & all other things belonging to her’.²² The maintenance of trade was crucial, not least so that the Royalist ports could benefit from some customs revenue. The fisheries of Newfoundland had for many years provided a boon to the economies of the southwest ports and the profits accrued had allowed for an extension of such ports’ trading interests.²³

Trading breaks were central to the King’s arrangement with Haesdonck. It was agreed ‘that noe Customes shalbee paid unto his Ma[ies]tie for any...Prizes or Booty imported or exported’ which belonged to the latter or his associates, on condition that the goods and holdings thereof had not been altered ‘by having first made sale of them

¹⁸ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/43; Sir John Berkeley to Sir Edward Seymour, 7 July 1644

¹⁹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/46; Prince Maurice to Sir Edward Seymour, 15 July 1644

²⁰ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/43; Sir John Berkeley to Sir Edward Seymour, 7 July 1644

²¹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/43; Sir John Berkeley to Sir Edward Seymour, 7 July 1644

²² DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/46; Prince Maurice to Sir Edward Seymour, 15 July 1644

²³ A. Grant, ‘Devon Shipping, Trade, and Ports, 1600-1689’ in Duffy, *New Maritime History of Devon*, I, p.132

to others'.²⁴ If the profits were then invested in buying 'Wollen cloth or other Manufactures of this Kingdome' Haesdonck would be charged customs at the same rate as English merchants, something which foreign shipowners implored Parliament to replicate. The King had to make his service an attractive proposition and permitting Haesdonck's trading at a more competitive rate of customs clearly made sense. A petition from foreign merchants which was sent to Parliament in 1646 elucidated the disadvantages that they believed were prejudicing their trade with England. Citing a long-standing agreement, *Charta Mercatoria*, in which foreign merchants were to pay 'three pence per pound more than the Natives doe which is one Quarter part more custome', the petition then bemoaned further charges which were being applied.²⁵

The pet[itioner]s are compelled to pay not only their customes equall with the Natives and their quarter part more...but also double custome...for most of their goods, and double one p[er]cent for the Plymouth duty.²⁶

The petition concluded by urging Parliament to abide by *Charta Mercatoria* whereby foreign merchants would pay their traditional extra quarter for customs dues and the same surcharge of one percent which applied also to English merchants (the Plymouth surcharge justifying itself as a means of raising ransom money for men captured by pirates). A warning of the damages which could be done to English trading abroad was also issued.

The terms of any agreement between the Royalists and merchants were never necessarily fixed in stone, a degree of flexibility being needed to take account of circumstances. Captain John Strachen, writing from Weymouth in February 1644, recommended to Henry Lord Percy that the Royalists would have to branch out to meet the costs of arms purchases from merchants:

wee must strive to drive another trade...to have cloth, wooll, and all other sorts of Commodities ready heere, or the monies to pay them with an exact accompt taken both of goods sold and bought, and likewise a free Lisence of transporting of all sorts of Commodities, I meane for such quanteties of armes as they bring in that there bee a store of 4 or 5000 pounds led aside, and to buy up the wooles, hides, and tallow, & such sorts of Commodities as are on free. The King may have these goods sould at very good rates wch will make the amunition to come in heere from forraine places, [and] wee shall have them at an easier rate then wee can bring them our selves.²⁷

²⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

²⁵ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 60, f.457; Petition of foreign merchants to Parliament, 1646

²⁶ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 60, f.457; Petition of foreign merchants to Parliament, 1646

²⁷ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.106r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 7 February 1644

Essentially then, by providing a ready market for merchants' trade, it was envisaged that both sides would prosper, the merchants being enticed to 'gun-run' for the King, confident that they could sell on manufactures to his agents when unloading. Strachen warned that such incentives were necessary:

if the King doe not buy these Comodities, and pay them present there is few marchants that will vent[ure] to buy them [i.e. ammuniton and weapons], for it is spoken to my selfe by diverse marchants when I do inquire of them why they doe not buy two, or three hundred barrells of powder, and lay them up in their Sellers and sett it out, they have answered mee that if the King, or any other governor had to doe wth powder that then they would take it when they pleased, and pay them when they pleased, wch is impossible to mainetaine their trade wthout p[re]sent paym[en]t.²⁸

In other words, merchants were concerned about potential delays in payments and the unpredictable nature of orders. Neither side wished to be beholden to the other. Sandys, writing to van Tromp, pleaded that two ships laden predominantly with cloth, be left free to sail to France.²⁹ The cloth would prove a useful currency with which to negotiate for further supplies of arms for the Royalists.

As mentioned earlier in the study, Parliament's dominance of London gave it control of the majority of the customs revenue. Royalist-held ports, though, could prove a boon to the King and he could collect the customs in such localities, or so he hoped. Dartmouth's capture by the Royalists in 1643 presented the King with an opportunity to exploit any trade which came into the port, but writing to the governor, Edward Seymour, in December of that year he enunciated dissatisfaction with the success of such schemes:

Whereas by reason of the disorders ocasioned by this unnaturall rebellion Our Customes and Dueties in the Severall Ports have not been duely answered and paid unto us for goods exported and imported. And that the necessity of our affaires doth require the same should bee duely answered unto us, and exactly managed for the best advantage, wch cannot bee if the Officers and Collectors in our saide porte shalbe interrupted in that service and not ayded and assisted by our...Governor there.³⁰

The tone of the letter was somewhat castigating and, as it went on, made plain to Seymour that he was to devote more energy towards the King's utilisation of 'any of those moneis wch shalbe due and collected from the Merchantes'.³¹ The King had no choice but to exploit each and every avenue of finance for his war effort. On paper the

²⁸ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.106r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 7 February 1644

²⁹ NA, SP16/501/122; Sir William Sandys to Admiral van Tromp, 12 May 1644

³⁰ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/40; Charles I to Sir Edward Seymour, December 1643

³¹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/40; Charles I to Sir Edward Seymour, December 1643

Royalists had made strong gains in 1643, but further men and supplies for the next year's campaigning were required urgently. Many men had died in fighting and needed replacing. Thus ports were of the utmost importance to provide funds for a fresh drive of recruitment and weapons purchases.

The King needed his commands disseminated effectively around regions under his control and, in a letter to Seymour at Dartmouth, he set out the means by which he hoped that would be achieved:

[Some proclamations] have been scarce heard of in some partes of Our Kingdome, and when they have been sendred to some cheife Officere whose duty it is to cause them to bee published, they have either absolutely refused or els excused [th]e doing thereof without a Writ, wch though it bee [th]e regular and orderly way yet in a time of soe generall disorder [and] distraccon Wee hold it very fit to dispense with such a formality.³²

Seymour was to 'take effectuall order' to publish any proclamations at a suitable location in the town so 'that all Men who shall pretend ignorance to Our Commands' would be acquainted with the royal will.³³ In terms of marshalling men and money for his forces, the King relied on men such as Seymour fulfilling their roles. His comments indicated concern that his will was not being enforced to its full extent in Royalist-held areas. The shifting loyalties of his subjects, however, were never easy to predict. The appearance of a large field army would often 'convince' people that their interests lay with the dominant party in the region. Places such as Dartmouth, which changed hands, were always open to potential intrigue.

The need to collect any available customs revenues meant that merchants trading for valid reasons had to be allowed to go about their business so as not to prejudice trade unduly. It made sense for such merchants to keep Royalist leaders (or indeed Parliamentary leaders if circumstances dictated) informed fully of their trajectories and movements. If goods were seized without due reason then appeals could be made, although the process of providing proper restitution or compensation to an aggrieved merchant was often a fraught one. Let us examine the case of a Mr Glyde whose 'two barks' had come into Dartmouth only for their cargo of corn to be taken by the Royalists based therein.³⁴ Glyde had appealed to Joseph Martyn, somebody clearly tasked with determining such appeals, for the restitution of his corn. On 4 January 1644, Martyn wrote to Seymour in support of Glyde's claims:

³² DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/46; Charles I to Sir Edward Seymour, 28 December 1643

³³ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/46; Charles I to Sir Edward Seymour, 28 December 1643

³⁴ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/1; Joseph Martyn to Sir Edward Seymour, 4 January 1644

I have adiudged the sayd corne to belong unto Glyde and have released the barques...chiefly for these reasons, first for that Mr Glyde before he bought the Corne applied himselfe to Sr John Berkly [th]e Governor of Exeter and acquainted him wth his intentions to bring wheate & malt into those parts and had his good leave & approbation testified under his hand so to doe, that he caused those goods to be loaded aboard the barks at a Creek called Longstowe...from Portsmouth and gave...directions...to the Masters of the barks to bring the loading for Topsham or Dartmouth, then in the Kings possession.³⁵

Glyde had hastened the cargo's passage to Plymouth 'to avoyd the danger of rebells' at Parliamentarian-controlled Portsmouth interrupting his trade with a Royalist port.³⁶ Some 'ten daies before the barks arrived' at Dartmouth he had 'acquainted the maior & divers others' of the town that he intended to bring into their harbour his pair of vessels.³⁷ Martyn urged Seymour to 'give him y[ou]r best assistance in the recovery of the greatest part of his goods taken from him and disposed of by Mr Ekins wthout any' lawful justification.³⁸ He went on to stress that Ekins should make suitable reparations to Glyde. The episode served as an example of the disputes which could arise at a port and the burdens which merchants sometimes encountered. It was imperative for those trading to have the right credentials or else their cargoes might end up confiscated.

The King's indenture with Haesdonck set out the conditions under which both parties could profit from the seizure of prizes at sea. First and foremost, Haesdonck's interest was financial: the war was not his own, but there was a chance to make money from it. The King would take his share of any captured vessels:

His Ma[ies]tie doeth hereby grant That out of all prizes and Booty taken...his Ma[ies]tie being first paid a Tenth part of [th]e true value & after that a fifteenth part of what truely remayned.³⁹

Before Haesdonck and his partners could benefit from their share (the majority of the prize) the ship needed to be taken to a Royalist port and 'bee there safely kept until adjudicacon shalbee passed'.⁴⁰ In May 1645, Haesdonck brought into Dartmouth some four frigates and six Scottish prizes which were valued at £3500, their combined cargoes worth £1800.⁴¹ Haesdonck's agreement with Rupert in November 1643 had also

³⁵ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/1; Joseph Martyn to Sir Edward Seymour, 4 January 1644

³⁶ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/1; Joseph Martyn to Sir Edward Seymour, 4 January 1644

³⁷ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/1; Joseph Martyn to Sir Edward Seymour, 4 January 1644

³⁸ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/1; Joseph Martyn to Sir Edward Seymour, 4 January 1644

³⁹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁴⁰ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁴¹ Powell, *Navy*, p.92

promised him a share of any booty taken by the troops he was to bring to England.⁴² He thus hoped to enjoy various profits from arrangements with the Royalists, both by land and sea.

The King was eager to utilise any wealth which he could lay his hands on to fund his armies, and money from the sale of either a ship or its cargo undoubtedly played an important role in allowing him to do so. A case in point can be seen from his letter of 11 March 1645 to the Council of the Prince of Wales at Bristol:

Whereas by our direcons the Lord Trea[sure]r hath already given order that the proceedes of the Shipp the Fame should be brought from Dartmouth to Bristoll with all conveyent speed, and that [£]3000 of the said moneyes should likewise be conveyed hither to Oxford by some safe Convoy...[it is now decided] lesse then five thousand pounds will not supply the necessary charge that must be for our going into the field.⁴³

Seemingly other sources of funding had not yielded the money required and the need to draw upon the proceeds of captured shipping was increased. The King was preparing at that time for a vital summer campaign, needing desperately to turn the tide of the war following Parliament's advances in 1644. The King hoped to benefit from any arms captured at sea and by the terms of the agreement with Haesdonck, he would 'at [th]e ordinary and usuall rates buy out of any ship taken and adjudged Prize...what Ordnance hee shall thinke fit'.⁴⁴ These weapons would be convoyed to various regions under Royalist control and the King would grant authority to those tasked with overseeing their transport to take suitable measures. A letter despatched in 1644 by Henry Lord Percy to Ralph Killinghall and William Dudley, the conductors of an artillery train, illustrated the point:

I here in his Ma[ies]ties name give you Full power and authority to impresse...as many Horses, Carts and Carters as shalbee...usefull for the draweing and cariinge of all such Ordnance as are to bee brought [from Worcester to Oxford].⁴⁵

Their warrant covered Gloucester, Worcester, Warwick and Oxford, with any local officers, mayors or constables being required to aid them. Many were highly protective of their stores, however. The lack of carts and carriages to transport arms and

⁴² *CSPD, 1641-1643*, p.500; Articles of agreement between Prince Rupert and John van Haesdonck, 18 November 1643

⁴³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. C125, f.11v; Charles I to Council of the Prince of Wales, 11 March 1645

⁴⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁴⁵ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.33; Henry Lord Percy to Ralph Killinghall and William Dudley, 1644

supplies was often a source of frustration for those serving the King. John Strachen related the stress which such circumstances sometimes inflicted upon him:

Collonell [John] Ashburneham hath taken order wth the Governor of Bristoll to send 40, or 50 Carts from Bristoll heere to Carry away the Armes, & Ammunition hence to Bristoll. I would to god it were free off of my hands for the staying of it for want of Convoy, and Carryages doth vex mee to the heart that I cannot sleepe a Sounde sleepe & I cannot carry it upon [my] back, therefore let not the Queene or any thinke it is my fault.⁴⁶

Aside from arms and prize money, the King required that any prisoners taken at sea be transferred into the care of Royalist officers, unless Haesdonck could exchange them for men ‘as shall happen to bee taken by [th]e Rebels’.⁴⁷ Men taken from Parliamentary ships would prove highly useful to the King. In 1644, John Digby wrote from Plympton to Sir Edward Seymour at Dartmouth, with news of captured sailors:

I have herewith sent you tenn seamen which were taken by my guards the other day comming on shore to pillage. They are good lusty fellows and as they say themselves were taken out of some merchand men by the parliament man of war and constrained to serve the King. I conceived that my L[or]d of Malburge [Earl of Marlborough] might have occassion to employ them or y[ou]r selfe if you sett out any shippes to sea.⁴⁸

The men appear to have served under several masters, then, with their service perhaps having been dictated more by events than by choice. It is possible that the ten sailors may have lied to their new Royalist masters about their background: it would probably have made some sense to claim that they were forced into Parliamentary service, as opposed to their having been proud opponents of the King. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that their account was true and that their service aboard a merchant ship had been curtailed by Parliament’s forced recruitment. Many men spent a career aboard multiple ships, the sailor Edward Coxere recalling his having served various captains during the Civil War and in later years finding himself aboard French, Dutch, Spanish and even Turkish vessels.⁴⁹

Captured seamen, however, were not always willing to serve under their opponents. At Scarborough in August 1643, a purser and six seamen, of the ship *London*, were surprised and then jailed at York Castle by a Royalist captain.⁵⁰ Not released until four months later, they petitioned the Committee of the Navy to plead for

⁴⁶ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.96r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 18 January 1644

⁴⁷ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁴⁸ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392M/L1644/22; John Digby to Sir Edward Seymour, 8 April 1644

⁴⁹ Rodger, *Command*, p.61

⁵⁰ NA, SP16/498/98; Petition of the purser and seamen of the *London* to Committee of the Navy, 1643

some recompense for their lost time and fidelity to Parliament. The Royalists had tried in vain to enlist the men as ‘Cannoneers’, but failed to alter the prisoners’ allegiances.⁵¹

On occasion, captured seamen found themselves paying the ultimate price. In 1644, Prince Maurice ordered the execution of a Captain Turpin, who had been taken prisoner at Exeter.⁵² Maurice had offered to exchange him for a Royalist sergeant-major in Parliamentary custody, but the Earl of Essex deemed the offer unfair. Turpin was hanged after a long period of custody: it is unknown whether the Royalists attempted to convert him to their cause, but his execution would imply strongly that he was not for turning.

Digby’s reference to the Earl of Marlborough highlighted the latter’s importance to Royalist naval activity off the south-western ports. The King had appointed Marlborough to a commission to serve at sea in December 1643 and recognised the need to equip his ‘fleet’ with the requisite arms. Writing to his General of Artillery, Henry Lord Percy, on 27 December 1643, he set out his will ‘that you cause to be issued and delivered out of our stores att Dartmouth to the Earle of Marlborough or to whome he shall appoynt thirty Barrells of powder’.⁵³ It was envisaged that Marlborough would form a squadron with its base at Dartmouth, shipping ideally being provided by local merchants.⁵⁴

Marlborough had scope, however, to extend his theatres of operations far beyond the English Channel, as Warwick well-recognised in a remonstrance to the Lords on 10 February 1644. The Lord Admiral referred to Marlborough’s recent dispatch towards the West Indies, with a pair of ships well-armed, and with others expected to follow him. Marlborough’s purported mission was to seize any English ships found amongst the islands, or also from the American plantations. Warwick, as a man with extensive interests in the New World, clearly had much to lose personally, just as the state could ill-afford the enemy’s seizure of vessels. Warwick warned that if sufficient Parliamentary shipping were not sent to block Marlborough’s expedition, the potential loss of trade with the plantations, and the subsequent deterioration in customs revenues, would be a considerable blow to Parliament. The Royalists were clearly thinking of ways in which to distract the Parliamentary fleet as much as possible, and forcing Warwick to divert shipping to the West Indies, far from the English Channel, made sound strategic sense. The fewer Parliamentary warships there

⁵¹ NA, SP16/498/98; Petition of the purser and seamen of the *London* to Committee of the Navy, 1643

⁵² *CSPD, 1644*, p.351; Earl of Essex to Committee of Both Kingdoms, 15 July 1644

⁵³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.64; Charles I to Henry Lord Percy, 27 December 1643

⁵⁴ Capp, ‘Naval Operations’, p.166

were to patrol the coasts of England, the greater the potential for arms shipments to reach the King's armies on land.

Of course, it could be speculated that Marlborough's supposed voyage to the West Indies was a feint, designed to distract the Parliamentary fleet, although the riches which could be won in the West Indies certainly made an expedition there a tempting prospect. Just over a month later, the Earl was reported as having been at St Malo, loading his ships with food and munitions for the use of the Royalists in England.⁵⁵ As Marlborough's three ships made their way back from France, half a dozen Parliamentary men-of-war gave chase to them. After some volleys were fired by his enemies, Marlborough returned the same towards them, but, with night approaching and the tide going out, he ordered his ships to anchor under Elizabeth Castle on Jersey. The Parliamentary vessels returned to Guernsey for reinforcements, but, some two days later, the Earl's small squadron managed to evade their attentions upon heading back out to sea and returned to England unscathed. Marlborough's vessels on that occasion were a 28-gun, a 24-gun and an 18-gun frigate.⁵⁶

The King again welcomed a foreign subject into his 'fleet' by appointing Jeronimo Caesar de Caverle, Seigneur de Giron, as Marlborough's vice-admiral. Caverle undertook to provide 'five able Shipes mand wth five hundred men', all victualled for six months with arms and any other necessities at his own cost.⁵⁷ In return, he was promised £2000 per month out of any prizes taken from the 'Rebelles' by Marlborough's fleet.⁵⁸ It is interesting that the King did not limit the prizes to those taken specifically by Caverle's ships, perhaps emphasising the wider-base of the Dartmouth 'navy'. Before claiming his fees, however, Caverle was to have any prizes adjudicated by the King's trusted appointees, whilst himself giving regular accounts of all prizes which he had captured. In a final draft of the contract, Caverle agreed to 'abate proporconably' his fees if he failed to set forth fewer ships or men than had been pledged.⁵⁹ Caverle left open the possibility of adding further ships to the King's strength at sea. The King's commission appointing him to the vice-admiralty followed the usual conventions by entreating him to obey Marlborough's directions, whilst ensuring that those further down the chain of command respected his own position, 'as they will answer [th]e contrary at their perille'.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, pp.126-127; Journal of Jean Chevalier, 11 March 1644

⁵⁶ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.127; Journal of Jean Chevalier, 11 March 1644

⁵⁷ NA, SP16/498/52r; Contract between Charles I and Jeronimo Caesar de Caverle, 16 November 1643

⁵⁸ NA, SP16/498/52r; Contract between Charles I and Jeronimo Caesar de Caverle, 16 November 1643

⁵⁹ NA, SP16/498/52v; Contract between Charles I and Jeronimo Caesar de Caverle, 16 November 1643

⁶⁰ NA, SP16/498/51; Contract between Charles I and Jeronimo Caesar de Caverle, 16 November 1643

Haesdonck had the King's authority to 'levy, hire and entertheyne Voluntieres, Saylers & Souldiers for [th]e Service' from any part of Charles' kingdoms.⁶¹ Provisions and victuals could be bought 'for their present Supply and Sustenance' free from customs charges, provided that any subjects 'at the end of this service [that] shalbee surviving shalbee sent back' to the King for him to make best use of them.⁶²

Once men had been found, though, it was not always easy to get them to sea. Suspicion on their part sometimes surfaced when an unfamiliar element presented itself. A case in point took place in 1644 and is worth exploring. On 18 January Captain John Strachen wrote from Weymouth to Henry Lord Percy:

To morrow goeth to sea [th]e resolute Batt a dainty vessell of six guns a side wch was a prize heere belonging to the King, and Col. [John] Ashburneham did give me monies to set her out a freebooting wth another vessell called Viceadmirall Pap, but good Lord what amazem[en]t the Sailors were in when they heard Col. Ashburneham name them that they refused to saile in shippes [tha]t had such unknowne names [tha]t were never heard of before.⁶³

Strachen was forced to stress the pedigree of the ships by extolling the 'good sucusse' of the two 'famous persons' after whom they were named. Roy speculates that 'Pap' was a nickname for the Duchess of Richmond, with 'Batt' possibly being the Queen's.⁶⁴ Strachen had shipped both of them across the Channel whilst a sea-captain and might have indulged them by naming two vessels in their honour. Nevertheless, such pedigree could only go so far in convincing the sailors to undertake their duty.

The sailors then

being partly satisfied with my words, and thereafter fully wth some monies, wch Colonell Ashburneham gave them to drinke the health of the Resolute Batt, and then of [the] Pap that they dranke their heads out...and Sucore [tha]t they would prove resolute and adventurous against all rebells.⁶⁵

Money for a supply of drink, then, probably swung the argument more forcefully than did Strachen's words of favour. The common sailors of the early modern period were invariably attracted to the bottle, their wages (as soon as they had them) often being spent on drink.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁶² Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁶³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.96r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 18 January 1644

⁶⁴ I. Roy (ed), *The Royalist Ordnance Papers, 1642-1646* (2 vols., Oxford, 1964-1975), II, pp.513-514

⁶⁵ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.96v; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 18 January 1644

⁶⁶ Rodger, *Command*, p.61

As Haesdonck's ships and frigates had authority to fly the King's flag, it was made explicit that dual loyalties would not be tolerated:

the said Haesdonck & his Partneres or Associates hereby Covenant that [th]e Commanders of their Shipes shall take noe Commission nor derive any power from other Princes or States during this Service other then from his Ma[ies]tie.⁶⁷

It was far from unheard of in the seventeenth century for merchants to hold various commissions. Holding multiple commissions allowed enterprising privateers a wider measure of validity at sea: they could roam further if they carried the right paperwork. On occasion, though, agents on the continent would agree terms with shipowners to serve the King, but these merchants' vessels would not carry Charles' colours. One example can be gauged from William Sandys' letter to Strachen at Weymouth, in which he mentioned 'all shippes [tha]t I send to y[o]u shall put up a Burgundian flagg'.⁶⁸ It was vital that notice was given in such circumstances, to prevent misunderstandings between ships serving the King.

For vessels departing the continent, those onboard sometimes needed to secure numerous passes beforehand. One such case was referred to by John Ogle in 1644. He apologised to the Marquis of Newcastle for the delayed delivery of some £600-£700 worth of arms which he had taken order for at Dunkirk.⁶⁹ Ogle had been forced to obtain passes from the Prince of Orange, the King of France and also Francisco de Melo, an interim governor of the Spanish Netherlands.

For Haesdonck, it was in his interests to deny the King's service to competing merchants and thus

for preventing all disorder that may ensue thereby His Ma[ies]tie is pleased to promise...that Hee will grant no Commissions or Licence for [th]e service to any Flemish Shipes, Frigates or Men of Warr to bee set forth from Dunkirke, Ostend or Newport other then [those under Haesdonck].⁷⁰

That was unless the King could negotiate a considerably more generous agreement with others, whereby he would receive 'at least a fowerth part or more reserved to him' from the proceeds of any prizes.⁷¹ Charles I, though, was always open to new arrangements if they would prove beneficial to his cause, so one should not

⁶⁷ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁶⁸ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.164v; Sir William Sandys to John Strachen, 15 January 1645

⁶⁹ NA, SP16/501/29; John Ogle to Marquis of Newcastle, 16 March 1644

⁷⁰ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁷¹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

necessarily regard the aforementioned clause as something which he would feel bound to honour at all costs.

One of the primary motives behind the King's enlisting of merchants was so that they could constitute an alternative fleet to the Royal Navy which had rebelled against him. Several of the clauses in Haesdonck's indenture with the King gave notice of the agreement's martial intent. Haesdonck's ships

shall by all wayes of force (in case of any resistance) endeavo[ur] to surpris[e] & take any of his Ma[ajesties]ties owne Shipes being now in the Rebels possession⁷²

either at sea or if spied in harbour. That was, though, much easier said than done: merchants were often very wary about risking their own vessels in battle, the risks posing an obvious threat to their investments. Profit and the preservation of their ships frequently held more interest to them than.⁷³ Nevertheless, Haesdonck was instructed that upon encountering any 'Rebelles Shipes' which refused to yield, then he had full power to 'sinke, fire or otherwise...destroy them'.⁷⁴ If a Parliamentary ship was taken and then brought into a Royalist port for the King's use, Haesdonck could expect recompense at the 'rate of fower poundes per Tonne according to [th]e true burthen of such Ship without deducting of [th]e Tenth or fifteenth of such prizes'.⁷⁵ At one stage of the war, in September 1645, Haesdonck was credited with being in command of ten ships and was styled 'General'.⁷⁶ Whatever the accuracy of the numbers, he certainly headed a small fleet.

Greater rewards were promised if Haesdonck's ships took on 'extraordinary service', such as the ships being

employed either together in a body or a Fleete or otherwise singly or in fewer number for Convoyes, Transportacons of Shipes employed by him or for blocking up of Havens or otherwise.⁷⁷

Under those circumstances the King undertook to 'pay them in different and reasonable Salaries by [th]e moneth' to be agreed for the time in which 'extraordinary

⁷² Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁷³ Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.162

⁷⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁷⁵ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁷⁶ Roy, *Royalist Ordnance Papers*, I, p.42

⁷⁷ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

service' was performed.⁷⁸ Such wording left much scope for disagreement, the terms being largely undefined and the prospect of negotiation to come therefore a strong factor. Generally, though, Royalist shipping did not operate under a central command. In many instances, the captains were more eager to win prizes for their own ends. Yet that was sometimes an advantage, flexibility and speed of action the basis of their strength. Had Parliament's ships encountered a Royalist fleet, though, their greater size would have dealt them a better hand.⁷⁹ As Lynch points out, merchant ships were armed primarily for defensive purposes and would need to add guns to function more effectively at war. The Royalists, though, were 'resource poor', frequently suffering a deficiency of artillery which could be employed on a ship.⁸⁰

Rather than battle at sea, much of the contact between Parliamentary and Royalist shipping came through a blockade or a 'watch' being kept on a port. Correspondence would sometimes pass between the commanders of rival ships, as happened for example in June 1644 off Dartmouth. Towards the end of that month, Captain William Somaster, aboard the Parliamentary 4th rate the *Mary Rose*, addressed Major John Fitzjames of the *Parragon*:

By what Reporte or Boats you have understood either my Shipp or name be knowne not, but to satisfie you in both I am the same man you writt of, and the Mary Rose is still the good shipp of his Ma[ies]ties and of his loyall and trueharted Subiects of the Parliament of England, and whereas you p[re]tend I have beene seduced by the Indevers of some Rebels to Imploye the Shipp against his Sacred p[er]son, the true p[ro]testant Religion and privelige of Parliam[en]t, my God hath given me soe much grace Reverence & duty to them as that accordinge to my protestacon & Covenant I shall Inviolably hold them, and in wch faith I shall live and dye...⁸¹

Somaster's religious tone reflected an officer of Warwick's navy, whilst the protestation that no harm was intended to the King's person paid homage to the continuing fiction that Parliament was waging war against those advising him and not Charles I himself. It was a typical means by which Parliamentarians might attempt to gain sympathy when writing to their Royalist opponents. Somaster's letter went on to argue that, whilst Fitzjames' 'pretences might happily wynn upon the beleife of some weake Subiects', they would have no impact on his own men, who were 'truly' devoted

⁷⁸ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

⁷⁹ Powell, *Navy*, p.93

⁸⁰ Lynch, 'Bristol Shipping and Royalist Naval Power', p.266

⁸¹ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/40; William Somaster to John Fitzjames, 27 June 1644

‘for the good of my Kinge and Country’.⁸² Naturally, he would stress the pedigree and loyalty of his own side. He then suggested that Fitzjames come aboard the *Mary Rose*:

I hope then to give you such Iresistable Resons and undoubted truth that you will detest yo[ur] former courses and Imbrace myne and no longer strive to withdrawe & detaine his Ma[ies]tie from his faithfull ones that Really hon[our] him and Endeavour wth me to bringe him backe againe from those that wickedly falcely & treucherously [put him] against the faithfully Convened Parliament.⁸³

The idea of Fitzjames submitting aboard the *Mary Rose* was not likely, but Somaster was not wasting the chance to try and part him from his service to the King. The letters were something of a formality, perhaps akin to a land garrison being presented with a summons to throw in its lot with those seeking to capture it.

Parliamentarian ships presented a significant threat to Royalist shipping. Privateers might have to change course or abandon their journey altogether on sight of one of Warwick’s ships. A particularly hard to read statement concerning a ship from Dunkirk, possibly written by John Thomasius, a man active at Dartmouth, related the pressure inflicted on the port by the Parliamentarian Navy.

The 19 Feb[ruary] 164[4] itt is come to us thatt Jacob Niesvesen...M[aste]r of the St Peeter Coming from the Fort of Dunckerke wth armes for his maies[tie] was freighted for Wymouth or Bristoll or in anie harbour thatt stands for his maies[tie] whether hee first could harbor himselfe for so to heere what the passages are...⁸⁴

The *St Peeter* attempted to come into Weymouth, but the ship ‘did...two and frow before the Harbor’ for ‘24 howers’.⁸⁵ Niesvesen’s attempts to do so were hampered by several factors:

the storme and tempestieus weather was soe great that hee was forced to overshute the plase, then presently mett wth a Parleментt shippe that came from the West & Chasted [the *St Peeter*] into Dartmouth.⁸⁶

A colonel onboard the ship soon saw to it that Niesvesen spoke with the governor, Seymour, and it was explained ‘thatt itt was nott good to goe to Sea being thatt there weere soe manie Parlements shipes abroade’.⁸⁷ The risk of the arms falling into the hands of Parliament was deemed too great and so they were unloaded at

⁸² DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/40; William Somaster to John Fitzjames, 27 June 1644

⁸³ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/40; William Somaster to John Fitzjames, 27 June 1644

⁸⁴ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/14; Possible letter by John Thomasius, 19 February 1644

⁸⁵ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/14; Possible letter by John Thomasius, 19 February 1644

⁸⁶ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/14; Possible letter by John Thomasius, 19 February 1644

⁸⁷ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/14; Possible letter by John Thomasius, 19 February 1644

Dartmouth, Seymour probably being very happy to take delivery of an unexpected bounty. Niesvesen's obvious lack of options might have seen him forced to cut a deal with Seymour for less than he had originally anticipated. The grave Parliamentary threat likely focused his mind. Niesvesen dared 'nott out of his owne order' put out to sea, for 'had hee then bein taken' by one of Parliament's warships, 'all the damage' would have been 'laine upon him'.⁸⁸ Parliamentary blockades of Royalist ports did a great deal of damage to trade, particularly in Devon.⁸⁹

On 5 January 1645, the Parliamentary *Warwick* captured a French vessel not far from Plymouth, laden with iron and cider, but, of perhaps much-greater interest, a letter from the Consul of Bilbao to the King. Once the ship had been sent up to Batten for conveyance, it was discovered that vessels serving the Royalists were charged, 'that if they met with any Parliam[entarian] shipping to throwe theyr letters overboard'.⁹⁰ In that particular case, then, the orders had not been carried out effectively. It made sense for any incriminating letters to be hidden from Parliamentary eyes, any correspondence from a Catholic power having the potential to cause grave embarrassment for the King.

As the tide of the war on land turned decisively against the King in 1645, ports such as Dartmouth came under increasing pressure from Parliament. Captain Edward Hall, writing to the Committee of the Admiralty on 2 August 1645, believed that Dartmouth was in great straits and would soon fall.⁹¹ He cited the pressure exerted on the port by Parliamentary warships as a key factor behind the Royalists' travails, referring to several mutinies from citizens unhappy with food and fuel shortages. Soon afterwards, Hall's predictions were proved correct.

The Devon ports took some time to recover from the upheavals of the Civil War, their recovery still a slow process after the Restoration.⁹² In September 1647, the Devon ship-owner Andrew Turner wrote to another merchant, Robert Phipps, at Exeter, to complain of 'the many and greatt losses wch I have sustayned at severall tymes by the parliament shippes at Sea'.⁹³ He bemoaned having suffered losses

to the Vallew of Seaventene hundred poundes and upwards, to mye utter undoeinge for ever, by which meanes I am become poore and mysserable and muche indepted unto divers persons. And therefore nott haveinge left att present

⁸⁸ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1644/14; Possible letter by John Thomasius, 19 February 1644

⁸⁹ Grant, 'Devon Shipping, Trade, and Ports, 1600-1689', p.136

⁹⁰ NA, SP16/539/253; William Thomas to Giles Greene, 11 January 1645

⁹¹ NA, SP16/510/34; Edward Hall to Committee of the Admiralty, 2 August 1645

⁹² Grant, 'Devon Shipping, Trade, and Ports, 1600-1689', p.130

⁹³ NDRO, Phillips MSS. B21Z/1/12; Andrew Turner to Robert Phipps, 6 September 1647

wherewth to give mye Credyto[rs] some Contentt for my debttts, wch much greives me to hartte.⁹⁴

Turner had drawn up a petition to Parliament which detailed his numerous losses and was exploring every possible avenue of help. He hoped for support from other merchants, Phipps included, and urged him to use any influence he possessed to further the matter. He hoped to benefit from Parliament's grace, as some others had done so: he mentioned a case in which a merchant from Exeter had received 'Eight hundred poundes starlinge' as a first step towards redressing £3500 worth of losses.⁹⁵ Such a sum, Turner pleaded, would help to ease the pressure he was under from creditors and allow him some breathing space to reorganise his affairs. He concluded by once more urging Phipps to do all he could to help, others having been 'found wanting'.⁹⁶

On occasion, bad luck would strike a shipment of arms. One such incident is worth considering. The Earl of Derby, the leading Royalist magnate in the North-West, wrote to Prince Rupert on 22 March 1643 with disappointing news:

Your own experience may inform you the misfortunes that wait on war, of which I needs must tell you some happened here very lately...The Spanish ship which perished on the shore had divers goodly pieces of ordnance in her, which by reason the enemy had them in possession, I thought good to spoil them if I could, and so did burn the ship; being advised by the Spaniards so to do, they knowing that their master would well like that any ill might be unto the rebels of our King. I believe most now are useless, but a few may do us great hurt.⁹⁷

The risk of a full cargo of arms falling into the hands of his opponents was something which Derby obviously took great pains to prevent. It appears that the ship was not originally destined for Derby's benefit, but he 'set them free, having found them in great distress'.⁹⁸ Presumably had Derby had prior knowledge of the ship he would have taken measures to utilise the arms on-board, but lacking manpower and the means to do so, it was better to destroy what he could, lest his enemies be presented with a larger bounty. It is possible that the ship was heading originally for Ireland, probably to deliver the weaponry to the Catholic Confederates. His letter to Rupert went on to mention that the Parliamentarians had salvaged some cannons, some of which were put into the Roundhead-controlled castle at Lancaster, although Derby's Royalists managed soon after to enjoy a rare victory in sacking and capturing the town.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ NDRO, Phillips MSS. B21Z/1/12; Andrew Turner to Robert Phipps, 6 September 1647

⁹⁵ NDRO, Phillips MSS. B21Z/1/12; Andrew Turner to Robert Phipps, 6 September 1647

⁹⁶ NDRO, Phillips MSS. B21Z/1/12; Andrew Turner to Robert Phipps, 6 September 1647

⁹⁷ Warburton, *Memoirs*, II, pp.142-143; Earl of Derby to Prince Rupert, 22 March 1643

⁹⁸ Warburton, *Memoirs*, II, p.143; Earl of Derby to Prince Rupert, 22 March 1643

⁹⁹ Warburton, *Memoirs*, II, p.143; Earl of Derby to Prince Rupert, 22 March 1643

There was scope for disagreement between merchants and the King's party in regards to deliveries of arms. Haesdonck and those involved with his enterprises were to

bring into England for [th]e use of his Ma[ies]tie & his loyall Subjects what Powder and Armes they conveniently can provide & spare wch his Ma[ies]tie...[would buy]...or els they shall have free liberty at their best Market to sell them to any [of] his Ma[ies]ties loyall & faithfull Subj[ec]tes in [the] Townes & Countreyes under his obedience...¹⁰⁰

In May 1645, Haesdonck appeared to have a significant collection of arms, which Lord Jermyn hoped would help stock the Royalist arsenal. Writing from Paris to Lord Digby, he mentioned some 5000lbs of brimstone, 'which I hope will enable you in England to make good store of Powder, for Mills, Saltpeter, Coale, and men that know how to make, may everywhere be had'.¹⁰¹ In simple economic terms, it made sense to exploit any resources which could be found in England itself.

There were frequent quarrels between merchants and Royalist agents concerning the value of prizes or the payment due for deliveries of weaponry. The merchants would frequently be driven to exasperation as they waited for their agreed money, but those buying the arms from them often experienced financial problems of their own. In May 1644, Sandys mentioned 100 barrels of powder which had been sent to Scarborough on Haesdonck's account, but the payment for them was still long overdue.¹⁰²

René Augier, resident for the Parliament at Paris, sometimes heard information which related to the Royalist war effort at sea. A telling letter to Giles Greene from September 1646 cast some interesting light on the fate of Haesdonck:

Haesdonck being pursued by some French Marchands for his depredations, was arrested here, & since sent prisoner to Rhennes in Brittany, where perhaps he will be condemned & punished as a Pyrate, whereat the Queene of England's Court wilbe the lesse troubled, because by that meanes they wilbe quitte of severall considerable Sommes they owe him.¹⁰³

By that stage of proceedings, the King had lost the First Civil War conclusively and had long since surrendered to the Scots. His Royalist allies, many based at Henrietta Maria's Court in France, certainly would have welcomed Haesdonck's capture. Clearly Haesdonck was owed 'rewards' for serving the King at sea, but some of the terms of his contract had presumably not been met.¹⁰⁴ The French merchants resented Haesdonck on

¹⁰⁰ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. A171, f.277; Indenture between Charles I and John van Haesdonck, 20 December 1643

¹⁰¹ *The Lord George Digby's Cabinet...* (London, 1646), p.47

¹⁰² NA, SP16/501/115; Sir William Sandys to Sir Hugh Cholmley, 9 May 1644

¹⁰³ BL, Additional MSS. 4200, f.30v; René Augier to Giles Greene, 18 September 1646

¹⁰⁴ BL, Additional MSS. 4200, f.30v; René Augier to Giles Greene, 18 September 1646

account of the damage which he inflicted on their livelihoods. Haesdonck appears to have grown disenchanted with his service to Charles I as the First Civil War drew to a close. Lord Jermyn wrote to Lord Digby on 9 April 1645 with news of Haesdonck's behaviour:

A Man the Queene sent foure moneths agoe into Scotland to Marques Montrosse this day arrived [and] it grieves me Hasdonckes did not obey the Queen's order for his supply, but now againe that shall be suddainly attempted I hope with better successe...¹⁰⁵

Jermyn went on to stress that Haesdonck would be more amenable if he was paid what was owed him for previous service. The Venetian ambassador to France, writing to the Doge and Senate on 22 May 1646, referred to a 'Haesdoneg, Admiral of the Frigates which serve the King of Great Britain', who was offering his services to the Republic of Venice if certain conditions were met.¹⁰⁶ We can speculate that the admiral referred to was Haesdonck and, if so, such an offer reflected a sense of disaffection with the Royalist party. His capture by the French later that year would have prevented any such arrangement.

Haesdonck did not disappear for good, however, and was still petitioning for his debts to be settled after the Restoration. His anguish was considerable and he bemoaned being 'reduced to poverty in his old age' due to Charles II's failure to advance him the money owed.¹⁰⁷ Haesdonck had petitioned Charles II in September 1649 with numerous claims for money owed on account of his services to 'the late King' and after the Restoration was compelled to annex the same petition with a fresh plea for the matter to be resolved.¹⁰⁸ Petitioning the Queen Mother in 1662, Haesdonck referred to 'sundry similar debts' which had been cleared since Charles II's return to England.¹⁰⁹ By December 1663, he claimed that the money due to him was over fifty thousand pounds, interest being taken into account. It was a salutary lesson and a reflection of the risks attached to serving Charles I during the war with Parliament.

Sometimes, in lieu of direct money, those who served the King at sea would petition for the grant of an office or entitlement, the hope being that over time they might recoup their losses. One such example concerned Francis de Carteret, who asked to be made Procurator of Jersey upon the office next falling vacant, either when his

¹⁰⁵ *The Lord George Digby's Cabinet...*, p.40

¹⁰⁶ *CSPV, 1643-1647*, p.259; Venetian ambassador in France to the Doge and Senate of Venice, 22 May 1646

¹⁰⁷ *CSPD, 1663-1664*, p.396; Petition of John van Haesdonck to Charles II, December 1663

¹⁰⁸ *CSPD, 1661-1662*, p.226; Petition of John van Haesdonck to Charles II, 1661

¹⁰⁹ *CSPD, 1661-1662*, p.630; Petition of John van Haesdonck to the Queen Mother, 1662

relative Helier de Carteret died or relinquished the position.¹¹⁰ Pointing out his many exertions for the King in Scotland, the Scilly Isles and ‘at sea’, he clearly believed that the office would be deserved. The office of procurator, of course, brought with it an involvement in fiscal matters, the potential for personal profit in an age of widespread corruption being all too apparent.

Throughout the war, both the Parliamentarians and their opponents complained frequently about shortages of money. Some regions felt the burden more heavily than others, but it was imperative for ports to have a ready supply of funds so as to capitalise on any incoming cargoes. The south-western ports, many of which were under Royalist control during the middle years of the war, were often presented with opportunities to re-stock their arsenals from merchants such as Haesdonck eager to do business. Captain Strachen at Weymouth dealt often with such matters, but the shortcomings of Royalist finances could prove frustrating. He wrote enthusiastically to Henry Lord Percy about the advantages that could be enjoyed if money was readily available:

I am Certaine of it, if there bee but reddy monies to buy them up presently so soone as they Come in, that wee shall have marchants to Court us (as if wee were Ladies) to buy up their Armes from them...[and] if marchants see that they may bee payed in monies, or goods, wee shall have them come (ding dong)...¹¹¹

Strachen, writing another time, put things bluntly: ‘I cannot Live on the wind’.¹¹² That sentiment applied, though, to all the forces engaged in the war, but neither side could meet the costs of satisfying all of its supporters on each and every occasion. Nevertheless, the Royalists had to be mindful of their dependence on merchants to stock their armies on land.

The quality of those cargoes was sometimes disappointing, however, as Strachen complained:

Now is Mr Naper and Mr Villa Nova the French marchant both come downe, and wee have viewed their powder wch is nothing else but old Cannon powder that hath Lyen in some Magazine these 4 or 5 yeares, it will never doe good Service tyll it be refined.¹¹³

Whilst Naper and Villa Nova had supplied some ‘good’ pistols and swords which were ‘reasonable’, these were mixed with ‘all the old trash that could be rapt

¹¹⁰ NA, SP16/511/110; Petition of Francis de Carteret to Charles I, 1645

¹¹¹ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.118r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 7 March 1644

¹¹² Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.106r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 7 February 1644

¹¹³ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.118r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 9 March 1644

together'.¹¹⁴ Strachen appeared especially bitter about the price demanded for such underwhelming items:

shall I eat Queene Marie's bread, and see a Company of Cheating marchants to deceive openly (hang mee, draw mee, quarter mee, or beager mee). Let it bee what it will I will speake the trueth. I have suffered these five yeares for being an honest man. I hope to God never to suffer for being a knave, but...to give them [£]7 for 112lb of powder, 16s for a musket, 10s and 6s 8d for the best swords, and bad swords, 30s for a dozen of bandoleers wch hath one Charge as big againe as another, and give them Custome free, freight free, and all the Courtecy that can bee done (it would anger a Sow, and a sword about her) yet if it were good Armes, and powder it were nothing.¹¹⁵

Poor-quality arms infuriated those further along the supply chain, land commanders often complaining about the state of supplies. Prince Maurice was always well-informed of any new supplies of weaponry, writing to Seymour at Dartmouth on 14 December 1643, for the latter to 'send away wth all speede all the powder, wch was in the Dunkerke Frygate and match proporcionable'.¹¹⁶ Three days earlier, he had berated Seymour for not meeting his demands in regards to another batch of supplies:

I expected to have received the long gunns especially, with the Carbynes and pistols, & yo[u] send mee onely twelve case & two old pistols & Forteene old unfixt Carbynes, but none of the Marchants Carbynes. I much wond[er] att it, I pray, fayle not to send mee the rest...but most especially the long Firelock gunns that were in the Shipp.¹¹⁷

Strachen and other Royalist agents were inundated with frequent demands for arms from local Cavalier commanders, and cries of empty weapons stores recur regularly in contemporary correspondence.

The Royalist navy, in effect, evolved and came into being with the capture of key ports and the readiness of merchants to throw in their lot with the King. Parliament's neglect of naval finance in 1643, combined with the King's string of military victories on land that year, were the key factors behind the revival of the Royalist party at sea. Yet, as has been discussed, many men became disgruntled by the King's parsimony and it is worth remembering that Parliament's naval position was considerably stronger.

¹¹⁴ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.118r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 9 March 1644

¹¹⁵ Bodl., Rawlinson MSS. D395, f.118r; John Strachen to Henry Lord Percy, 9 March 1644

¹¹⁶ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/35; Prince Maurice to Sir Edward Seymour, 14 December 1643

¹¹⁷ DRO, Seymour MSS. 1392/M/L1643/37; Prince Maurice to Sir Edward Seymour, 11 December 1643

CHAPTER 7: THE KING DEFEATED

1645 was the year in which Royalist ambitions for victory in the English Civil War were shattered. The Battle of Naseby, fought on 14 June, resulted in a decisive Parliamentary triumph. Clarendon judged that ‘the king and the kingdom were lost’ at Naseby.¹ Charles’ chief field army suffered heavy casualties, with many of his soldiers also being captured. Perhaps just as damaging, however, was Parliament’s seizure of a large collection of Royalist correspondence, including papers which detailed Charles’ discussions with the detested Catholic Confederates in Ireland.² Parliament thereafter made full use of that information, publishing some of the most controversial items, as it sought to score a propaganda coup against the King. The charge that he was plotting to invade England with ‘foreign’, Papist forces was highly incendiary. Digby, writing to the Queen, elucidated the importance of the ‘precious things’ which had been ‘unfortunately and heedlessly lost’.³ The Royalists had begun the battle at a numerical disadvantage, with their 8000 troops up against 14000 men on the Parliamentary side.⁴ The Navy’s preventing of further Royalist reinforcements from crossing the Irish Sea after early 1644 could be considered as an indirect factor behind the victory at Naseby: the King’s army was smaller than it might otherwise have been had Ormonde and the Royalists in Ireland been at liberty to ship thousands more soldiers to England.

After Naseby, Parliamentary victories on land continued. The creation of the New Model Army was a key factor in Parliament’s success: it brought together troops from the principal Parliamentary armies and placed them under the central command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, who became Lord General.⁵ Fairfax was a strong leader and not subject to the Self-Denying Ordinance, being neither a peer nor an MP. Since the outbreak of war, disputes and disagreements between rival Parliamentary commanders had hampered Parliament’s opportunities to defeat the King outright. Both Cromwell and Waller had argued the case that Parliament would struggle to win the war with its disparate armies competing against each other for resources: they considered it a far better policy to unify the armies in the interests of efficiency and to try and limit the damage caused by factionalism.⁶ The example of the Navy’s effective central command

¹ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1946

² For a good discussion of Charles’ negotiations with the Catholic Confederates see J. Lowe, ‘Charles I and the Confederation of Kilkenny, 1643-9’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 14 (1964), pp.1-19

³ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.13; George Lord Digby to Henrietta Maria, 10 July 1645

⁴ Bennett, *Civil War: Companion*, pp.167-168

⁵ A good recent study of the New Model Army can be found in K. Roberts, *Cromwell’s War Machine: The New Model Army, 1645-1660* (Barnsley, 2005)

⁶ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.301

was surely influential with Parliamentary decision makers as the debate over remodelling the armies took place.

The New Model Army highlighted the ascendancy of the so-called Independents (sometimes referred to as the War Party) in Parliament: those commanders who were accused of not prosecuting the war to its fullest extent, such as the Earl of Manchester, were swept away. The most high profile target of the Self-Denying Ordinance was the Earl of Essex, the erstwhile Lord General, who was deeply unpopular with the Independents, such as Cromwell.⁷

The latest peace overtures to the King had collapsed in February 1645, with the treaty of Uxbridge being abandoned once it became clear that Charles had little interest in agreeing to Parliamentary demands. Indeed, the negotiations ended with bitterness, the participants parting ‘with such a dryness towards each other, as if they scarce hoped to meet again’.⁸ Those in Parliament who wanted to win a total victory were now strengthened. Many of those who had previously invested considerable time and effort in seeking to agree a peace with the King also hardened their attitudes against him, including Northumberland. Clarendon remarked upon his reaction to the failure to conclude peace at Uxbridge:

Northumberland...could not look upon the destruction of monarchy, and the contempt the nobility was already reduced to, and which must then be improved, with any pleasure: yet the repulse he had formerly received at Oxford, upon his addresses thither, and the fair escape he had made afterwards from the jealousy of the parliament, had wrought so far upon him, that he resolved no more to depend upon the one, or to provoke the other, and was willing to see the king’s power and authority so much restrained, that he might not be able to do him any harm.⁹

After Parliament’s victory at Marston Moor the previous year, the Earl of Inchiquin had defected from the Royalist party, which gave Parliament control over the key Irish ports of Cork, Youghal and Kinsale.¹⁰ That had given Parliament greater opportunities to disrupt Royalist shipping in the Irish Sea and provided the Irish Guard with alternative bases to Milford Haven. The small port of Duncannon, which guarded the approach to the privateering base of Waterford, was placed under effective Parliamentary control in October 1644, with a Confederate frigate also intercepted.¹¹ In the first months of 1645, however, Duncannon came under repeated attack by the

⁷ D. L. Smith, *The Stuart Parliaments* (London, 1999), pp.132-133

⁸ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1870

⁹ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1864

¹⁰ Powell, *Navy*, p.87

¹¹ *LJ*, VII, p.34; Report on Duncannon, 25 October 1644

Confederates and Parliament had to dedicate naval resources to its defence. Yet the port was captured in March 1645. Whilst being a relatively small episode of the Civil War, the loss of Duncannon provided an important demonstration that naval power on its own could not guarantee the relief of a besieged port. Sufficient forces were needed *on land* also.¹²

In January, Confederate forces of up to 1500 men, commanded by Thomas Preston, laid siege to Duncannon. Preston had at his disposal seventeen guns and three mortars, which gave him a considerable advantage in terms of artillery.¹³ The garrison was only 150 strong and had poor supplies of water. Pleas for help soon reached Swanley, then commanding the Irish Guard, but Royalist operations in south Wales monopolised his resources. A squadron of four small ships, commanded by Captain Beale in the *Great Lewis*, was all the aid which Swanley could spare. The Royalists soon had the fort surrounded and were able to inflict heavy damage on Beale's squadron. This was because they commanded both approaches to the fort, by land and water, having erected batteries of cannon and mortars. On 24 January, the seaward batteries fired repeatedly at Beale's ships, with the *Great Lewis* suffering so much damage that it sank, with the majority of the crew losing their lives. It was a clear demonstration that ships were very vulnerable to land-based artillery fire if in close proximity. Beale was fortunate to escape to Milford Haven aboard another vessel and, once there, related the news to Swanley.

The next month, Swanley dispatched his Vice-Admiral, William Smith, to attempt a fresh defence of Duncannon. Smith had half a dozen ships at his disposal and, heeding Beale's warnings, anchored out of range of the batteries on land. Smith was able to land vital supplies, but, crucially, there were no Parliamentarian reinforcements available to strengthen the garrison.

As the siege continued into March, conditions at the fort worsened and desperate reports reached Smith aboard the *Swallow*. In one letter of 9 March, several of those who were besieged outlined the problems which threatened to overwhelm Duncannon. The garrison was very short of water, 'there being many of us that have not a drop of water to quench our drought'.¹⁴ The enemy were now at very close quarters, having taken charge of the trenches outside the fort, so 'that we cannot go out for water without

¹² Powell, *Navy*, p.89

¹³ R. Hutton and W. Reeves, 'Sieges and Fortifications' in Kenyon and Ohlmeyer (eds), *Civil Wars*, p.224

¹⁴ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.191; J. Franklin and Abraham Mootham to William Smith, 9 March 1645

great hazard'.¹⁵ Many had also fallen ill, 'occasioned by our bad lodging and sustenance'.¹⁶ The absence of a surgeon was also causing great alarm: casualties could not be treated effectively. The damage that those hurdles did to morale was made plain, with Smith urged to 'relieve us out of this miserable distress...for we cannot perceive any likelihood to preserve the fort'.¹⁷ The letter referred to the mines which the Confederates had been digging since the start of the siege and which now enabled them to venture so close to the fort. The heavy artillery had been very important in protecting the Confederate troops who dug the mines. Contemporary reports testified to the strength of the bombardments.¹⁸

Unfortunately for the garrison, Smith was unable to offer the relief which they wished for. His response to requests for provisions was stark: 'as for bread, beer, and other provisions I unfeignedly protest I have not any to supply the fort withal...having but 20 days victuals aboard, which will enforce me to sail at the first opportunity'.¹⁹ He also bemoaned his lack of small boats to ferry coal and water to the fort. In late January, Warwick had warned Parliament that the Navy was running short of supplies.²⁰ In particular, he had cautioned that the Irish Guard was especially under equipped. Smith's predicament seemed to confirm Warwick's worries.

In mid-March, Smith was forced to depart Duncannon and the garrison surrendered. The presence of Parliamentary shipping before the fort had not been enough to overcome the shortages of manpower at the garrison itself. With Duncannon now under Confederate control, the privateers had more freedom to operate in the Irish Sea. Parliamentary concerns now centred on the possibility that Royalist troops in South Wales might strike at Milford Haven and thus seize the main base for the Irish Guard.²¹ It was not until late summer that Parliament's forces finally put an end to the regular Royalist operations in South Wales, whilst the Irish Guard could not devote itself fully to the war against Confederate shipping until the fall of Bristol heralded the collapse of regional Royalist power.

There was much better news for Parliament in the North, with the capture of Scarborough. In spite of its loss, the Royalists still harboured faint ambitions that a

¹⁵ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.191; J. Franklin and Abraham Mootham to William Smith, 9 March 1645

¹⁶ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.191; J. Franklin and Abraham Mootham to William Smith, 9 March 1645

¹⁷ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.191; J. Franklin and Abraham Mootham to William Smith, 9 March 1645

¹⁸ Hutton and Reeves, 'Sieges and Fortifications', p.224

¹⁹ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.192; William Smith to Lord Esmond, 11 March 1645

²⁰ NA, SP21/17/198-200; Earl of Warwick to Parliament, January 1645

²¹ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.193; Letter to William Lenthall, 27 March 1645

foreign ally might yet be persuaded to come to Charles' aid and land forces there. On 26 July, Jermyn wrote to Digby expressing his hope that the King of Denmark would 'give us an army' to 'give a new turn to all'.²² Digby still held out hope that the defeat at Naseby, whilst being very punishing to the King's war effort, would not prove terminal. Writing to Jermyn in late August, Digby was optimistic that help from Denmark and Ireland would still materialise.²³ His optimism was misplaced, however.

In mid-February, Batten recovered Weymouth, which had been surprised, and then captured, by Sir Lewis Dyve several days previously. At Duncannon, the Parliamentarians suffered because the garrison remained weak due to a lack of reinforcements and supplies. At Weymouth, however, Batten took decisive action to avoid a similar outcome. He landed some 150 seamen at nearby Melcombe, with as much ammunition as he could spare. Writing to Lenthall, Batten related that the Royalists 'played upon us with their Cannon, battered many of our houses, and fired some'.²⁴ Goring soon added his forces to those of Dyve and battle was now imminent. Batten's men joined with those under Weymouth's Parliamentary Governor, Colonel Sydenham, and engaged the enemy, the seamen showing 'themselves very brave men in all this businesse'.²⁵ Weymouth was regained for Parliament, whilst the *Endeavour*, a 'malignant' ship, laden with salt, was captured after cutting her cables and making an attempt to slip past Batten.

Appointed to the command of the fleet after Warwick's resignation from the Lord Admiralty, Batten would play an important part in the capture of the remaining Royalist ports. Warwick continued to hold great influence over the fleet as head of the Admiralty Commission and, in May 1645, he informed the Lords of the state of the Navy.²⁶ In particular, he drew attention to the continuing dangers from Royalist privateers: 'if the Enemy continue to disturb the Trade of the Kingdom, and seize our Ships, the Enemy will be thereby furnished with a very considerable Fleet from ourselves'.²⁷ Warwick feared that further harm to trade would convince 'The Mariners...to betake themselves to Foreign Services'.²⁸

²² CSPD, 1645-7, p.31; Henry Lord Jermyn to George Lord Digby, 26 July 1645

²³ CSPD, 1645-7, p.87; George Lord Digby to Henry Lord Jermyn, 27 August 1645

²⁴ BL, TT, E.271 [22] *God Appearing for the Parliament, In sundry late Victories Bestowed upon their Forces, Which Command and call for great Praise and Thanksgiving both from Parliament and People* (London, 1645)

²⁵ BL, TT, E.271 [22] *God Appearing for the Parliament, In sundry late Victories Bestowed upon their Forces, Which Command and call for great Praise and Thanksgiving both from Parliament and People*

²⁶ LJ, VII, pp.373-374; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 14 May 1645

²⁷ LJ, VII, p.374; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 14 May 1645

²⁸ LJ, VII, p.374; Earl of Warwick to House of Lords, 14 May 1645

With those threats in mind, on 1 April, the Committee for the Navy had ordered that preparations be made ‘for the blocking up of Bristol’.²⁹ After the King’s defeat at Naseby, the Southwest was the last region where Royalist strength, if united, could still present a serious obstacle to Parliamentary military power. Fairfax recognised that and resolved to prevent any such union of Royalist forces. The New Model Army thus marched towards the Southwest after its victory at Naseby. Money to pay for the army’s upkeep was originally to be shipped from Portsmouth to Lyme Regis, in anticipation of its arrival in the region.³⁰ The plans later changed, however, with Colonel John Fiennes’ regiment of horse ordered to transport the funds to Fairfax at a place of his choosing.³¹ Ultimately, the plans reverted back to what had been agreed previously, with the money earmarked for Lyme Regis.³² What that demonstrated, though, was that Parliament had the benefit of several options, with convoys by either sea or by land at its disposal. It had greater flexibility to respond to changing circumstances.

Clarendon questioned why the King did not try and coordinate his forces in the Southwest at that time. In the aftermath of Naseby,

nothing can be here more wondered at, than that the king should amuse himself about forming a new army in counties which had been vexed, and worn out with the oppressions of his own troops, and the licence of those governors, whom he had put over them; and not have immediately repaired into the west, where he had an army already formed, and a people, generally, well devoted to his service.³³

Prince Rupert travelled to Bristol, ‘that he might put that place into a condition to resist a powerful and victorious enemy; which he had reason to believe, would in a short time appear before it’.³⁴ When he reached the city, he found it in a state of distress, with sickness (rumoured to be plague) widespread. His own account outlined a city under numerous pressures, with the Parliamentary naval blockade interrupting trade and commerce, ‘and the Mariners, for want of employment, betooke themselves to other parts, or to the Enemy’.³⁵ That last point was an important demonstration that the King could not retain the loyalties of his mariners if he was unable to provide for them. By July 1645, it was becoming increasingly difficult for the Royalists to ship reinforcements from South Wales to Southwest England. Parliamentary shipping was

²⁹ *CSPD, 1644-5*, p.636; Committee of the Navy, 1 April 1645

³⁰ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.5; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Sir Thomas Fairfax, 2 July 1645

³¹ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.7; Committee of Both Kingdoms to John Fiennes, 4 July 1645

³² *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.11; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Sir Thomas Fairfax, 8 July 1645

³³ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1947

³⁴ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1947

³⁵ BL, TT, E.308 [32] *A Declaration Of His Highnesse Prince Rupert* (London, 1645)

widespread, with vessels from the Irish Guard, now commanded by Moulton, capturing a series of Royalist transports. One case in particular demonstrated the damage which Parliamentary shipping was now doing to Royalist military operations: a squadron of a dozen vessels, aiming to ferry reinforcements from Wales, was captured.³⁶

The Royalists' ambitions to form a new, substantial army were dashed at the Battle of Langport (10 July 1645) when Fairfax decimated the forces under the command of Goring.³⁷ It was 'no less than a defeat of the whole army'.³⁸ The Parliamentarians captured up to 2000 men and killed at least 300. Many of the Royalist troops who evaded capture chose to desert, whilst 500 who were taken prisoner enlisted with Fairfax. There was now little realistic prospect of the King being able to raise an army of sufficient strength to challenge the New Model Army.³⁹

Before victory at Langport, Fairfax had come to the relief of Taunton. Twelve days after his defeat of Goring, he seized Royalist Bridgwater.⁴⁰ Once more, the fleet proved useful, with Fairfax directing Batten to transport 600 of the prisoners captured at Bridgwater over to Pembrokeshire.⁴¹ The same journey by land would have been arduous and much more dangerous to complete, whilst it would have tied down troops who could be better employed at Bristol. Having prevented the Royalists from concentrating their forces, Fairfax reasoned 'that Bristoll could not be assaulted in a better time, they wanting all things for food'.⁴² Furthermore, he recognised that the seamen were 'readie to help also'.⁴³

Rupert made the defence of Bristol his priority: the Parliamentary naval blockade, however, placed intolerable pressure on the city. Moulton joined the squadron before Bristol, which comprised the *Lion*, the *Mayflower*, the *Anne and Joyce*, the *Nicholas* and the *Defiance and Spy*. These vessels were augmented by shallops which could hold up to 300 men each. When Fairfax brought his army to Bristol, the Royalists grew increasingly worried that they would be powerless to resist him. The Parliamentary investment of Bristol was complete by 23 August.⁴⁴ In addition to that,

³⁶ J. Lynch, *For King and Parliament: Bristol and the Civil War* (Stroud, 1999), pp.140-141

³⁷ D. Underdown, *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum* (Newton Abbot, 1973), pp.103-104

³⁸ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1960

³⁹ Lynch, *Bristol and the Civil War*, pp.141-142

⁴⁰ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.321

⁴¹ Powell, *Navy*, p.105

⁴² BL, TT, E.301 [4] *Mr Peters Report From Bristol, Made to the House of Commons, from Sir Thomas Fairfax* (London, 1645)

⁴³ BL, TT, E.301 [4] *Mr Peters Report From Bristol, Made to the House of Commons, from Sir Thomas Fairfax*

⁴⁴ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.322

the sea communications to the city were cut on 28 August, with Parliamentary ships establishing control over the mouth of the river Avon.⁴⁵

Reportedly, the King was planning to cross the Bristol Channel in an attempt to link up with Goring. Yet again, however, the King's plans were frustrated by Parliamentary naval power, with Moulton capturing sixteen ships (earmarked for the King's crossing) which lay near the Holms Islands in the Channel.⁴⁶ Batten had earlier been ordered to send 'such shipping [thither] as shall be proper for that purpose'.⁴⁷ Charles had to abandon his scheme, then, but that came as a relief to the anti-Rupert faction at Court: 'they who did not love prince Rupert, nor were loved by him, could not endure to think that the king should be so wholly within his power'.⁴⁸ Jealousies and rivalries amongst the Royalist party were now festering, the defeats of the past year having taken their toll on morale.

For the Royalists at Bristol, meanwhile, the situation became ever more precarious. In September, Fairfax had his gunners unleashing day after day of bombardments upon the city walls. Despite the failure to create a breach, the Roundheads were ordered to storm the city on 10 September, their sheer weight of numbers giving them an advantage. Fairfax's army was almost 10000 in strength, with up to 5000 auxiliaries in support. Rupert could count on as few as 2000 regular troops and perhaps 1000 trained bands to defend Bristol. After around six hours of fierce combat, Rupert decided that further resistance would be futile and accepted the terms of surrender presented by the enemy.⁴⁹ Clarendon voiced the magnitude of the defeat:

The sudden and unexpected defeat of Bristol was a new earthquake in all the little quarters the king had left, and no less broke all the measures which had been taken, and the designs which had been contrived, than the loss of the battle of Naseby had done.⁵⁰

Rupert had assured the King that, notwithstanding the many difficulties which Bristol faced, he could keep it in Royalist hands for up to four months.⁵¹ As a result, the King had still harboured hopes of raising fresh forces elsewhere to come to its relief. News of Bristol's fall struck a heavy blow to Royalist morale: it 'cast all men on their

⁴⁵ Lynch, *Bristol and the Civil War*, p.141; P. McGrath, 'Bristol and the Civil War' in R. C. Richardson (ed), *The English Civil War: Local Aspects* (Stroud, 1997), p.114

⁴⁶ Powell, *Navy*, p.106

⁴⁷ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.15; Committee of Both Kingdoms to William Batten, 11 July 1645

⁴⁸ Clarendon, *History*, IV, pp.1972-1973

⁴⁹ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.323

⁵⁰ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1989

⁵¹ Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution*, p.322

faces, and damped all the former vigour'.⁵² Digby, writing to Edward Nicholas on 15 September, was dejected: 'Never was there soe sad a relapse into a desperate condicon from soe happy a recovery, as [th]e prodigious surrender of Bristoll hath cast us into'.⁵³ He spoke of opportunities lost, remarking that 'it is not imaginable howe faire a game wee had before us'.⁵⁴ Yet his apparent belief that Royalist designs to relieve Bristol would have succeeded 'within ten dayes or a fortnight' was very misguided.⁵⁵ The New Model Army, combined with the Navy, had the capacity to frustrate any such scheme and, with the fall of Bristol, 'all those hopes are vanished'.⁵⁶

The loss of Bristol proved costly to Rupert, with the King dismissing him from all of his previous commissions. Writing to his nephew, he expressed his disappointment:

Though the loss of Bristol be a great blow to me, yet your surrendering it as you did, is of so much affliction to me, that it makes me not only forget the consideration of that place, but is likewise the greatest trial of my constancy that hath yet befallen me. For what is to be done, after one that is so near me as you are, both in blood and friendship, submits himself to so mean an action?⁵⁷

The port had been a valuable regional headquarters for the King's party and its fall heralded the impending collapse of Royalist territories in the rest of the Southwest. Bristol had played a major role in the supply of Royalist field armies, acting as a distribution centre for the munitions which were landed at the King's Southwest ports, whilst becoming an important entry point for arms in its own right.⁵⁸ Weapons had also been manufactured locally. In terms of a maritime contribution, Bristol had furnished the King with sufficient shipping to ferry over thousands of troops from Ireland and had, at times, put pressure on Parliament's Irish Guard.⁵⁹ Yet Parliament's own naval strength proved instrumental in preventing the garrison from receiving supplies and was capable of blocking reinforcements from reaching Bristol's beleaguered Royalists. The Irish Guard now faced no threat from a regional Royalist naval base and could devote more attention to the privateering operations of the Confederates.

Yet Parliament's ability to apply naval pressure to Bristol had itself come under challenge earlier in the summer. Royalist advances in South Wales destabilised the

⁵² Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1988

⁵³ BL, Egerton MSS. 2533, f.399; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 15 September 1645

⁵⁴ BL, Egerton MSS. 2533, f.399; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 15 September 1645

⁵⁵ BL, Egerton MSS. 2533, f.399; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 15 September 1645

⁵⁶ BL, Egerton MSS. 2533, f.399; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 15 September 1645

⁵⁷ Clarendon, *History*, IV, p.1994

⁵⁸ Lynch, *Bristol and the Civil War*, pp.181-182

⁵⁹ Lynch, *Bristol and the Civil War*, p.182

regional Parliamentary war effort and threatened the base of the Irish Guard at Milford Haven. The Committee of Both Kingdoms wrote to Fairfax on 2 July with worrying news:

We have received diverse informations of the distressed state of Pembrokeshire, the whole country, with the exception of the garrison towns of Pembroke and Tenby, being reduced under the power of the enemy. If those be lost Milford Haven would thereby be in the enemy's power, available for landing there the Irish forces, and for all foreign correspondence. Hitherto, by reason of the distance of those parts from all our forces, we have been unable to give them the relief they have desired.⁶⁰

Fairfax was urged to send what troops he could spare for the defence of the remaining Parliamentary outposts in the region. By mid-July, the Parliamentary garrisons in Pembrokeshire had been supplied with 100 barrels of gunpowder, transported there by the Navy, but they were 'still in want of match and bullet proportionable'.⁶¹ Fairfax was still being asked to contribute manpower, but his recent battle with Goring had limited his capacity to respond.⁶²

The Royalists planned to destroy the food supply around Pembroke, with raiding parties sent out from Haverfordwest to attack corn supplies. The local Parliamentarians, under Rowland Laugharne, faced starvation and decided to fight.⁶³ Had they subsequently been defeated or captured, then Milford Haven may have been at risk. Laugharne appealed to Batten for reinforcements and the Vice-Admiral sent the *Warwick*, manned by 200 seamen, to provide assistance.⁶⁴

On 31 July, the *Warwick* landed two miles up the Haven near Canaston Bridge. The next day, before he had been able to add the seamen to his army, Laugharne surprised the Royalists at Colby Moor, routing their forces and paving the way for an attack on Haverfordwest Castle, the seat of local Royalist power.⁶⁵ Three days of bombardment made little impact against its defences. A demi-cannon, taken from the *Lion*, provided the battery, 'but did no execution, the walls being so extreme thick'.⁶⁶ The 200 seamen were now put to work, scaling the castle walls and seizing control. They were perhaps better rested than Laugharne's soldiers, having taken no part in the late battle. Once more, reinforcements, provided by the Navy, proved integral to the success of a Parliamentary military offensive on land.

⁶⁰ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.3; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Sir Thomas Fairfax, 2 July 1645

⁶¹ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.23; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Committee of the Navy, 17 July 1645

⁶² *CSPD, 1645-7*, pp.25-26; Committee of Both Kingdoms, 17 July 1645

⁶³ R. Hutton, *The Royalist War Effort, 1642-1646* (2nd edn., London, 2003), p.185

⁶⁴ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.209; William Batten to William Lenthall, 19 August 1645

⁶⁵ P. Gaunt, *A Nation under Siege: The Civil War in Wales, 1642-48* (London, 1991), p.61

⁶⁶ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.209; William Batten to William Lenthall, 19 August 1645

By the end of September, the Parliamentarians had managed to expel the Royalists from the whole of Pembrokeshire. Digby had warned that ‘all Wales [is] in danger of being lost, [th]e Rebels having landed already since [th]e surrender of Bristol, neere 2000 men and wee put to wander again’.⁶⁷ Cardigan and Carmarthenshire then declared for Parliament, with South Wales, so long disputed by both parties, now under firm Parliamentary control.⁶⁸ The King’s popularity in the Principality no longer matched the support he received in 1642.⁶⁹

By the end of September, Royalist fortunes were bleak. Having lost Bristol, the King nevertheless hoped to bring over fresh reinforcements from Ireland, with the Earl of Glamorgan negotiating in secret with the Confederates on his behalf. The only remaining Royalist port at which reinforcements could land was Chester, but it was under siege by the enemy. The King decided to journey there, in the hope of ending the siege and paving the way for potential landings by the Irish. Once more, though, he was to be disappointed by the outcome.

On 24 September, the Parliamentary Northern Association army, commanded by Sydenham Poyntz, defeated Royalist forces under Sir Marmaduke Langdale at the Battle of Rowton Moor.⁷⁰ Poyntz had orders to keep a close watch on the King and to follow him wherever he went, hence his presence before Chester.⁷¹ His orders mentioned the threat from Irish forces, a clear demonstration that Parliament still feared intrigues from the King.⁷² Langdale had hoped to relieve the Royalist garrison at Chester and had put serious pressure on Poyntz. The Parliamentary forces which had been besieging the city, however, were able to spare up to 1000 horse and foot to augment the army under Poyntz and that proved decisive in the battle.⁷³ The local Parliamentarians were resolute in their determination to continue the siege of Chester, resolving to ‘runne all hazard, rather than quit a foot of what we have gained’.⁷⁴

The events of late 1643 and early 1644, when thousands of troops from Ireland had been able to land at or near Chester, still cast a shadow. In effect, however, Rowton Moor ended the possibility of Chester again playing an active role in the Royalist war effort. Thereafter, the siege, or ‘Leaguer’ as it became known, developed in intensity.

⁶⁷ BL, Egerton MSS. 2533, f.399; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 15 September 1645

⁶⁸ Gaunt, *Civil War in Wales*, p.61

⁶⁹ G. H. Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales: Wales, 1642-1780* (Oxford, 1987), p.17

⁷⁰ R. N. Dore, *The Civil Wars in Cheshire* (Chester, 1966), pp.49-52

⁷¹ J. Barratt, *The Great Siege of Chester* (Stroud, 2003), p.86

⁷² Barratt, *Chester*, p.86

⁷³ Dore, *Civil Wars in Cheshire*, p.50

⁷⁴ BL, TT, E.303 [18] *The Kings Forces Totally Rovted By the Parliaments Army, under the Command of Major Generall Poyntz and Cheshire-Forces, on Routon Heath, within two miles of Chester, Sept. 24* (London, 1645)

The King's ambitions were thwarted yet again and he left Chester. The 'Leaguer' continued until February 1646, when the Royalist garrison finally surrendered, with its supplies utterly bare and with any prospect of relief having long since evaporated. Sir William Brereton, commander of the Parliamentarians during the 'Leaguer', had outlined the simple tenet upon which the siege depended: 'The increase of the enemy's wants is the greatest ground of our hopes'.⁷⁵ Parliament's shipping in the Irish Sea helped to block reinforcements from sailing down the Dee and reaching the Royalists in Chester. Eventually, the encirclement succeeded in forcing a Royalist surrender.⁷⁶

Not long after his unhappy departure from Chester, the King received news of a fresh catastrophe. Much faith had been placed in the Marquis of Montrose and his campaigns in Scotland. Since 1644, Montrose had scored a string of victories against the Covenanters in Charles' northern kingdom, raising hopes that the Scots would be compelled to withdraw from England to protect their homeland against a Royalist revival, thus weakening the Parliamentary war effort south of the border. That may ultimately have been wishful thinking, but, nevertheless, as the King's setbacks mounted throughout 1645, Montrose offered the Royalists a beacon of hope.

On 26 September, Digby wrote to Ormonde and his comments demonstrated the importance of Montrose to the King's continuance in the war. Digby described Royalist fortunes as being in 'so low a condition [that] were it not for the Marquis of Montrose's successes and the hopes of assistance out of Ireland, we should almost despair'.⁷⁷ In mid-September, Digby had expressed confidence that Royalist fortunes would revive: 'wee have at this present in being two Designs very hopefull and of that consiquence that if either succeed wee shall not thinke our condicon much impair[e]d'.⁷⁸ Clearly, the King had ambitious plans to capitalise on Montrose's success:

His Majesty conceives that the reducement of Scotland to his obedience will have two notable effects of advantage in order to Ireland, the one of making the Scots there submit to the peace, the other of affording safe transportation and landing in Scotland to such forces as may be had from Ireland, which it would be almost impossible to transport with any safety into England.⁷⁹

That last remark alluded to the recent capture of Bristol and the greater freedom which it had afforded to Parliament's Irish Guard. It also reflected the fact that Parliament had few suitable bases close to Scotland, thus making it a more feasible

⁷⁵ R. N. Dore (ed), *The Letter Books of Sir William Brereton, Volume II: June 18th 1645-February 1st 1646* (Stroud, 1990), p.301; Sir William Brereton to William Lenthall, 3 December 1645

⁷⁶ Dore, *Brereton Letter Books II*, pp.529-531; Articles for the surrender of Chester, 1 February 1646

⁷⁷ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.161; George Lord Digby to Marquis of Ormonde, 26 September 1645

⁷⁸ BL, Egerton MSS. 2533, f.399; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 15 September 1645

⁷⁹ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.161; George Lord Digby to Marquis of Ormonde, 26 September 1645

place for the King's allies to land troops.⁸⁰ Yet, even as Digby was expressing those sentiments on paper, the Royalist cause in Scotland had already suffered an irrevocable blow. On 13 September, Montrose's army had been decimated at Philliphauth.⁸¹ When the news filtered through to the King and his closest confidants, they were distraught.

Charles' last great hope remained Ireland, but, in reality, his defeat in the war was assured. For the remainder of 1645, Fairfax progressed into the Southwest and set about reducing the last Royalist outposts. Plymouth had been under siege by the Royalists repeatedly during the Civil War and, on 22 September, the Committee of Both Kingdoms wrote to Fairfax with news that Plymouth was in need of defence:

We need not add any thing concerning the great consequence it is to preserve that town, which we are informed cannot be done by sea. We are also informed that there are 2,500 well affected Club-men in that county who will be ruined for declaring themselves and their good affection to the Parliament unless some help be speedily sent them. It is their opinion that, if a sufficient strength be employed, Devonshire may be cleared of the enemy. Dartmouth is likely to be had upon easy terms, and thereby the enemy deprived of all ports on this side of Cornwall, and the only considerable body of an army which the King hath thereby dispersed, and indeed the whole west reduced.⁸²

Naval power alone was insufficient to raise the siege. Over the winter, though, Fairfax brought relief to a port which had proved invaluable to Parliament throughout the war.⁸³ He relied, however, on supplies from Batten at sea. Cooperation between Parliament's New Model Army and the Navy thus resulted in success.

Fairfax was determined that the last Royalist ports be brought to submission and, on 15 January, Dartmouth, for some time a haven for Royalist privateers, was captured. Batten once more provided support. Batten's squadron of ships positioned themselves before the haven, 'to keep any of their ships from going out of the harbour', as the Parliamentarian soldiers 'stormed by land'.⁸⁴ As had become common in such operations, seamen were redeployed to assist with the assault, some 200 being recruited to aid the troops at Dartmouth. Valuable Royalist shipping was captured at the port.⁸⁵

The final pitched battle of the First Civil War was fought at Stow-on-the-Wold, on 21 March, when Brereton defeated the last remaining Royalist field army, under

⁸⁰ The possibility of shipping the King to Scotland to rendezvous with Montrose had been discussed in Royalist circles, but dismissed. See G. F. Warner (ed), *The Nicholas Papers: Correspondence of Sir Edward Nicholas, Secretary of State, Volume 1, 1641-1652* (London, 1886), p.66; George Lord Digby to Sir Edward Nicholas, 28 September 1645

⁸¹ G. Donaldson, *Scotland: James V-James VII* (Edinburgh, 1965), pp.334-335

⁸² *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.153; Committee of Both Kingdoms to Sir Thomas Fairfax, 22 September 1645

⁸³ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.224

⁸⁴ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.229; Account of the fall of Dartmouth, 18 January 1646

⁸⁵ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.230; Account of the fall of Dartmouth, 18 January 1646

Lord Astley.⁸⁶ In the Southwest, the Royalists were being pushed further westwards, as the Parliamentarians overran the King's former strongholds of Devon and Cornwall. Pendennis Castle, 'a stronghold in the utmost parts of Cornwall', finally fell in mid-August 1646, as the combination of a naval blockade by Batten, and an encirclement by troops under Colonel Fortescue, forced the Governor, John Arundel, to agree terms of surrender.⁸⁷ Batten's ships had come under heavy fire from the garrison, the Royalists being 'very prodigal of their powder', but the shots proved ineffective.⁸⁸ Only the Scilly Isles now held out, but they too surrendered the next month. The King's maritime capabilities in the Southwest were brought to a close at last, thus completing Parliament's victory in the war.

By that point, of course, the King was in the custody of the Scots, having surrendered in May 1646, in large part to avoid capture by the Parliamentarian army which overran Oxford.⁸⁹ Oxford fell in June.⁹⁰ Thus began several years of negotiations between Charles I and his enemies. The King sought to play off different factions against each other, as his dealings veered from intrigue to outright chicanery. The New Model Army grew restless and Parliament became increasingly disunited. Ultimately, no lasting peace settlement could be agreed and a Second Civil War erupted in 1648. The Royalists mounted their most serious challenge yet to Parliament's dominance at sea, as the Navy, so important to Parliament's success in the First Civil War, rebelled against a regime which many began to view as little better than the monarchical government which it had overthrown. Those events will be discussed in chapter eight.

⁸⁶ Bennett, *Civil War: Companion*, p.223; A. Woolrych, *Battles of the English Civil War* (London, 1961), p.141

⁸⁷ CRO, Tremayne MSS. T/1629/1; Articles for the surrender of Pendennis Castle, 10 August 1646

⁸⁸ Powell and Timings, *Documents*, p.253; Account of the fall of Pendennis, 16 August 1646

⁸⁹ Clarendon, *History*, V, p.2114

⁹⁰ Woolrych, *Battles*, p.141

CHAPTER 8: THE NAVAL REVOLT OF 1648

In 1648, as the Second Civil War erupted, the Royalists were presented with an opportunity never afforded to them during the 1642-6 conflict: a significant defection of ships and mariners from the Parliamentarian Navy.¹ Discontent had been rising in the Navy since the appointment of the radical Colonel Thomas Rainsborough to the position of Vice-Admiral, in place of the popular William Batten. Rainsborough was seen as an army man, more radical in beliefs than many of those who served in the fleet, and his efforts to purge the Navy of moderates were unpopular. Nevertheless, he did have experience at sea, having commanded a warship earlier in the war, and his family had a strong naval heritage.² His political views alienated many, however, including the man he replaced, with Batten amongst those who defected to the King. To some extent, Rainsborough was given the vice-admiralty to remove him from the nucleus of political power back in London, Cromwell in particular despairing of his strident opposition to peace negotiations with Charles I in 1647 and his perceived Leveller sympathies.³ His appointment met with strong opposition from within Parliament itself and both Houses had initially voted to revoke his commission, but at the risk of prolonging a leaderless Navy and with the King looking to the fleet for rescue him from the Isle of Wight, the Commons reluctantly ignored the Lords' determined hostility and ordered Rainsborough to at last assume command on 1 January 1648.⁴

As unrest towards Parliament grew in the opening months of 1648, the Navy was not isolated from such developments. A sense of unease was evident: many peoples' primary concern was to bring King and Parliament together for some kind of peace settlement. One account captured the mood of the time: 'the ground of all is that the Kingdome is wearie of Warr, and it is generally beleived that the King desires peace more then the Parlyam[en]t'.⁵ That war weariness, twinned with unhappiness at the army's power, helped to create a Royalist reaction to Parliament's rule of the country. The disbanding of the New Model Army was regarded as an essential precondition for

¹ A good history of the Second Civil War can be found in R. Ashton, *Counter Revolution: the Second Civil War and its Origins, 1646-1648* (London, 1994); the operations of the fleet under the Prince of Wales are discussed in S. Kelsey, 'King of the Sea': The Prince of Wales and the Stuart Monarchy, 1648-1649', *History*, 92, No. 308 (October 2007); the naval revolt is also discussed in D. E. Kennedy, 'The English Naval Revolt of 1648', *English Historical Review*, 77 (1962)

² William Rainsborough, Thomas' father, had been a well-known privateer captain and ship owner, helping to assault the pirate base at Salée in 1637; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.17; Ian Gentles, 'Rainborowe [Rainborow], Thomas (d. 1648), parliamentarian naval officer and Leveller', *ODNB*

³ Gentles, 'Rainborowe', *ODNB*

⁴ Gentles, 'Rainborowe', *ODNB*; Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp.19-20

⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2796; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 1 June 1648

successful peace talks with the King, but attempts to do so had sparked off an army mutiny in 1647. That unsettled some of those in the Navy.

Revolts against Parliamentary power began in South Wales in March, but soon spread across numerous parts of Britain. The unrest in Wales occupied the fleet, at a time when Irish privateers ‘do not lessen but increase’.⁶ In May 1648, risings in Kent escalated to the extent that Parliament was forced to dispatch Sir Thomas Fairfax to quell the opposition, but by the time he had contained it, Parliament had lost a number of ships to the Royalists. Given Kent’s proximity to the capital and its links to the Thames, hostility from that quarter posed serious dangers for Parliament, not least the possibility of its trade being interrupted.⁷ The various threats posed to Parliament placed a great strain on the Navy, so any defections were particularly harmful.

An intelligence report of 4 May 1648, sent to the leading Royalist Edward Hyde, related the Duke of York’s message to Rainsborough, entreating the latter to ‘be obedient to his Commands’, the former having been ‘made Admirall by the K[ing]’.⁸ York’s appointment as admiral was more titular than realistic, but it provided the Royalists with a prominent figurehead to whom naval opponents of Parliament might direct their energy. Some reports suggested that York did enjoy support amongst the seamen, but it was unlikely that he was considered a serious candidate to head the Navy.⁹ The word reaching Royalist circles was that the seamen were extremely unhappy: ‘I am told that Rainsborough hath written to the Parl[iamen]t that the Marriners are so mutinous, he dare not venture to Sea with them’.¹⁰ It was, quite literally for the Royalists, ‘too good to be true’.¹¹

The Royalists sensed an opportunity to wield a significant degree of naval power, with York repeating the King’s promises that any mariners who joined his party ‘shalbe well accepted and [have] their service rewarded’.¹² Referring to a petition in Kent for a personal treaty between King and Parliament, the report was optimistic that the two Houses were facing trouble, but tempered that enthusiasm with Royalist concerns about ‘the p[er]fidiousnesse of the Scotts’, their prospective allies.¹³ Plans were under way for a Scottish military intervention into England in support of the King, a rather ironic development given the Scots’ key role in sabotaging Charles I’s ability to

⁶ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 58, f.707; Thomas Rainsborough to William Lenthall, 18 February 1648

⁷ Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, p.19

⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2773; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 4 May 1648

⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2796/2; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 1 June 1648

¹⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2773; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 4 May 1648

¹¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2773; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 4 May 1648

¹² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2773; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 4 May 1648

¹³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2773; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 4 May 1648

govern in the late-1630s. The new alliance with the King reflected their breakdown in relations with Parliament. In January 1648, the Independent faction in Parliament had dissolved the Committee of Both Kingdoms, effectively bringing to an end the alliance which had been cemented by the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643.¹⁴ Even in 1645, when Parliament's armies dominated the field, there had been friction with the Scots. Northumberland enunciated Parliament's recurring view towards its then ally: 'it must be more useful unto us than of late it hath been'.¹⁵

The Royalists sensed that the Parliamentary army would act decisively to stop a peace deal being pushed through by the Presbyterian faction:

The Presbyterian party hath the power of the Houses now and will certainly hold it except the Army interpose, wch it doth not yet, though it shewes it selfe to be nothing well pleased.¹⁶

It was apparent, then, that the army was in no mood to negotiate with a King who had lost one war and was putting in motion another. Parliament, aware of Scottish invasion plans, had resolved to send considerable forces northwards to meet the threat, but the unrest in Kent complicated matters. Parliament's refusal to hear the Kent petitions unleashed a wave of opposition, culminating in the rebels' capture of magazines across the county, including those belonging to the Navy. Rainsborough's authority was coming under severe strain, with the rebels intercepting 'whole packets' of correspondence between Parliament and the vice-admiral.¹⁷

The Navy became more heavily involved in the Kentish revolt when a number of sailors signed up to the rebels' petition. Reports reached the Royalists that they were united in their loathing of Rainsborough, with many calling for the return to command of either Batten or the Earl of Warwick. One intelligence report indulged in hyperbole by suggesting that, but for the intervention of his wife, Rainsborough would have been hung by his own men.¹⁸ That seems unlikely: the rebels knew that the execution of a leading Parliamentary figure would bring heavy reprisals. Rainsborough was certainly very unpopular, but the sailors were more interested in having him replaced than killed. Such reports certainly brought cheer to the Royalists, as they grew more confident that the situation could be exploited to their advantage.

¹⁴ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.425

¹⁵ *CSPD, 1645-7*, p.150; Earl of Northumberland to Sir Henry Vane Senior, 22 September 1645

¹⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2773; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 4 May 1648

¹⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2790; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 25 May 1648

¹⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2791/2; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 29 May 1648

Another report offered a more thorough and objective overview of events in Kent. Placing matters in perspective, the report acknowledged that Parliament faced trouble, ‘but they looke upon it as a slight businesse’.¹⁹ The rebels did not constitute a well-organised or well-disciplined force, whilst major figures had failed to come forward to ‘hazard an engagem[en]t upon the frothy humour of the giddy multitude’.²⁰

Of far more concern was Parliament’s loosening grip on the Navy. Some intelligence reports were highly positive in their appraisal of the King’s position: ‘in appearance the King’s restitution was never so likely, as now, for besides the people, the Shipping are Comeing about towards him, which is the key of the Worke’.²¹ Rumours suggested that half a dozen ships had revolted and that Rainsborough had been relieved of effective command by the sailors’ total refusal to adhere to his orders. Debates were being heard in Parliament concerning a new admiral, with Batten and Warwick both in the frame. The Royalist intelligence was quite accurate: by the end of 27 May, the *Constant Reformation*, *Swallow*, *Roebuck*, *Hind*, *Satisfaction* and *Pelican* had revolted.²²

An eyewitness from amongst the rebels outlined how the Navy revolt came about. The rebels had seized a series of castles across the county and had marched towards the stationed fleet. Rainsborough was at Deal Castle and, in his temporary absence from the fleet, letters were sent aboard to tempt the sailors into supporting the petitioners. A key intervention had come from Samuel Kem, formerly Batten’s chaplain. Kem was still a keen supporter of Batten, who was now edging towards open opposition to Parliament. Kem favoured the Kentish petitioners and was active in spreading the revolt to the Navy. When Rainsborough was at Deal, Kem went aboard his flagship, the *Constant Reformation*, and helped to spark a mutiny.²³

Within a short space of time, a number of captains had been seized and the sailors declared their support for the petition. Rainsborough was ‘ignorant of what passed aboard’ and hastened to the fleet with his wife and children, only to be met by stern opposition when he got there:

When he came neere the Admirall, & commanded to loose the fortopsail, intending belike to weigh Anchor, he was answered by the Boatswaines mate (a witty and bold knave & a prime agent in the mutiny) that the case was altyed,

¹⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2792; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 29 May 1648

²⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2792; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 29 May 1648

²¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2796; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 1 June 1648

²² Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, p.20

²³ Capp, *Cromwell’s Navy*, p.20

[and] that they had concurred with the Kentish Gentlemen, & that there was no admittance for him.²⁴

The extraordinary developments continued, as the crew had Rainsborough's possessions unloaded and he and his family were 'sett aboard of a Weymouth man that was bound for London'.²⁵ The mutineers wanted Rainsborough to give a full account to Parliament of their grievances and disposition. They no doubt enjoyed the humiliation which was experienced by Rainsborough himself, with the deposed admiral 'most outrageously mad' at his loss of authority.²⁶

Rainsborough had warned beforehand that the Kentish rebellion was risking 'distemper' in the fleet and believed that the escalating Royalist support in the county could corrupt his mariners, unless it was suppressed speedily.²⁷ In Rainsborough's relation of the naval revolt to Lenthall, he expressed dismay that he had been forced to attend to the besieged castles in the Downs and suggested that his presence with the fleet would have prevented the defection of his flagship, the *Constant Reformation*.²⁸ That ignored the latent hostility which the seamen harboured towards him, with Rainsborough overestimating his own influence over them. He gave details of a Council of War which had taken place only hours before at which virtually all of the officers had given assurances of support for Parliament and had denied any knowledge of impending plots.²⁹ Rainsborough was writing in the heat of the moment and seemed to be in a state of shock that a number of his officers had been dishonest with him. Care needed to be taken, he warned, to stop the revolt spreading further, with other ships attracting his suspicion.

A Royalist eyewitness reported the rebels' optimism that the entire fleet might come over to the King, but hedged that positive analysis with a warning: 'they must not want victuals nor their pay, wch it is impossible wee can furnish, having pawned our Credit for great Sommes already'.³⁰ Despite their confidence, on sober reflection the rebels knew that they lacked the money to carry on their opposition to Parliament indefinitely. Fears were also growing that the Earl of Warwick, now appointed by Parliament to head the fleet, might subdue the naval revolt: 'wee cannot confide in him, and wee hope the officers of the fleet will not receive him without our consent'.³¹

²⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2794; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 30 May 1648

²⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2794; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 30 May 1648

²⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2797; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 1 June 1648

²⁷ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 57, f.100; Thomas Rainsborough to Committee of Admiralty, 24 May 1648

²⁸ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 57, f.115; Thomas Rainsborough to William Lenthall, 27 May 1648

²⁹ Bodl., Tanner MSS. 57, f.115; Thomas Rainsborough to William Lenthall, 27 May 1648

³⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2794; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 30 May 1648

³¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2794; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 30 May 1648

Warwick's previous popularity with the sailors was clearly a concern to the King's party, and was instrumental in Parliament's decision to recall him to active service. Batten had his supporters, though, with the City of London petitioning the Lords on 1 June and urging his reappointment as vice-admiral.³²

An insight into the motivations of those who spearheaded the naval revolt can be gauged from the *Declaration of the Navy*, issued on 28 May by a number of officers from the rebellious ships.³³ Importantly, the declaration contained an oath made by both officers and common seamen, indicating that the movement was not simply a top-down enterprise. It made damning reading for Rainsborough, with his 'insufferable pride, ignorance and insolency' having alienated the 'hearts' of the seamen.³⁴ The fleet was also angered by the appointment of army men as sea commanders and the seamen had apparently taken grave offence at Parliament's granting of commissions to commanders in their own names, with no mention whatsoever of the King. The malcontents still referred to serving 'King and Parliament', a clear indication that one of the origins of their unrest was not overwhelming dedication to the monarch, but rather a rejection of the increasing Independent faction in the two Houses. The declaration called for Parliament to treat with the King for a peace agreement which would protect the liberty of the subject, the laws of the kingdom already established and Parliamentary privileges. Its demands were little removed from those of the Kentish petitioners, then.

R.C. Anderson argued that the chief cause of the naval mutiny was not the mariners' obvious loathing of Rainsborough, but the political situation. He suggested that the revolt came about because of 'purely political motives'.³⁵ I believe it is safe to say that Rainsborough's personal unpopularity *did* play a part in the mutiny: a vice-admiral commanding the respect of the seamen would surely have been better placed to withstand the escalating Royalism which swept the Downs fleet in 1648. Anderson's emphasis on political motives is a correct analysis, but he dismissed Rainsborough's unpopularity too easily in my opinion. The personal nature of the insults directed at Rainsborough by the signatories of the *Declaration* was a testament to his own role in fostering discontent in the Navy.

Warwick reached Kent on 31 May aboard the *Nicodemus* frigate and was soon boarded by captains from the Kent squadron. He was told by Captains Penrose and Harris that, until the night previous, the seamen had resolved to accept him as

³² *LJ*, X, p.296; Petition of the City of London to the House of Lords, 1 June 1648

³³ *Declaration of the Navy* (28 May 1648) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, pp.332-334

³⁴ *Declaration of the Navy* (28 May 1648) in Powell and Timings, *Documents*, pp.332-334

³⁵ R.C. Anderson, 'The Royalists at Sea in 1648', *Mariner's Mirror*, 9 (1923), p.36

commander. Unfortunately for Warwick, one of the leading Kentish agitators and a Royalist captain had been admitted aboard the *Reformation* and had helped to stiffen the mariners' loyalties to the petitioners. Warwick now faced stubborn demands to subscribe to the Kentish petition or else he would not be allowed to board any of the vessels. Upon his refusal, he was indeed blocked from joining the main body of the fleet. At a Council of War on 2 June, Warwick and his own officers decided that, for the present, their chances of reducing the fleet in the Downs were extremely low.

Other reports suggested that Warwick made an emotional appeal to the mariners to come over to him, pledging indemnity to those who did so. Warwick was told, though, to return to Parliament to relate the 'unanimous consent & association of the Fleet wth the Gentlemen...of Kent'.³⁶ Upon hearing this he succumbed to tears, clearly dismayed that his previous good standing with the Navy now appeared to count for so little. Given that he had not held personal command over the fleet since the Self-Denying Ordinance some three years previously, though, it was perhaps to be expected that his authority would have lessened. With no tangible force at his disposal, his hopes of coercion were minimal.³⁷

Having rejected Warwick's offers of indemnity, the mutineers had now reached the point at which they could not realistically turn back. Some of the rebel ships set sail from the Downs, with the apparent intention to 'bring in the whole Fleet abroad'.³⁸ The challenge for Warwick was to ensure that no further ships rebelled against Parliament, it being clear that the ships from Kent were resolute in their hostility, at least for the time being. Three of the vessels were reportedly heading for Holland, there to link up with the Royalists in exile on the continent. Rumours abounded that the Isle of Wight was poised to declare for the King and that he might be rescued by the Kent fleet and landed in a place safe from the clutches of Parliament.³⁹ For Parliament, the tension was apparent and even the wildest and most improbable stories seemed to take on an air of authenticity.

Warwick was speeding to Portsmouth to try and maintain Parliament's grip on the rest of the Navy, fully aware that he had competition for the said ships' loyalties. Parliament's hope was that Warwick's securing the Portsmouth fleet would 'be a meanes to the revolted ships to returne to their first condition'.⁴⁰ Parliament's relatively

³⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2800; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 3 June 1648

³⁷ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.21

³⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2800; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 3 June 1648

³⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2800; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 3 June 1648

⁴⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2801; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 5 June 1648

swift defeat of the Kentish rebels on land raised Warwick's spirits. Fairfax had emerged triumphant after storming Maidstone on 1 June, whilst the Mayor of Greenwich had sent forces to take on another contingent. The poorly-organised rebels were no match for the more disciplined and seasoned Parliamentary troops. By 8 June, it was becoming clear that the Kentish rebels were in trouble, with one account offering a damning verdict: 'They're fire is vanished into smoake'.⁴¹ On 9 June, the main body of their forces surrendered at Canterbury.⁴² A fortnight or so later, their forces were 'all dispersed'.⁴³

Rodger argues that, had the rebels established lasting control of a major anchorage such as Chatham, then the naval mutiny might have been far more damaging to Parliament than it actually was.⁴⁴ Chatham, under the command of Peter Pett, had withstood strong pressure to join the rebels. Its valuable dockyard was a key prize and the Rochester Committee, prime movers in the Kentish risings, had made strenuous efforts to persuade those at Chatham to sign their petition.⁴⁵ Pett resisted all such attempts and managed to secure two powerful warships, the *Prince* and *Sovereign*, from falling into the mutineers' hands.

With a strong base in England, the rebel fleet would have been more effective. Had the rebels been led by better generals, enjoyed the promised support from other counties and established more coordination with the ships which declared support for their petition, then perhaps Parliament would have faced a sterner challenge.⁴⁶ The mutineers were reliant on three castles in the Downs for supply, but Parliament had set about investing them.⁴⁷ With their fall looking likely (and soon occurring) the rebel ships started to look towards Holland.

Warwick reached Portsmouth on 4 June and believed the four ships there to be loyal. Nevertheless, consideration had been given to removing their sails, hardly a vote of confidence.⁴⁸ There were grave concerns over the northern squadron at Yarmouth, with Warwick fearing that the late troubles 'may have an evill influence upon those'.⁴⁹ Fortunately, those apprehensions proved to be unfounded: had Yarmouth defected, then Warwick feared Portsmouth would do likewise.⁵⁰

⁴¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2804; Mr R. Hollins to Mr Denman, 8 June 1648

⁴² Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.19

⁴³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2819; Dr Stephen Goffe to Mr Aylesbury, 25 June 1648

⁴⁴ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.426

⁴⁵ Powell, *Navy*, pp.162-163

⁴⁶ Frank W. Jessup, *A History of Kent* (Chichester, 1974), p.109

⁴⁷ Powell, *Navy*, p.165

⁴⁸ Anderson, 'Royalists 1648', p.38

⁴⁹ BL, Add. MSS. 19367, f.3r; Earl of Warwick to Committee of the Navy, 7 June 1648

⁵⁰ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.22

The Prince of Wales knew that some of the Kent ships had left the Downs on 10 June and were making for Helvoetsluys in Holland. He resolved to journey there from St Germain, adamant that he would play a role in moulding them into a Royalist Navy.⁵¹ A Royalist letter of intelligence on 21 June outlined the movements of the seven rebel ships, stating that they had been joined by a further two state ships, the *Constant Reformation* and the *Swallow*.⁵² Five frigates were also reported to have joined the putative Royalist fleet, one of which had been sent to Helvoetsluys to ask the Duke of York to be admiral. York agreed, but sent Lord Willoughby of Parham to advise the rest of the fleet, whilst acknowledging that his brother Prince Charles would in all likelihood hold the overall command. York urged further defections and suggested Calais as a good place for the fleet to come together.⁵³

On 23 June, Lord Digby reported that the Prince was *en-route* to Calais, ‘whither he is hastening to make a settlement in [th] businesse of [th]e shippes wch are declared for him’.⁵⁴ He reached the French town in early July and was soon pressing to be ‘sett aboard the ships under the Comand of the new Vice-admiral’ Lord Willoughby.⁵⁵ Some cautioned, however, that he should travel overland to Holland and instead meet the fleet there. The fear that Warwick might put to sea and capture the Prince pervaded Royalist circles. Nevertheless, the Royalists in exile were growing more optimistic that the ships which had apparently come over to their service would help them tip the balance of events back in England and aid the restoration of the Stuart monarchy to its former powers.

The Prince of Wales, accompanied by leading Royalist nobles including Prince Rupert, left Calais for Helvoetsluys on 9 July. Rupert had seen service in the French army after his dismissal from Royalist circles in 1645, but had now returned to the fold in a time of need. When he reached the Dutch port, Prince Charles assumed command of the fleet in person, with Lord Willoughby confirmed as his vice-admiral.⁵⁶ Willoughby was a Parliamentarian defector, having previously been a notable member of the Presbyterian party and one of the seven lords thrown into the Tower in September 1647.⁵⁷ Accused of treason by the army faction, he had been released in January 1648,

⁵¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2806; Prince of Wales to Edward Hyde, 10 June 1648

⁵² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2817; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 21 June 1648

⁵³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2817; Letter of intelligence, endorsed by Edward Hyde, 21 June 1648

⁵⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2818; George Lord Digby to Edward Hyde, 23 June 1648

⁵⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2824; Anonymous letter to Edward Hyde, 29 June 1648

⁵⁶ Anderson, ‘Royalists 1648’, p.38

⁵⁷ Michael A. LaCombe, ‘Willoughby, Francis, fifth baron Willoughby of Parham (*bap.* 1614, *d.*1666), colonial governor’, *ODNB*

pending charges, and unsurprisingly skipped bail and went over to the Royalists. His lack of experience at sea hardly gifted him strong authority to command the sailors.

The Royalist fleet put to sea from Helvoetsluys on 17 July. Ten days later, the Prince drew up a declaration to justify the formation of a Royalist Navy.⁵⁸ He listed eight reasons, including the stabilising of religion and the fulfilment of the King's alliance with the Scots.⁵⁹ He outlined that his fleet aimed to restore his father to liberty and his just rights. There was talk of a Personal Treaty, something clearly designed to appeal to moderates and a reflection of the mariners' stance. The Prince pledged that property rights would be defended and proposed the abolition of unpopular taxes and the army's free quarter.⁶⁰ Anger at the Parliamentary army obviously influenced such Royalist thinking, but a further pledge from the Prince spoke of the importance of maintaining Parliament's privileges and freedoms. That tied in with the promise of a Personal Treaty. The Prince's list also included the obeying of the Act of Oblivion and Indemnity, as well as populist undertakings to disband the army and bring about peace.⁶¹ The final justification for a Royalist fleet was the time-honoured need to defend the King's rights at sea and the kingdom's trade. It was imperative to signal to the merchant classes that the Royalist Navy intended them no ill.

On 29 July, Prince Charles wrote from aboard the fleet to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London.⁶² He was making a determined effort to win their approval. He built upon his recent declaration and emphasised his regard for London, describing it as 'the most considerable part of the Kingdome'.⁶³ That analysis was obvious, of course, but it did no harm to flatter the recipients of his letter by highlighting their importance. The Prince wanted London to view his actions as just and he tried to reassure his audience that his support for the capital's trade was paramount. Making reference to a number of vessels which were 'stayed in the Downs', many of which owned by London-based merchants, he wrote that 'wee are so farre from intending Violence' to any goods or persons of the capital.⁶⁴

The Prince stepped up his charm offensive by suggesting that his 'only aime and end' was to procure a proper subsistence for the Navy, the better to safeguard England's

⁵⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2841; Order of the Prince of Wales, 27 July 1648

⁵⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2841; Order of the Prince of Wales, 27 July 1648

⁶⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2841; Order of the Prince of Wales, 27 July 1648

⁶¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2841; Order of the Prince of Wales, 27 July 1648

⁶² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, 29 July 1648

⁶³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, 29 July 1648

⁶⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, 29 July 1648

trade.⁶⁵ The real motive for his letter became apparent when he asked for £20000 to equip his fleet, with a promise to repay that sum out of the customs duties. He complained that he was ‘for the present utterlie unable to provide for soe great a charge’ and made something of a veiled threat by promising to discharge the stayed ships *if* the loan was forthcoming.⁶⁶ The message was obvious: London had to pay up or the Prince’s fleet would exert pressure on its shipping. He drew attention to the fact that the ships which were kept in port were ‘of a far greater Valew than the Summe wee desire’.⁶⁷ Underneath the conciliatory language, the Prince was doing his utmost to capitalise on the Royalists’ newly-acquired maritime strength. He hoped to use the Navy to force London into supporting him as the best means of protecting trade.

In another declaration of 29 July, Prince Charles repeated his desire for a lasting peace and tried to increase the pressure on Parliament by offering pay and indemnity to any seamen or officers who left Warwick’s service. He sounded an optimistic note that such defections would be forthcoming, having been assured of the ‘good affections’ of Warwick’s seamen by those who had already made the breach.⁶⁸

Despite the Royalists’ apparent maritime strength, many still acknowledged the very real threat from Parliament’s Navy. Warwick succeeded in maintaining the loyalty of the Portsmouth fleet and the Royalists were a long way short of enjoying the undisputed mastery of the seas. He expressed confidence in the ships under his command, writing to the Committee of the Navy with news that their crews ‘have severally ingaged themselves to live, and dye with mee in the Parlyaments Cause’.⁶⁹

One Royalist peer wrote to Hyde on 7 August and gave details about the detaining of his vessel by a Parliamentarian ship eager to search it for suspicious materials or personnel.⁷⁰ The peer had managed to spirit away an important letter addressed to the Prince of Wales, something which the Parliamentarians would have been very eager to read.

The Scots, having invaded England in support of the King, noted the emergence of a Royalist Navy. The Earl of Lauderdale, writing to the Prince on behalf of the

⁶⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, 29 July 1648

⁶⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, 29 July 1648

⁶⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2845; Prince of Wales to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of London, 29 July 1648

⁶⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2846; Declaration by the Prince of Wales, 29 July 1648

⁶⁹ BL, Add. MSS. 19367, f.3v; Earl of Warwick to Committee of the Navy, 7 June 1648

⁷⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2852; Earl of Peterborough to Edward Hyde, 7 August 1648

Committee of Estates of the Scottish Parliament, invited him either to sail to Scotland or to join the army wherever it would be most advantageous in England.⁷¹

Prince Charles was with the fleet throughout August and Hyde, writing to Lord Culpepper, enunciated the advantages which this brought:

the Prince continuing in his Royall Fleete (wch by his prescence is every day increased, united and more firmly resolved) hanges like a Meteor over [th]e Heades of all the Rebells in England.⁷²

The reasons for this were many, not least the uncertainty which was created for the Parliamentarians. Hyde believed that with ‘all the maritime parts having equall hopes’ of the Prince’s landing there, there was a greater likelihood of their declaring for him.⁷³ Given that the Royalists had no publicised place of landing, the Parliamentarians were forced to scatter their own forces to try and cover as many places as possible. When the fleet set out from Holland the Royalists ‘strongly beleaved’ that they would be able to gain control over a port in England.⁷⁴

Hyde reiterated the importance of choosing good harbours to receive the Navy and advised that the only means by which the ‘Seamen can be kept in order’ was by a ready supply of provisions and money.⁷⁵ Thinking of the bigger picture, though, Hyde kept to the spirit of the Prince’s earlier declarations by cautioning against a reliance on capturing prizes to fund the fleet. He warned that such a policy would be dangerous and ensure that ‘you will in a short time bee looked upon as common Enemyes’, with both England and foreign kingdoms uniting against the Royalists if trade was coming under sustained attack.⁷⁶ Hyde wanted to see the Royalists pay the mariners out of more conventional means (hence the Prince’s earlier letter asking London to volunteer a loan) and believed that, by adhering to such methods, ‘you will keepe up both your Navall power and reputacons, and all adjacent Countryes shall either Love or feare you’.⁷⁷ The underlying theme of Hyde’s advice was sensible: the Royalists needed to present themselves as legitimate and law-abiding. The Prince’s fleet had to be seen as a guarantor of trade and not an impediment. Trying not to provoke opposition from foreign governments was important.

⁷¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2857; Earl of Lauderdale to Prince of Wales, 16 August 1648

⁷² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

⁷³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

⁷⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

⁷⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

⁷⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

⁷⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

Yet Hyde recognised the value which prizes could contribute to the fleet. He acknowledged that hostile vessels would have to be captured, both to neutralise them as threats at sea and to raise funds. There was nothing ‘more necessary’ than the raising of money and Hyde recommended that the Royalist Navy established a base in the Channel Islands, believing that their location was more advantageous for the controlling of trade.⁷⁸ He thought that the selling of prizes and goods in foreign markets would eat into profits, with such issues as currency discrepancies always a risk for example.

In an attempt to maintain the loyalty of the masters and mariners (many of them having only recently abandoned Parliamentary service) Hyde repeated the populist call for them to enjoy a just share of any prizes. There was nothing new about such a promise, but it was essential to make the King’s service as attractive as it could be.⁷⁹

The Prince himself was alert to the necessity of currying favour not just with English merchants, but with those from abroad as well. In August 1648, he made a series of proposals to the company of merchants at Rotterdam. Expressing his belief that the Royalist fleet would soon ‘be able to commande the Narrow Seas’, he asked the merchants to think carefully about how that would affect them.⁸⁰ He was making a play for financial support by highlighting the possible interruptions to trade which his fleet might force. In return for a subsidy, he promised to protect the merchants’ trading vessels with his Navy and held out the prospect of the subsidy being repaid when conditions allowed. The themes were more or less identical to those discussed in his letter to London: support for his fleet would bring protection of trade, or so he promised. It obviously made sense to try and widen the basis of his support from beyond England, the better to neutralise potential opposition at sea.

Plans were afoot for Royalist landings in England, but the King’s party was unsure about where they might take place. Lord Goring emphasised that any landings should take care to avoid Parliamentary cavalry on the coast.⁸¹ The Prince’s changing objectives were apparent in the correspondence of that summer: sometimes he was proposing to travel to Scotland, sometimes back to Holland and was even at one point intent on sailing for Scarborough.⁸²

The Royalist fleet, however, spent much of the summer in the Downs. Having initially feared the total defection of the fleet to the King, Parliament managed to

⁷⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

⁷⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2860; Edward Hyde to Lord Culpepper, 20 August 1648

⁸⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2866; Prince of Wales to the Company of Merchants at Rotterdam, August 1648

⁸¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2869; Lord Goring to Lord Treasurer Cottingen, 1 September 1648

⁸² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2871; Edward Hyde to Lord Goring, 2 September 1648

maintain a strong and viable Navy of its own. For the first time in the war, though, Parliament faced opposition from significant numbers of state ships.

In late-August, the two rival fleets of Warwick and Prince Charles came close to battle. That direct confrontation was avoided perhaps came as more of a blow to the Royalists, for thereafter they had little prospect of defeating Warwick's Navy. Some on the Royalist side certainly saw it that way, with the episode regarded as a missed opportunity. In mid-September the Royalist Dr Stewart composed an account of the fleet's movements that summer. He sounded a pessimistic tone: 'when wee came first to Sea, wise men thought wee might have been masters of it, had wee taken [th]e right way wch was oft enough suggested to us'.⁸³

That feeling of an opportunity lost was extended to the issue of prizes. Stewart's account bemoaned Hyde's cautionary policy of not relying too-heavily on prizes to sustain the Navy. He claimed that the Royalist fleet took possession of vessels worth between £100,000 and £120,000 in a six week period, but honoured the pledge not to interfere with trade and 'very curteously lett them all goe', reserving 'only' £30,000 or so to themselves.⁸⁴ That policy seemed sensible at the time, Stewart suggested, but in hindsight 'I cann perceive men as wise as ourselves laugh at us'.⁸⁵

Another Royalist account pointed the finger of blame at former Parliamentarians such as Batten and Jordan. Having joined the Prince's fleet, Batten spoke of his willingness to 'affront and battle Warwick' and expectations were high amongst the seamen that an advance would soon take place, 'but it suddenly cooled'.⁸⁶ The seamen were very upset that Batten and Jordan appeared to expend so much effort on striking bargains with merchants for the discharging of their ships, a policy which, in their view, helped bring about the Royalists' 'owne Ruynes'.⁸⁷ Some noted the familiarity between the erstwhile Parliamentarian officers and many of the merchants, with 'hardly a Shipp cominge in but was of kinne to one of them'.⁸⁸ Many of the mariners were outraged and Batten and Jordan were 'upbraided...to their faces' with accusations of corruption and treason, all of which helped to unsteady the fleet.⁸⁹

A further Royalist journal, which related events between 26 August and 2 September, confirmed that by late-August the fleet's victuals were close to expiring and

⁸³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁸⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁸⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁸⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

⁸⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

⁸⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

⁸⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

that the Prince's Council had decided the best course of action was to leave the Downs and refit at Helvoetsluys.⁹⁰ Some held the opinion that had the Royalists exploited prizes more aggressively then in the short-term the fleet might have been better-equipped to launch a knockout blow against Warwick's Navy. Such an analysis overlooked the advantages of not provoking merchant opposition.

Stewart's critical account of the fleet's campaign pinpointed a lack of clarity in Royalist planning, with suggestions that the King's 'Grandees' had kept others in ignorance of what was happening 'or they doe not knowe themselves the true state of their disaster'.⁹¹ Stewart was particularly scathing of what he regarded as an over-reliance on Scottish help, with other potential sources of help 'neglected, or worse'.⁹² Perhaps plans to sail for Scotland, whether realistic or not, distracted the Prince and his Council. The Scots had, of course, suffered a crushing defeat against Cromwell at the Battle of Preston in August and their ability to tip the Second Civil War in favour of the King was seemingly at an end. Following the Scottish defeat on land, it made little sense for the Prince to take his fleet northwards.⁹³

What was particularly intriguing about the events of late-August was the apparent lack of control which the Prince and the Royalist naval command exercised over the seamen. The initiative to try and engage Warwick's fleet had come from the mariners themselves. In Stewart's words, the Prince had been forced to delay the return to Holland 'by a very arrant Mutinie'.⁹⁴ He had begun to sail there in his flagship, but 'his Fleete turned taile to him' and led him up the mouth of the Thames, hoping to entice Warwick into battle.⁹⁵ Such actions were extraordinary and served as a reminder that those manning the ships of the Royalist Navy were both unpredictable and independent-minded.

As another account testified, the seamen 'would by noe meanes bee persuaded' to depart from the Downs.⁹⁶ The Prince warned that a contrary wind would leave them stranded up river and facing starvation, given that Warwick guarded the land, but 'noe Rhetoricke could alter this Madde multitude from their designe'.⁹⁷ So resolute were they that the fleet should advance up the Thames that they indicated a willingness to make do

⁹⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman's Journal of the Prince's fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

⁹¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁹² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁹³ J. P. Kenyon, *The Civil Wars of England* (London, 1988), p.192

⁹⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁹⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

⁹⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman's Journal of the Prince's fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

⁹⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince's fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

with half allowances, or even less. Given the frequent complaints about overdue and insufficient pay during the 1640s, perhaps that was not such a sacrifice and was more a pragmatic outlook. The ships' crews certainly had expectations of prize money if the fleet went into battle and the Prince could not ignore their demands.⁹⁸ In a report written for Hyde, it was suggested that some anti-Scottish elements amongst the Council had whipped the seamen into frenzy by letting them know of the Prince's plans to depart their fleet and sail to Scotland in a frigate.⁹⁹ He had quickly faced deafening calls to stay.

As a demonstration of the Prince's loose grip over the fleet, he and his Council felt the need to write to every ship asking the officers and seamen to promise 'not to deliver up his highnes'.¹⁰⁰ Prince Charles was worried that the mariners might have a change of heart once they encountered Warwick and he remembered well the imprisonment of his father the King at the hands of the Scots. Indeed, the Royalist officers 'much feared whether we were Prisoners or noe'.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, promises were made that the Prince would receive loyal service.

The mariners themselves were confident that 'their fellowes' aboard Warwick's ships would quickly forsake his service if they met their former counterparts.¹⁰² This optimism seemed to ignore the fact that those ships had not chosen to join the naval revolt earlier in the year. Warwick had, of course, been first to rendezvous with them, unlike the case with the rebels from Kent.

The Royalist fleet advanced into the Thames and Warwick directed his ships towards them. The Parliamentarians soon retreated, though, having perhaps underestimated their opponents' strength. Stewart put that down to Warwick having presumed that the Prince had taken much of his fleet to Holland, as intended.¹⁰³ When the Royalists came near the Parliamentarians, they signalled that Warwick should dispense with what they regarded to be a false admiral's flag.¹⁰⁴ The Prince reminded Warwick that the appointment of an admiral was in the King's gift, not Parliament's.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ Kenyon, *The Civil Wars of England*, p.192

⁹⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince's fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹⁰⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

¹⁰¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince's fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹⁰² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹⁰³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹⁰⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart's Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹⁰⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2880; Prince of Wales to Earl of Warwick, 19 September 1648

When the Royalists fired several shots as a warning, the Parliamentary retreat began.¹⁰⁶

Prince Charles won plaudits for disregarding advice to shelter in the hold, choosing instead to make himself visible to the men on deck. It was a shrewd move and made a good impression on the seamen, who rejoiced ‘beyond expression to see such admirable fruite in soe young a plant’.¹⁰⁷ The Prince’s visibility demonstrated solidarity with his mariners and may have helped counter some unease at the presence of distrusted former Parliamentarians such as Batten. More importantly, the seamen believed that the Prince’s presence was essential to counter charges from their opponents that the Royalist fleet was led by no figure of substance, or even a ‘conterfeit’ Prince.¹⁰⁸ They were perhaps gambling that Warwick’s sailors might find it irresistible to submit upon sight of a member of the royal family.

The Royalists gave chase for two days, but the wind and tide favoured the Parliamentarians and, in the words of Stewart, Warwick ‘could doe what he pleased & lett us plainely see that his intent was not to fight with us’.¹⁰⁹ The Royalist fleet, though, was very much in a posture of war, with the cabins knocked down to allow the guns to be put in place and ‘every Land man had his Station & Muskett’.¹¹⁰ For much of the pursuit, the Royalists had difficulty staying within three miles of their enemies.¹¹¹ On 30 August, however, Captain Jordan (in effect the Royalist vice-admiral despite Willoughby holding the title) was eager to initiate battle. But for a rapid deterioration in the weather, Jordan may have got his wish. ‘Being a greate Master at Sea’, Jordan had lined-up an attack against a Parliamentary ship.¹¹² A sudden gust of wind intervened ‘with much violence’, however, and both fleets were compelled to drop anchor.¹¹³ The two flotillas remained at anchor overnight, but the next morning, with heavy winds still bearing down, ‘[th]e Pr[in]ce perceiving hee could noe way’ engage Warwick’s fleet gave the order to pull back and sail for Holland.¹¹⁴ Some on the Royalist side had

¹⁰⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman’s Journal of the Prince’s fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

¹⁰⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

¹⁰⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince’s fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹⁰⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹¹⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince’s fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹¹¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman’s Journal of the Prince’s fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

¹¹² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹¹³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman’s Journal of the Prince’s fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

¹¹⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman’s Journal of the Prince’s fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

expressed concern that fighting ‘amongst shallows and narrow bounds’ posed too high a risk, whilst it was noted that on both shores the Parliamentarians had ‘Armed men’.¹¹⁵

The whole episode had turned out to be an anti-climax for the Royalists. The mariners’ confidence of large-scale defections from Warwick’s fleet proved to be totally misplaced, with no new declarations forthcoming for the King. Stewart’s judgement several weeks later was stark: ‘things yet look but very sadly’.¹¹⁶ Looking back on the decision to advance up the Thames, a Royalist journal reiterated that the impetus to do so had come from the seamen and argued that the strategy was a flawed one given the fleet’s very low supplies.¹¹⁷

In Stewart’s view, the terrible weather was a blessing as it forced the Royalists to retreat, at a time when their ships lacked enough drink to last two days and were due to run out of other victuals within four days.¹¹⁸ On the return to Holland, the Royalist Navy caught sight of ‘2 greate Shippes & 6 Friggottes’ which had been sent from Portsmouth to aid Warwick.¹¹⁹ Warwick himself had ordered his ships to track the Royalists’ progress, but was playing it safe and not hazarding battle at that stage. Stewart’s account paid tribute to the Prince’s luck: had the two Parliamentarian fleets known of each others’ proximity and had night not intervened, then ‘wee had beene lost betweene 2 Milstones & in all probability ground to powder’.¹²⁰

The possibility of the Royalist fleet being trapped between two rival squadrons was a real one, but the Royalists managed to pass by the Portsmouth ships overnight. There was anger in Royalist ranks that an attack had not been made against the Portsmouth contingent, which was numerically-inferior and also at anchor, as opposed to the Prince’s fleet being at sail. It seems likely that the Prince did not want to risk all in a ‘Darke Sea fight’ with Warwick’s fleet relatively close.¹²¹ As ever, some of the seamen seemed to clamour for a fight, but the officers made it plain that this time there would be no turning back, judging it to be ‘needlesse to engage amongst so many’.¹²² Yet weeks later, as the inquest into the campaign was under way, there were voices

¹¹⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

¹¹⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹¹⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2873; Mr Edgeman’s Journal of the Prince’s fleet, 26 August-2 September 1648

¹¹⁸ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹¹⁹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹²⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹²¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2878; Dr Stewart’s Relation of the fleet under Prince Charles, 17 September 1648

¹²² Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

cursing ‘how great an opportunity was re[j]ected’.¹²³ Reportedly, some of the Portsmouth frigates had been ill-manned and were there for the taking. In reality, though, the Prince’s Navy needed to return to base urgently, or else the victuals would have expired whilst still at sea. The time to strike at Warwick was probably much earlier in the campaign, when supplies were not scarce. The bombastic tone of some Royalist accounts seemed to assume that had battle been joined then the fleet of Warwick would have been crushed easily, a thesis that ignored some of the realities.

When the Prince reached Holland he met with a good reception, but Royalist fortunes seemed to have deteriorated. There was confusion over the direction of the war: ‘what is next to be done puzzles the wisest amongst us’.¹²⁴ Any plans to link up with the Scots were now shelved decisively and there was dismay at their setbacks. One Royalist summed up the mood towards them: ‘though I never much loved them, yet I am very Sorry, they being our only string to our Bow, it should be soe absolutely broaken’.¹²⁵ When the Scot William Lauderdale arrived with demands to take the fleet and rescue the King from the Isle of Wight, ‘it was noe more listened to, nor regarded, then if a dog had been sent’ and nothing was done to advance the project.¹²⁶ The fleet had been at sea for several months and had returned to base with very little to show for it. There was now little enthusiasm for a hazardous expedition, especially one championed by a discredited ally. Writing to the Queen on 22 September, Hyde spoke out against the Prince’s dalliances with the Scots that summer and said that it caused him ‘great perplexities’.¹²⁷

On 19 September, Warwick anchored his fleet near Helvoetsluys and kept a watch on the Royalist fleet.¹²⁸ It had been a frantic dash for both navies to reach the Dutch port, with the Royalists narrowly taking charge of the harbour.¹²⁹ He sent the Prince a summons which referred to the ships ‘having been by their respective Maryners carried away, contrary to their duty’.¹³⁰ Warwick obviously recognised the somewhat tenuous grip which the Prince exercised over the fleet: yes, the ships were currently loyal, but reminding Charles of the mariners’ forthright independence was designed to

¹²³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2879; Account of the fleet at sea under the Prince of Wales, 18 September 1648

¹²⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince’s fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹²⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince’s fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹²⁶ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2881; Relation of the management of the Prince’s fleet for Edward Hyde, 21 September 1648

¹²⁷ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2882; Edward Hyde to Henrietta Maria, 27 September 1648

¹²⁸ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.426

¹²⁹ C. Spencer, *Prince Rupert: the Last Cavalier* (London, 2007), p.196

¹³⁰ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2886; Earl of Warwick to Prince of Wales, 19 September 1648

undermine him further. The two navies were separated by a squadron of ships under the Dutch admiral Van Tromp, the United Provinces not wanting to see a major fleet engagement take place off its own coast. Warwick was maintaining a policy of caution, not wishing to risk his own ships, but hoping to keep the Prince's fleet bottled up at Helvoetsluys where it could inflict no damage on English merchant shipping and trade.

By November, the Royalist fleet was in increasing disarray. The Prince of Wales had gone to The Hague, where he received ever-more pessimistic notes from those still at Helvoetsluys. Prince Rupert, having returned to Royalist service during the ill-starred summer naval campaign, was now the commander of the fleet at Helvoetsluys. The remaining officers still entertained hopes of fitting out the fleet once more, but warned that 'it would not be possible to get Seamen to Carry it out, they beinge most of them runn away'.¹³¹ The reasons for desertion were simple and understandable: there was nowhere near enough food with which to feed the men, nor did it look likely that enough victuals would be found. Warwick was also happy to see his men infiltrate Helvoetsluys, where they could boast of the better conditions aboard Parliament's ships, the intention being to encourage as much dissatisfaction amongst the Royalist mariners as possible.¹³² On 10 November, Hyde wrote to the Prince saying that even if the fleet could miraculously be supplied '(wch we thinke impossible)' there was no port in England to which the Royalists could sail.¹³³ Some were already looking to take the ships further afield, with suggestions that raiding expeditions against Levant merchants would yield good profits. Such thoughts, though, demonstrated that the Royalists no longer presented a great threat in the English Channel.

Rupert had to confront a severe deterioration in morale amongst the seamen. When the Dutch squadron was posted elsewhere, Warwick's ships were quick to sail into the harbour and find berths not far from the Royalists. Their proximity increased the temptation for men to defect back to Parliament, with discipline becoming more of a problem. Rupert ordered his ships to anchor next to the shore, hoping that any Parliamentary gunnery would hit the town and 'p[ro]voke the Hollander'.¹³⁴ The Prince feared, though, that such measures would do little to harm Parliament and suspected that the agreement for neutrality in Dutch waters would be overlooked. The Royalists were starting to worry that the Dutch would actually favour Parliament: if

¹³¹ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2906; Lord Hopton and Edward Hyde to the Council of the Prince of Wales, 10 November 1648

¹³² Spencer, *Rupert*, p.196

¹³³ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2906; Lord Hopton and Edward Hyde to the Council of the Prince of Wales, 10 November 1648

¹³⁴ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2918; Sir Francis Dodington to Edward Hyde, 18 November 1648

Warwick's fleet swept away the Royalist ships at Helvoetsluys, few doubted that the 'Hollander wilbe easily made freinds wth a victorious Neighbour'.¹³⁵

Rupert apparently trusted his own men so little that he ordered some artillery to be transferred from his ships to onshore, where it could be formed into batteries which would keep watch on both Warwick's men and his own.¹³⁶ It was to no avail, however, as the majority of the Royalist ships soon abandoned their allegiance and crossed over to Warwick.

From that point onwards, Parliament was never again to be challenged seriously by the Royalists at sea. True, Rupert did put to sea again over the next few years, but direct threats to Parliament in English waters were not witnessed.¹³⁷ Parliament had weathered the naval storms of 1648 and the fleet would play a vital part in projecting English power abroad during the Commonwealth of the 1650s.

¹³⁵ Bodl., Clarendon SP, 2918; Sir Francis Dodington to Edward Hyde, 18 November 1648

¹³⁶ Spencer, *Rupert*, p.197

¹³⁷ See R. C. Anderson, 'The Royalists at Sea in 1649', *Mariner's Mirror*, 14 (1928); 'The Royalists at Sea in 1650', *Mariner's Mirror*, 17 (1931); 'The Royalists at Sea, 1651-1653', *Mariner's Mirror*, 21 (1935)

CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated that Parliament's victory in the English Civil War was aided by its control of the Navy and by the 'maritime preponderance' which that provided. Yet it would be wrong to argue that sea power alone was the foundation of Parliament's triumph: all of Parliament's key victories were won by its armies on the British mainland. The Navy, however, performed a crucial support role to Parliament's land forces throughout the conflict, with the transport of military supplies and reinforcements of manpower being targeted at the areas where the need was greatest.

The fleet's ability to supply Parliament's besieged outposts in times of acute crisis was demonstrated on repeated occasions: Hull and Lyme Regis, for instance, were only able to withstand heavy Royalist pressure because Parliamentary shipping was available to keep them supplied by sea, in spite of Royalist numerical strength on land. Comparatively weak garrisons such as these, then, could have been starved into surrender by the Royalists had Parliamentary sea power not been deployed in their defence. The military benefits of this were twofold: not only did the Navy prevent such outposts from falling under the King's control, but, by prolonging the operations there, it helped to tie down Royalist forces which might otherwise have posed a serious danger to Parliamentary territory elsewhere.

For example, by failing to capture Hull in 1643, the Royalist army of the North faced a dilemma: the threat, real or otherwise, that Parliament could land significant numbers of troops there, complicated the Earl of Newcastle's plans to march south, because there was a potentially serious threat to his army's rear flank. Therefore, sea power could help to maintain a Parliamentary threat to the Royalists in regions where the King's forces were in the ascendant. This was the case particularly in 1643, when the King's armies appeared capable of winning the war, but were unable to press home their advantages. To some extent, that was due to Parliamentary sea power helping to prevent the Royalists establishing the complete domination of a region.

Sometimes, the Navy boosted Parliament's ability to minimise a setback. For example, Prince Rupert's seizure of Liverpool in 1644, whilst striking a painful blow against Lancashire's Parliamentarians, was not as comprehensive a victory as it could have been. This was because Parliament had shipping available to ferry the governor to safety: some ammunition was also rescued.¹ Therefore, ammunition and weaponry

¹ S. Bull, *The Civil Wars in Lancashire, 1640-1660* (Lancaster, 2009), p.232

which Rupert had otherwise hoped to add to his arsenal, for the impending campaign to relieve the besieged Royalists at York, was denied him.

Less easy to measure in terms of its contribution to Parliament's victory, but of considerable importance nonetheless, was the fleet's protection of England's maritime trade.² The maintenance of trade during a time of war has always been essential.³ With privateers becoming ever more prevalent as the war continued, the Navy was called upon to offer safe passage to merchant shipping. Whilst it was obviously powerless to protect each and every merchant ship, the fleet nevertheless prevented the total interruption of trade by privateers. Had Parliament lacked tangible sea power, then the privateers would have been afforded free reign to block *all* trade, either import or export. That would have brought about a collapse in customs revenues, one of Parliament's primary sources of finance.

Whilst trade in the British Isles did suffer from the depredations of the war, the Royalists never had sufficient maritime strength to cut off Parliament's supplies. Parliament's greater naval strength, and the dominance of maritime communications which that provided, was deployed to interrupt the King's trade very effectively: for instance, when Newcastle was under Royalist control, a Parliamentary blockade did great damage to the local coal industry by stopping shipments from leaving port. Therefore, the King was denied the revenue which the coal would have raised. The average annual exports of coal from Newcastle in the pre-war years were sometimes as high as 450 000 tons, but, in the year to Michaelmas 1644, not even 3000 tons left port.⁴ Whilst Parliamentary London suffered from coal shortages as a result, the King suffered greater damage because of the lost revenue. The Navy's role was paramount.

The Navy benefited from the leadership provided by the Earl of Warwick. His popularity with the common seamen was a key factor in the fleet's rejecting the King in 1642. In terms of the naval dimension to the English Civil War, the events of late June and early July 1642 were arguably the most pivotal. Even before war was declared officially, Charles I had lost his fleet. One of the chief benefits of Parliament's seizing the Navy was a very simple one, the denying of a formal, state fleet to the King, which therefore prevented him from mounting a blockade of London, the chief centre of Parliamentary revenue.

² Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.176

³ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.160

⁴ S. Porter, 'The Economic and Social Impact of the Civil War upon London', in S. Porter (ed), *London and the Civil War*, p.186

The fact that Charles I never received the large-scale military assistance from continental powers which he wished for was testament to Parliament's Navy. Yet it would be wrong to argue that Parliament was able to maintain the unchallenged control of the sea, because, at certain stages of the war, the King was able to exploit the weaknesses of his opponents to mount effective maritime challenges. In any case, no Navy could establish the total command of the ocean.⁵

One of the most striking successes of the Royalists was the shipping of thousands of troops across the Irish Sea between late 1643 and early 1644. It was arguably the most striking challenge to Parliament's 'maritime preponderance' of the First Civil War. In spite of their numerous victories on land during 1643, the Royalists were in urgent need of reinforcements to continue the war into the next year, having sustained heavy losses and facing a struggle to recruit sufficient men in England. Warwick's warnings to Parliament, that its Irish Guard was bereft of resources, were proved correct, as the Royalists capitalised on the absence of Parliamentary shipping to ferry the reinforcements from Ireland to Wales and England. Parliament, however, under constant pressure from Warwick and his captains, mobilised resources effectively and sent a much strengthened Irish Guard to sea in 1644. Thereafter, the Royalists were, on the whole, blocked from transporting further reinforcements from Ireland to the main theatre of the war.

One point is worth making, however: some of the King's military successes *on land* in 1643 were advantageous in maritime terms also. The capture of Bristol, for example, not only gave the Royalists a new regional stronghold in the Southwest, but also an important port to which the reinforcements from Ireland were shipped. That meant that the Royalists did not have to rely solely on North Wales and Chester for that purpose. Thus, Royalist victories on land could place more pressure on Parliament's war effort at sea by forcing Parliament to stretch its resources more widely to try and counter the increased territorial reach of the King.

As the war progressed, though, Parliamentary victories on land, combined with greater naval capabilities, overturned all of the King's triumphs of 1643. In particular, Parliament's victory at Marston Moor (2 July 1644) signalled the defeat of the King's forces in much of northern England. Arguably, that relieved some of the pressure on the Navy to patrol the North Sea and its resources could thereafter be diverted to regions of greater need. To maximise its naval capabilities, Parliament needed success on land: the fleet would never be as effective working in isolation.

⁵ P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London, 1976), p.2

It is worth bearing in mind that had the King controlled the Navy, he would have been at liberty to transport to England much greater numbers of troops.⁶ Even when Parliament's Irish Guard was at its weakest, though, the Royalists were prevented from making the most of the opportunity because their own supplies of shipping were insufficient, thus limiting the total number of soldiers who were actually sent to mainland Britain.

Denied the Royal Navy, the King's only means of challenging Parliament at sea was to pursue a more ad hoc maritime strategy, whereby he contracted individual ship owners to take to sea on his behalf, or else reached agreement with leading privateers, such as John van Haesdonck, to raise small squadrons of shipping. In many cases, the recruitment of these privateers was done by local Royalists 'on the ground' who had trading connections to the continent. As discussed in chapter six, however, entering into a contract with privateers was often a straightforward process, but grievances, from both parties, were frequent problems thereafter. Haesdonck's long struggle after the war to recover moneys owed to him by the Royalists testified to the inability of the King to uphold his promises. This led naturally to some ship captains determining that further service for the Royalists was not in their best interests.

Whilst Warwick's ships captured Royalist vessels, and hampered the King's lines of supply from abroad, sufficient Royalist shipping managed to evade the Parliamentarian net and transport supplies to Charles' supporters. Whilst contemporary Royalist accounts bemoaned the lack of arms and ammunition, the King's forces nonetheless managed to take to the field. The machinations of Queen Henrietta Maria were integral to Royalist sea power making an impact: her efforts to raise funds and shipping on the continent, whilst encountering various hurdles and disappointments, proved successful enough that large quantities of military supplies reached England. Yet these supplies would have been far more plentiful had Parliament not controlled the fleet: thus the Royalist armies which fought in the Civil War were less well supplied than they could have been. As Capp argued, the Navy defined the terms of the war on land in Parliament's favour.⁷

Although the King lost out in the struggle to control the kingdom's most advantageous ports in 1642, the Royalists worked hard to redress that throughout the war. A key factor, of course, in Parliament's seizure of the best ports was its naval power, which provided the opportunity to intervene with force and also acted as an

⁶ Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.176

⁷ Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.176

encouragement to some ports to declare for Parliament out of economic pragmatism: the ports which threw in their lot with the King would come under blockade and thus their trade would suffer.

Yet the Royalists were resourceful and tried to maximise the opportunities afforded by lesser ports, such as Scarborough, often with success. When Royalist forces captured a series of strategically important ports in Devon in 1643, this provided the King with more widespread opportunities to land arms shipments, with the Cornish ports having already proved their worth in that respect. Royalist military strength on land ultimately proved too weak to defend the King's ports against an onslaught of Parliamentary military might, both by sea and by land, in the final years of the war. Parliament had the ability to deploy land forces in concert with shipping from the fleet, thus cutting off the Royalists' opportunities of escape. This was seen to great effect when Fairfax oversaw the surrender of the Southwest ports late in the war, whilst Batten provided naval support.

Parliament, having abolished the non-Parliamentary levy of Ship Money even before the outbreak of war, established the principle that the Navy should be funded as part of ordinary governmental expenditure, setting the precedent for future English maritime policy. Parliament's finances were higher than those which could be raised by the King, with its control of London being the primary advantage in that regard. It is estimated that, between 1642 and 1647, the Navy received £1,186,879 10s 5½d, with the vast majority of those funds, some £923,864 2s 10½d, coming from the Customs.⁸ The remaining funds came predominantly from the unpopular Excise of Flesh and Salt.

The fleet's costs always surpassed Parliamentary grants, however, with Warwick estimating expenses of £392,000 for the Navy in 1644 alone.⁹ The Navy therefore ran up considerable debts for Parliament, with the total debt standing at £220,000 in 1647.¹⁰ In spite of these financial burdens, though, and as a testament to its importance, Parliament never withdrew the fleet from active service, although it did employ various expedients to try and minimise the overall cost. Leaving the Summer Guard in commission was one such option: very unpopular with the seamen, it nevertheless bought Parliament time to raise more money when needed.

The Royalists had their chance to overturn Parliament's naval supremacy in 1648, with a large proportion of the fleet defecting to the Prince of Wales. Yet those who defected did so more out of exasperation with Parliament than out of support for

⁸ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.424

⁹ Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.176

¹⁰ Rodger, *Safeguard*, p.424

the Royalists. In many respects, the seamen who defected in 1648 held opinions broadly similar to those which existed in the Navy in 1642: there was unhappiness over pay and conditions (now directed at Parliament rather than Charles I) and a yearning for the King's powers to be curtailed, but not through the formation of a republic and the implementation of a Puritan regime.

The whole episode, though, demonstrated continuities with the Navy of pre-war England: seamen would protest when confronted with discrepancies of pay or conditions. Overall, however, conditions in the Navy improved during the 1640s, with wages being increased and greater provisions being made for sailors' health.¹¹ When such progress appeared to retreat, unrest could flare up.

Parliament's misguided appointment of the radical Colonel Thomas Rainsborough to the command of the fleet met with deep unpopularity amongst the seamen, with resentment being voiced about his religious outlook and the fact that he was regarded as an army man. The broad spectrum of opinion amongst the Navy's officers was that an accommodation needed to be made with the King, with William Batten the most notable exponent of this view. His defection to the Royalists was a blow, yet the majority of officers stayed loyal to Parliament, despite concerns over Parliament's growing radicalism. Whereas the bulk of the officer class had owed their positions to royal patronage in 1642, by 1648, every officer held his position by order of Parliament.¹²

The newly acquired Royalist Navy caused great alarm amongst the Parliamentarians. Yet infighting and mistrust between long-time supporters of the King, and the former Parliamentarians, such as Batten, who joined them, was instrumental in the failure of the Royalists to inflict a permanent blow against their enemies at sea.

Once more, Warwick's influence came to the fore: whilst he failed to prevent a number of ships from Kent going over to the King's party, his robust rallying of support helped to maintain the loyalty of sufficient shipping in Portsmouth, so that Parliament's Navy was not overwhelmed totally by mutiny. His recall to the command of the fleet in 1648 was perhaps long overdue. Having been forced to relinquish the Lord Admiralty in 1645, out of deference to the Self-Denying Ordinance, he had continued to exercise strong influence over the Navy, but his absence from direct command was probably detrimental to Parliament. Warwick was the victim of factions in Parliament jealous of his position in the Navy, with men such as Henry Vane Junior striving to place the fleet

¹¹ McCaughey, 'The English Navy', p.239

¹² McCaughey, 'The English Navy', p.239

under greater control by the emerging Independent party, something which accelerated after 1647.

Warwick's replacement at the head of the Navy, Batten, was a skilled commander, but, having not been appointed as Lord Admiral, he was compelled to pay more heed to Parliament and its multifarious committees. Much of Warwick's authority derived from his popularity with those who served in the Navy, whilst his status as Lord Admiral, from December 1643, had given him greater freedom to direct the fleet as he saw fit. It was telling that, in 1648, Parliament turned to him to subdue the naval revolt and, thereafter, to confront the Prince of Wales' fleet. A lack of coordination, and disputes over which strategy to pursue, combined with shifting loyalties and dwindling finances, ultimately ensured Royalist maritime failure in 1648. Warwick's measured response, however, was important in averting a Parliamentary catastrophe.

Yet Warwick soon found himself out of favour with the new republican regime which governed England in the aftermath of Charles I's trial and execution. Having played an important role in Parliament's victory against the King, Warwick wished to see the years of conflict resolved with a lasting political settlement and not by 'revolution'. Despite no evidence to prove their validity, rumours circulated that he had made his peace with the Royalists.¹³ Nevertheless, after Pride's Purge on 6 December 1648, Warwick harboured serious misgivings about the Rump Parliament and its exclusion from power of anybody deemed to be too 'moderate'. Failing to resume his place in the Lords signalled his disapproval. He acquiesced, however, by pledging his loyalty, but his commitment was, in Capp's judgement, half-hearted.

Warwick was dismissed from the Lord Admiralty on 23 February 1649 and played no part thereafter in the fleet of the Interregnum.¹⁴ His removal heralded a new era for the Navy, with the Commonwealth determined to overhaul the officer corps, as well as the administration ashore, to reward those who shared its political sympathies.¹⁵ 'Warwick's Navy' was no more.

Bernard Capp's comprehensive overview of the next period of English naval history, chronicling the years without monarchy, builds upon the themes discussed in this thesis and assesses how the Navy underwent notable changes.¹⁶ He outlined the new challenges facing the Navy: 'A fleet that had been sufficient to contain the cavalier

¹³ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.41

¹⁴ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.46

¹⁵ Capp, 'Naval Operations', p.187

¹⁶ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, passim

threat in the 1640s was too weak to face the hostility of the whole of Europe'.¹⁷ Clarendon elucidated the challenge which the House of Stuart would continue to present to the victors of the Civil War, even after Charles I's death: 'They had no sooner freed themselves from one, than another king [recognised by Royalists and supporters abroad as Charles II] was grown up in his place'.¹⁸ The abolition of monarchy in England provoked outrage across the Continent and the Rump recognised its dependence on the Navy to ward off any potential invasion from abroad and to compel foreign governments to recognise the new Republic.¹⁹ Whereas this thesis, then, considered how naval power was employed to help *defeat* the regime in England during the 1640s, Capp's study assessed how maritime strength was deployed to *uphold* the position of the English government throughout the 1650s.

As chapter eight of this work demonstrated, many of the fleet's officers held views similar to Warwick's, in that they wanted to see the King and Parliament reach an agreement to end the war. The rise to power of what many historians, including Rodger, termed a 'military dictatorship' was therefore viewed with great distaste by a large body of the fleet.²⁰ There was apprehension over the Navy's loyalty and how it would react to the upheavals of a new form of English government.²¹ Two-thirds of the officers were dismissed in 1649.²² The officers who replaced them were vetted carefully by the Rump and, as a consequence, the Navy became a highly politicised and partisan force, with ideology becoming a primary factor behind selection.²³ Capp apportioned 'political reliability' as the dominant issue.²⁴ The 'remodelling' of the officer corps, analysed at great length by Capp, was a direct response to what was discussed in chapter eight of this thesis: the Rump was determined to avoid any further naval mutinies.²⁵

Having removed Warwick from the Lord Admiralty, the Council of State opted to retain ultimate authority over the fleet and the title was not retained. Instead, the Council delegated command of the Navy to three trusted supporters, the colonels Robert Blake, Richard Deane and Edward Popham.²⁶ In a profound expression of the army's supremacy in English politics, the trio were described as 'Generals at Sea', whilst many of the fleet's ships were renamed to honour Parliamentary successes from the Civil

¹⁷ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.4

¹⁸ Clarendon, *History*, V, p.2408

¹⁹ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.3

²⁰ Rodger, *Command*, p.1

²¹ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.41

²² Rodger, *Command*, p.50

²³ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.2

²⁴ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.156

²⁵ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.396

²⁶ Lambert, *Admirals*, p.46

Wars.²⁷ In Capp's estimation, the 'subordination of the navy in an essentially military regime was manifest'.²⁸

The Navy grew in size substantially during the 1650s, as the Rump ordered a large-scale programme of shipbuilding. The threat from privateers was demonstrated throughout the 1640s and so, to confront their challenge more effectively, the new regime ensured that many of the new vessels pressed into service were fast frigates.²⁹ By the Restoration, in 1660, some 161 ships were owned by the state, a figure which exceeded, by some margin, the maritime strength of any previous English monarch.³⁰ The fact that so many ships were *owned* by the state, and not merely hired, represented a major change from previous practice, although it should be acknowledged that Charles I's Ship Money fleets, whilst far smaller than anything possessed by the Commonwealth, were composed mostly of purpose-built, state-owned vessels.³¹ Parliament, like the King, contracted numerous merchantmen during the Civil Wars, but the inefficiencies of this practice became clear: ship owners could be less willing to risk an engagement, given that their own property would come under threat. Furthermore, many of the ships which were hired were not in the best condition.

As Capp identified, the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the 1650s heralded a new era of naval warfare, characterised by engagements between great fleets.³² The dominant status of sailing warships was finally established.³³ Merchant vessels proved too vulnerable for the new age and that compelled the Commonwealth to accelerate the fleet's move away from its traditional reliance on merchant shipping. It should be recognised, however, that the policy of augmenting the fleet's maritime strength with merchant vessels began to be superseded towards the end of the Civil Wars. A ship building programme (eight new vessels were built under Parliament) and, much more widely, the addition of prizes into the fleet, anticipated the development of the Navy during the Commonwealth, when the proportion of state ships in the Navy far exceeded the number of private vessels.³⁴ The fleet which Parliament inherited in 1642 expanded to become the largest in the world by 1650.³⁵

²⁷ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, pp.52-54

²⁸ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.134

²⁹ Kennedy, *British Naval Mastery*, p.46

³⁰ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.6

³¹ Thrush, 'Navy under Charles I', p.11

³² Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.6

³³ Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, p.109

³⁴ McCaughey, 'The English Navy', p.243

³⁵ J. Black, *Naval Power: A History of Warfare and the Sea From 1500* (Basingstoke, 2009), p.39

Backed by the Navy in the 1650s, England became a major European power for the first time since the high points of the Hundred Years' War. Capp argued that the Navy, expanded to protect the 'revolution', developed into 'a major force shaping international relations'.³⁶ This thesis highlighted that opponents of Charles I's alliances with Spain in the 1630s were eager to revive the old Elizabethan ideal of war against the Spanish Empire: during the Interregnum, Cromwell's so-called 'Western Design' put that into practice. Cromwell saw English interests through the prism of Protestant ideals, with criticism of his foreign policy ignored.³⁷ Capp determined that the naval wars of the 1650s were 'ultimately more significant for what they portended than for what they achieved'.³⁸ They marked the beginning of a 'new age of naval might, colonial expansion, and gunboat diplomacy', all unforeseen results of the Commonwealth's supreme fears over its survival in the years following 1649.³⁹

Rodger made a telling judgement on the Commonwealth Navy: 'The core of the fleet was the great ships inherited from Charles I'.⁴⁰ The large vessels which were built during the Personal Rule, whilst not especially effective at combating piracy, were far better suited to the type of naval warfare which emerged in the 1650s. As discussed in the introduction, Charles, for all his other faults, arguably merits greater acknowledgement from historians for certain aspects of his impact on maritime history. The fleet he took such pride in, however, helped to bring about his downfall during the English Civil War.

Ultimately, it was the support role which the Navy provided to Parliament's forces on land which was perhaps its greatest contribution to the war effort, along with its pivotal role in protecting London. Essentially, the Navy did not guarantee victory for Parliament in the Civil War, but it was instrumental in preventing defeat.

³⁶ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.72

³⁷ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.112

³⁸ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.114

³⁹ Capp, *Cromwell's Navy*, p.114

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