Mobilization and the Power of the English Crown During the Wars of the Roses

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MOBILIZATION AND THE POWER OF THE ENGLISH CROWN DURING THE WARS OF THE ROSES

BY

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BA, University of New Hampshire, 2018

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

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By

Cory Szaro

University of New Hampshire, May, 2022

Historians of the period of the Wars of the Roses have long debated about the power of the English Crown relative to that of the nobility in fifteenth-century England. These historians have often based their arguments on outdated notions of “bastard feudalism” and supported them using biased narrative sources. This study draws upon the patent rolls and close rolls produced by the royal government to examine the different aspects of English military organization during the period from 1452 to 1477. The evidence contained within these sources demonstrates that military mobilization relied on the enduring authority of the Crown and its central administration. Expeditionary forces relied on the Crown’s ability to provide funding, transportation, victuals, ordnance, and specialists. Mobilization for coastal defense and other domestic service was based on the Crown’s authority to raise local forces via commissions of array. The maintenance and administration of garrisons required royal officers and constant funding. Whenever possible, the Crown funded military forces by granting access to local sources of revenue which it had the authority to manipulate. In short, the Crown commanded the manpower and resources which made English military forces function.
I. INTRODUCTION

Historiography

The period of the Wars of the Roses provides a fascinating opportunity to observe the operations of the English government in a period of dramatic change. The English suffered the dramatic loss of most of their lands in France; the mental breakdown of King Henry VI; the rise of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick; the series of betrayals and domestic conflicts between Yorkists and Lancastrians; and the repeated depositions of Henry VI and Edward IV in the 1460s. It is no wonder that this period has attracted the attention of political historians. One of the most prominent debates within the historiography of the Wars of the Roses is that which concerns the relationship between kings and their most powerful subjects. Recent scholarship on this matter is divided between those who see this relationship as contentious and those who see it as cooperative. The former, influenced heavily by K. B. McFarlane’s ideas about the nature of feudal government in fifteenth-century England, argue that the practice of bastard feudalism allowed “overmighty subjects” to challenge the Crown’s power and authority by raising their own private armies. The Wars of the Roses, therefore, were the ultimate expression of this conflict between king and nobility.

Michael Hicks, who follows many of the insights first developed by McFarlane, is a proponent of this view. He argues that overmighty subjects arose through “the weakness of contemporary kings” who “lacked the spare resources to throw against external threats and to maintain the armies and fleets necessary to deter, prevent, or defeat invasions.”1 Hicks describes the Wars of the Roses as a series of conflicts “fought between kings and the heads of the greatest noble houses” who raised private armies

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1 Michael Hicks, “Bastard Feudalism, Overmighty Subjects and Idols of the Multitude during the Wars of the Roses” in History 85, no. 279 (July 2000): 387-388.
via the mechanisms of bastard feudalism. Hicks states that the nobility and gentry, as a class, “commanded far more manpower than the king.” To bring this manpower to bear against the king, who individually possessed the largest household and greatest number of estates, the nobility formed factions. In this version of English history, the king was simply the most powerful of the feudal landlords who held a theoretical claim to everyone else’s allegiance. In Hicks’ words, “Bastard feudalism was power.”

Those who disagree with this portrayal of English society argue that the relationship between king and nobility was not inherently antagonistic. A leading proponent of the “cooperative model,” Christine Carpenter, argues that cooperation between the nobility and the Crown was a foundational feature of English government during the fifteenth century. She describes the nobility as “the essential linking point between command and enforcement” and nobles themselves as “the essential intermediaries between king and lesser landowners.” Additionally, the nobles “represented the realm to the king” and provided counsel. Carpenter writes:

[The nobles] willingly sustained the king’s power by placing their own at his disposal because they needed him, his majesty and his authority. Any society whose basis is land is very vulnerable to conflict and upheaval, which can destroy the land and its produce. It will need a system for regulating disputes and dealing with disorder, and in medieval England the system that evolved was the king’s. Equally only the king could guarantee the country’s safety against its enemies and lead it into foreign war… All landowners had to be sure that no-one but the king could use [the king’s authority], but the nobility needed this security most of all. Only the king could stand above the nobles and prevent them attacking each other. Ineffective rule nearly always resulted in disunity among the nobility.

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2 Ibid., 389.  
3 Ibid., 390.  
4 Ibid.  
5 Ibid.  
7 Ibid.  
8 Ibid., 39.
In short, “There was in fact a large degree of consensus binding together monarch and ruling aristocracy.” As Carpenter states, “To put it very crudely, kings and landowners were a ruling elite. They had a common interest in taking much of the country’s surplus for themselves, in keeping hegemony, and in maintaining a level of stability which would keep their lands safe... For all these reasons both nobility and gentry were bound to stand up for the powers of the monarchy.” There was little sense in rebellion when the stakes were so high.

A problematic feature of the historiographical debate regarding the political organization of fifteenth-century England, however, is the lack of attention to institutional structures. In particular, the military institutions of this period, who controlled them, and ultimately the basis of military power, have received very little attention from both the “antagonistic” and “cooperative” schools. The result is that many histories of this period discuss the relationship between the Crown and the nobility without discussing the records which show how military power actually worked. The exercise of military power is, after all, the core of the matter. The concept of bastard feudalism suggests that a powerful subject could rival the Crown through his own resources and independent military authority. This is the essence of both the “antagonistic” and “cooperative” models, which differ only in their arguments about whether the nobility saw its interests aligned with or against those of the Crown. However, the model of bastard feudalism is fundamentally flawed. Historians who explain the Wars of the Roses in terms of bastard feudalism have not devoted enough attention to the ways in which English armies were mobilized, transported, supplied, and fed. When due attention is given to these matters, it becomes clear that it was the royal government that maintained control over the military institutions of the kingdom, even under weak or incompetent kings such as Henry VI. Consequently, political authority,

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9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
based on military power, could only be achieved through control over the institutions of the royal government.

Sources

Traditional military histories of the Wars of the Roses focus on narrative sources to reconstruct the timeline of events and provide some information about the major battles of the period. Narrative sources are valuable for providing a chronology of events, but they suffer from a number of problems which make them unsuitable for understanding warfare and the institutional structures which made mobilization possible. First, the authors of narrative sources were driven by their own political agendas. These were not impartial witnesses and their accounts are often biased. Some of these biases are made obvious by the authors’ praise for the leaders of one side and denigration of those on the other side. Other biases, including a lack of interest in the details of military organization, are present but less obvious.

In contrast, the patent rolls and close rolls, produced by the royal chancery as part of the central royal administration and largely ignored by historians of this period, contain a staggering amount of information about how the Crown mobilized men, ships, ordnance, supplies, and provisions for military service overseas and within the British Isles. The patent rolls are especially useful, as they offer a running record of all of the letters patent issued by the Crown. The royal government used these letters to appoint officials, issue commissions, grant money and land, and otherwise project the Crown’s will throughout the kingdom. The close rolls for the latter half of the fifteenth century serve primarily as a record of grants. They contain less information about military matters than the patent rolls, but in some instances they offer information to support conclusions gleaned from the patent rolls.

This study draws upon these records to examine the different aspects of English military organization during the period from 1452 to 1477. The decision to focus on this period is based on
several considerations. First, there is the nature of the source material. The patent rolls are divided into collections as follows: 1452-1461, 1461-1467, and 1467-1477. Second, there were multiple significant events which took place during this period. Focusing on these sets of records allows one to examine two major expeditionary campaigns undertaken by two different kings: Henry VI’s mobilization for the Aquitaine campaign of 1452-53 and Edward IV’s mobilization for his invasion of France in 1475. Additionally, the turbulence of the intervening years offers a means of examining military matters related to coastal defense and domestic conflict. France raided Sandwich in 1457, domestic conflict escalated sharply in 1459, Yorkist rebels captured Henry VI in 1460, and Edward IV ascended to the throne in 1461.

An examination of the patent rolls for this period demonstrates that military operations depended on cooperation between the king, his most powerful subjects, and local authorities. Most of the retinues mobilized for foreign service were funded by the Crown, either directly or indirectly. There were exceptions to this, such as when Anthony Woodville, earl of Rivers, volunteered to lead a retinue to Brittany at his own expense in 1472. Even in this instance, however, Woodville received permission from the Crown to raise and lead his own force. Mobilizing naval forces relied heavily on impressment backed by royal authority, and most mariners served for royal wages. Again, exceptions prove the rule. The men serving at sea with the earl of Warwick during his time as “keeper of the sea” under Henry VI did so for “the earl’s wages,” but the earl received royal funding to raise and maintain his fleet. Once the earl became a rebel, Henry VI moved to seize the ships, men, and materiel he had raised. Domestic operations relied heavily on commissions of array to mobilize soldiers, which depended on cooperation between the Crown and local authorities. Additionally, war called for an array of specialists, laborers, and officers to produce, maintain, and transport ordnance and other materiel. Mobilization for war also required the levying of large quantities of food, the supply and transportation of which required
additional men and logistical planning. Again, mobilizing these men and resources depended on a system in which the king, or those who controlled the king, commanded his subjects’ obedience.
II. EXPEDITIONARY ARMIES

Raising Soldiers for Foreign Service

There is substantial scholarship on the mobilization of English men for continental service during the Hundred Years’ War. Historians generally agree that the Crown relied on the use of indentures to recruit armies for foreign service. An indenture was essentially a service contract between the Crown and an individual tasked with raising and leading a military force. Neil Jamieson observes that “there was a voluntary element in such service which was necessary to sustain a long war abroad.”11 In fact, this was “virtually the only way used in the time of Henry VI.”12 Anne Curry offers an overview of how the indenture system worked in her article, “English Armies in the Fifteenth Century.” She explains that “once captains had indented with the crown, the Exchequer was instructed to make payment, usually giving the captain half the wages due for his intended company immediately with the remainder being handed over at embarkation.”13 Royal officials took muster of the indentured companies before embarkation to ensure that the captain provided the agreed-upon force.14 Curry writes that “by 1415 the indenture format was well established as were the conditions of service,” although variations occurred to meet the circumstances of the present campaign.15 Such variations “also suggest that captains were keen and able to negotiate advantageous arrangements” such as “favorable replies to petitions” and payment of arrears for prior service.16

12 Ibid., 108.
13 Anne Curry, “English Armies in the Fifteenth Century” in Arms, Armies, and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War ed. Anne Curry and Michael Hughes (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 1999), 41. 39-68
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 42.
16 Ibid.
Additionally, there was the matter of the background of the individuals with whom the Crown decided to establish indenture relationships. “In some cases,” Curry writes, “the crown entered into only one ‘great’ indenture, usually with a leading nobleman, for all of the troops intended to make up the expeditionary army.”\(^\text{17}\) In other instances, “the crown indented with many individuals who promised to bring companies of varying sizes which together made up the army.”\(^\text{18}\) How retinue leaders recruited men is more of a mystery. Jamieson suggests the plausibility of retinue leaders focusing their recruitment efforts on “family members and local men.”\(^\text{19}\) As soldiers “either died or left” in the course of a campaign, they could be “replaced by soldiers recruited on the spot” in France.\(^\text{20}\) A large number of these soldiers were archers. Regarding the predominance of archers in the armies of this period, Curry argues that “archers were easier to recruit” in large numbers and cheaper to maintain than men-at-arms.\(^\text{21}\)

The patent rolls contain numerous entries related to the armies which Henry VI raised for service in Aquitaine in 1452 and 1453. Considering that the Aquitaine campaign marks an important moment at the tail end of the Hundred Years’ War, which has received considerable attention from military historians, it serves as a good place to begin an examination of the military systems that were in place during the Wars of the Roses. In his book *The Fall of English France*, David Nicolle writes that the force which John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, took in September 1452 to retake Aquitaine consisted of about 3,000 men.\(^\text{22}\) The evidence in the patent rolls provides information about how these forces were raised and maintained. Gervase Clyfton, knight and treasurer of Calais, was originally retained to serve with 1,000 men-at-arms and archers, the muster of which was commissioned in August 1452.\(^\text{23}\) In May

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 43.
\(^{18}\) Ibid.
\(^{19}\) Jamieson, “The Recruitment of Northerners,” 110.
\(^{20}\) Ibid.
\(^{21}\) Curry, “English Armies in the Fifteenth Century,” 45-46.
\(^{23}\) *CPR Henry VI 1446-52*, 583-584.
1453, however, Clyfton submitted an account claiming that his service continued for two months longer than the three months originally agreed upon, with the result that Clyfton paid 400£ out of his own pocket to keep his men in service.\textsuperscript{24} Then, after using his retinue to retake Bordeaux “and other towns and castles,” Clyfton hired 50 men-at-arms at a rate of 10 francs per month and 350 archers at a rate of 5 francs per month to serve as garrison soldiers to secure conquered territories for three months.\textsuperscript{25} The cost of retaining these men amounted to 675£.\textsuperscript{26} Clyfton thus claimed that he spent 1075£ and five months over what was agreed upon in the original indenture.\textsuperscript{27} To compensate him, the king granted Clyfton 500£ from the monies granted to the king by Parliament.\textsuperscript{28}

A similar account for Edward Hull, knight and constable of Bordeaux, also appears in the patent rolls. Like Clyfton, Hull was retained to serve with 1,000 men for three months but ended up retaining his men for an additional two months at the additional cost of 600£.\textsuperscript{29} Also like Clyfton, Hull hired men to serve as garrison soldiers to secure the fortifications that the English retook from the French. He retained 60 men-at-arms for 10 francs a month and 420 archers for 5 francs per month for three months, costing him a total of 765£.\textsuperscript{30} The portion of arrears which Hull received from the king was 600£.\textsuperscript{31} It is not unreasonable to suppose that Talbot also brought at least 1,000 men on the expedition, considering the leading role he played in the Aquitaine campaign. The earl of Shrewsbury was still owed 6797£ 18s 2 ¼d in arrears in April 1453, the outstanding portion of a grand total of 10,426l 4 ¾d spent in

\textsuperscript{24} CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 78.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 108.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
royal service on the continent over several years.\textsuperscript{32} The king allowed him to keep 800 marks a year from the wool subsidy collected at Calais as a means of repaying him over time.\textsuperscript{33}

These accounts, submitted after the fact, demonstrate several key points about the indenture system as it operated in the mid-fifteenth century. First, the accounts support much of what Curry and other historians have said about the matter. The initial indentures were between the king and the individual retinue leaders, who were in turn responsible for raising and paying their own retinues with the funds they received from the Crown. Clyfton and Hull asked only for payment of additional expenses, suggesting that they had already been fully paid what had been granted in their original indentures. However, the retinues continued service beyond the duration originally agreed upon between the military commanders and the Crown. Evidently, retinue leaders could petition the king to compensate them for serving longer than anticipated. In this case, the king was willing and able to grant some recompense. Clyfton and Hull each received close to half of their reported arrears, pending further certification.

The repayment of Talbot via the wool subsidy is demonstrative of another important aspect of war finance in fifteenth-century England. The king often preferred to grant payments from customs revenue and other local sources of income. Customs collectors and other port authorities were royal agents who held office by the Crown’s authority. The king, therefore, could direct his officials to pay certain individuals (or their agents) a portion of the monies they were supposed to collect on behalf of the Crown. This allowed the king to pay his military leaders over time rather than distributing large lump sums at a time when funds granted by Parliament were needed for other purposes.

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 116.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\end{itemize}}
This system, in which a king could establish indenture relationships with multiple captains and then pay them through various channels, including revenues granted by Parliament and fixed sources of income such as customs, is indicative of a strong centralized administration. Additionally, these forms of payment and repayment reveal some important elements of the nature of the relationship between the Crown and its military leaders. The captains themselves were men of high status who held important royal offices. These were loyal men performing military service as agents of the Crown, not mercenaries working for the highest bidder. The fact that their services continued beyond the terms of their initial contracts is demonstrative of their allegiance to the king. In these instances, the men had to pay their soldiers out of their own resources and wait until a later date to receive any reimbursement from the Crown.

The 1470s saw another flurry of military activity under Edward IV. There were, of course, preparations for the king’s campaign against France. Forces were being raised for service as early as 1468, years before Edward IV launched a large-scale invasion in June 1475. There was also a force raised to go to Ireland in 1474 and another in 1475 as part of a separate military campaign there. The records in the patent rolls suggest that the way in which Edward IV raised forces for foreign service in this period was not much different from the way in which Henry VI raised forces to go to Aquitaine twenty years earlier. By contrast, the expedition to Brittany in 1472 stands as an exception to the rule, made possible by the voluntary participation of the earl of Rivers. Even in this case, the primacy of the Crown is evident from the earl’s need to obtain a royal license to raise his own troops at his own cost. The other expeditions mentioned above all follow the familiar customs of indenture with the king, leaving the Crown as the ultimate guarantor of the pay of the soldiers being mobilized.

The expedition to Brittany was the first step in the king’s planned invasion of France. In October 1468, Anthony Woodeville was appointed “governor and captain of the king’s armed power shortly
proceeding to sea and elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{34} The king commissioned a nobleman and loyal Yorkist, William Hastings, and others to take a muster of Woodeville “and the king’s soldiers in his company” at Gravesend.\textsuperscript{35} John Fogge, a trusted knight with a history of loyal service to the Crown and the Yorkist faction, was among the officials tasked to do the same at Sandwich.\textsuperscript{36} Patent roll entries from the following year tell us more about these forces. An entry dated April 28, 1469 reads as follows:

Whereas by indentures dated 10 September last the king retained Walter, lord Mountjoy, to serve him and his kinsman the duke of Brittany in their wars against their adversary Louis calling himself the king of France for a period of six months, receiving certain wages for himself and his retinue, and this voyage to the duchy of Brittany was restrained by the king and the indentures were void and of no effect, and because the said lord Mountjoye received at the king’s command from the treasurer and chamberlains of the Exchequer certain sums of money for the wages of himself and his retinue he offered his service to go to other places at the king’s command, and the king desired him to serve him at sea with 1,000 soldiers for a quarter of a year and with 500 mariners in the company of Anthony, lord Scales, receiving certain wages, as appears in a writ of privy seal, and he served accordingly until otherwise ordered; the king hereby pardons to him all offences committed by him and all debts and accounts due from him to the king in this matter, although he did not serve for the full quarter of a year.\textsuperscript{37}

A separate entry from May 1469 notes that Woodeville was also retained on September 10 of the previous year “to serve [the king] by sea and land for the defence of the realm with 3,000 men and 1,100 mariners for the space of a quarter of a year, receiving certain wages for himself and the men and mariners, and with five lancers assigned to him beyond the said number.”\textsuperscript{38} As above, the king pardoned “all debts and accounts due from him to the king in this matter” despite the service ending earlier than originally agreed upon.\textsuperscript{39}

Later, in June 1472, Edward IV again turned to Woodeville. The king granted him license to “take 1,000 men at arms and archers out of the realm to Brittany and other parts beyond the seas at his own

\textsuperscript{34} CPR Edward IV 1467-77, 109.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 127.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 156.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
expense with certain captains appointed by him to go where he pleases.”\textsuperscript{40} The king also granted that “proclamation be made that anyone wishing to go to him has licence to do so.”\textsuperscript{41} This force was to aid the Bretons in their defense against a French invasion. The wording of the records suggests that the expedition was voluntary. Unlike the force raised in late 1468, this military effort does not appear to have been financed by the Crown. Additionally, the king’s permission to recruit for the expedition is explicit. All of this suggests that even a voluntary force, led and funded by a loyal earl, required the king’s blessing before it was considered legitimate.

The following month, Edward IV commissioned William, earl of Arundel, and others to take the muster of “the men at arms, armed men and archers in the retinue of Galliard de Dureford, whom the king has ordered to go beyond the seas to resist his enemies.”\textsuperscript{42} The king had appointed Dureford, a Gascon noble with a history of loyal service, “to the command of an armed power which the king is sending beyond the seas to resist his enemies.”\textsuperscript{43} In December, the king also appointed Robert Green, a knight, as “leader and governor of an armed force of men at arms and archers which the king has ordered to be sent to foreign parts for the resistance of his enemies.”\textsuperscript{44} These last two retinues were ordered by the king, suggesting that they were financed by the king according to the familiar indenture system.

The records of the mobilization of these forces highlight the importance of the role of the royal government in military preparations. The voluntary expedition by the earl of Rivers, despite being funded by the earl himself, required a royal license to be considered legitimate. The forces led by Dureford and Green were mobilized via royal indentures. When the time came for the main invasion of

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 339.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 356.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 342.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 363.
France in 1475, Edward IV continued to utilize royal indentures to raise troops. Fortunately, the planning for this invasion was well-documented. First, preparations for the invasion were preceded by yet another force raised by the king to assist continental allies against the French. In March 1474, the king appointed John Parre and John Sturgeon, both knights, to “take muster at some place near Suthwark of 13 men at arms and 1,000 archers whom the king has ordered to be sent beyond the seas to his brother Charles, duke of Burgundy.”45 This expedition to aid the Burgundians was soon followed by large-scale preparations for a royal campaign against the French. This included the recruitment of a very large invasion force, a major component of which consisted of archers. In November 1474, the king appointed commissioners to collect the monies which Parliament had granted “for the defence of his realm and subjects in part payment of the wages of 13,000 bowmen, each receiving 6d daily for one year.”46

Final preparations and musters for the invasion took place in May and June. In May, the king commissioned the earl of Essex and others to “take muster of all soldiers and others belonging to the king’s ordnance to be sent to France at a field called ‘Seynt Kateryns Mede’ and to certify thereon to the king with all haste.” 47 Retinue leaders for a campaign in Brittany were also established. In June 1475, the king appointed “John, lord Audeley, and Galliard Dureford, lord Duras, to the rule and governance of an armed force which the king has ordered to be sent to the parts of Brittany.”48 Another entry in the patent rolls describes the same two men as “captains of the army of armed men and archers” going to Brittany and grants them “power to treat in the king’s name with commanalties and persons willing to come to the king’s obedience” to avoid “shedding of Christian blood.”49 On June 12, the king commissioned the earl of Arundel and several others to take muster of this force near Falmouth, which

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46 Ibid., 496.
47 Ibid., 526.
48 Ibid., 542.
49 Ibid., 536.
was supposed to consist of “2,000 men at arms, armed men and archers.” A similar commission addressed to a different group of men went out on June 23, ordering the muster to take place near Weymouth. It is unclear from the patent rolls whether the original muster was rescheduled or if this was a second muster. That same month, the king commissioned a knight named John Scott and others to “take muster of 104 archers of the retinue of William Hastynges of Hastynges, knight, in any convenient place near Calais.”

In addition to this campaign in France, Edward IV organized a separate military campaign in Ireland. The records related to mobilization for the Irish campaign provide more evidence of royal control over military matters. In August 1474, the king commissioned a number of men including the loyal knight William Stanley to “take muster of the king’s knight Gilbert Debenham and 400 archers in his company whom the king has ordered to be sent to Ireland in any place near the city of Chester on 9 September next or within three days following.” Another force was arranged to cross to Ireland the following year. In April 1475, the king commissioned Stanley and others to “take muster of Thomas Danyell and 100 archers at the king’s wages and 120 archers at the wages of the inhabitants of Ireland, going to Ireland in the company of the said Thomas for the resistance of the king’s enemies, at any suitable place near the city of Chester on 11 May next.” Evidently, some were reluctant to serve in Ireland. There were a number of deserters from Debenham’s retinue who subsequently were to be pressed into service in Danyell’s. While Danyell’s force was being raised, the king ordered the arrest of John Rutter, John Obryth, and “others who have received the king’s wages from Gilbert Debenham to serve the king in Ireland in his company but have not yet come to the king’s service.” The men were to

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50 Ibid., 551-552.
51 Ibid., 552.
52 Ibid., 551.
53 Ibid., 491.
54 Ibid., 524.
55 Ibid., 526. Similar entry bearing the same date calling for the arrest of the same individuals on page 572.
be imprisoned “until they shall restore the said wages or find security that they will serve the king in the company of the said Thomas Danyell.”

The way the king divided the funding of Thomas Danyell’s retinue between royal wages and the wages “of the inhabitants of Ireland” demonstrates a degree of flexibility in the system. The matters related to the non-appearance of several of Debenham’s men is also fascinating. It is unclear whether the men innocently missed their muster or if they took their wages and deserted. The fact that they presumably received their wages in late 1474 and were subsequently targeted for arrest and imprisonment in April 1475 suggests that they had deserted. In any case, the delinquents had taken royal wages and were therefore the king’s soldiers, even if they were supposed to be part of Debenham’s retinue. Furthermore, they were offered a chance to serve in a different retinue to keep those wages. The Crown was more concerned with getting its money’s worth than it was with punishment.

An examination of the details regarding these expeditionary forces mobilized by Edward IV for campaigns in both France and Ireland demonstrates that the central authority of the Crown remained strong in the 1470s. Like Henry VI, Edward IV raised armies by contracting with loyal men of high status. Wages were established by indentures and paid by royal agents from a variety of royal revenue streams. Musters were confirmed by knights and local authorities who received their commissions from the king. Desertion attracted royal attention. Such a system was only possible with a centralized administration capable of projecting its authority and commanding the loyalty of those involved.

Mobilizing Ships

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56 Ibid.
As was true of mobilizing military contingents for service on land, the mobilization of ships for foreign service also depended on the authority of the Crown. In order to raise and coordinate large numbers of ships capable of carrying soldiers and ordnance overseas, the Crown relied on the royal right of impressment. This right was not available to anyone who did not act in the king’s name or hold delegated authority from the Crown. The patent rolls from the period of Henry VI’s Aquitaine campaign of 1453 provide a detailed example of how the impressment system worked. In May 1453, a ship owner named Thomas Martyn petitioned the king regarding his ship le Marie Buxyngham, which was forced to abandon a voyage to Spain in order to carry Sir John Talbot’s retinue to Aquitaine.  

A patent roll entry states, “Thomas caused the ship to return at his own costs of 7£ for the crossing of the said earl and his retinue to Aquitaine and to delay thirteen weeks, and spent 109s each week in victualling the ship and lost the freightage of his cargo, to wit, 28s for each tun, animating the possessors, masters and mariners of other ships ordained for such crossing to serve the king better.” Apparently, it was understood that ships pressed into service as transports would be free to load up with merchandise at Aquitaine before returning to England. The entry states, “the earl would not allow the ship to be laden with merchandise and brought back to England, as were other ships, but commanded it to be kept there because it was strengthened with 41 complete cuirasses, 73 bows, 129 sheaves of arrows, 9 cannons and 4 barrels full of ‘gunpowdir,’ to Thomas’ loss of 486£.” As recompense for his losses, the king granted Martyn customs-free shipping of wool from London and Southampton ports “whereof the customs paid by alien merchants amount to 200 marks.”

This account reveals specific details which are otherwise invisible in the more numerous commissions to arrest ships. The entry shows that a merchant ship already underway and loaded with

57 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 76.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
merchandise could be pressed into service at the king’s command. The ability of ship owners to have their ships “laden with merchandise and brought back to England” at the end of their service, which Martyn was denied, reveals another phenomenon. This was probably an incentive offered by the Crown which allowed pressed shipmasters to compensate themselves for lost time and cargo, freeing up more royal revenue which otherwise would have to be spent compensating petitioners like Martyn. The fact that Martyn’s ship was instead kept in service and “strengthened” with arms demonstrates that ships pressed for transport could be converted into military vessels through the addition of soldiers and armament. It is also worth noting that, again, the king granted customs privileges as payment of arrears.

Given the inconveniences laid out in Thomas Martyn’s petition, it is no wonder that shipmasters were not always enthusiastic about being pressed for military service. An entry in the close rolls demonstrates that sometimes the king needed to place a shipmaster under a recognizance to secure his service. In July 1452, “John Sharpp of Bristol the younger ‘marchaunt’” was placed under a recognizance of 1000 marks.\(^61\) The condition was as follows:

Condition, that with a ship called the ‘Marie’ of Bristol of 300 tuns burden or less, or with two ships each of 160 tuns or less and the men for them, he shall associate himself or his deputies with John earl of Shrewsbury and others in his company retained with the king to serve at sea for safe guard thereof and to resist the malice of his enemies, serving with them in that company all the time of their retainer, and not departing without licence of the king or earl, unless some lawful and reasonable impediment shall supervene.\(^62\)

In short, if John Sharpp failed to meet the terms of the condition, he would be forced to pay 1000 marks.

A recognizance was one way to ensure cooperation, but more direct threats were also used. In January 1453, the king commissioned Peter Boweman and John Breley, one of the king’s sergeants-at-arms, “to arrest all ships and other vessels of the portage of 50 tuns and under necessary to serve the king for the transport of an army appointed to go to Aquitaine, and masters and mariners for the

\(^61\) *CCR Henry VI 1447-54*, 360.
\(^62\) Ibid.
governance thereof, in the port of London and thence to Fowy and there, and to have the same brought
to Plymmouth by 19 February next.”⁶³ These ships were to be part of a fleet which was to carry an
expeditionary force led by John Talbot’s son, Viscount Lisle.⁶⁴ Apparently, London shipmasters dragged
their feet and missed the February deadline. In March, a commission to Gilbert Parre and Thomas Gille
appointed them “to enjoin upon all masters and mariners of any ships and vessels in the port of London,
who have received any prests to take an army to Bordeaux, that they sail without delay to Plymmouth
where they will take aboard the said army; on pain of forfeiture of the said ships and vessels and of
answering to the king touching all damage arising on account of such delay; and to arrest all rebellious
herein and take them to one of the Counters of London to stay there in prison, until the king order their
delivery.”⁶⁵

As these instances demonstrate, the centralized authority of the Crown was essential for raising
ships to carry Henry VI’s forces to France. Impressment was, at the very least, an inconvenience for
those being impressed. Without an administration capable of enforcing compliance, raising a large fleet
would have been impossible. The Crown was able to project its authority and command obedience,
resorting to recognizances and threats of forfeiture when necessary. And, of course, a centralized
administration allowed the royal government to coordinate the ships it impressed by instructing them to
rendezvous at specific ports.

The impressment system had not changed much by the time Edward IV was preparing forces for
his campaign in Brittany in 1468. In fact, there was even continuity in personnel. In August 1468, Adam
Godale and Peter Boweman were commissioned to “take ships and other vessels for the conduct of
Walter Blount of Mountjoye, knight, and certain soldiers going in his company to foreign parts, and

⁶³ CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 59.
⁶⁴ Nicolle, The Fall of English France, 47.
⁶⁵ CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 61.
masters and mariners for them, to be in the port of Portesmouth or any other port assigned by 28 September next. 66 These same two men were also ordered to secure ships for Anthony Woodeville, which were to be gathered at Gravesend. 67 As noted above, Peter Boweman had been actively engaged in the impressment system in 1453 when Henry VI needed ships to carry a force led by Viscount Lisle. This continuity is further evidence of the fact that the bureaucracy of the Crown remained strong throughout this period. As the remainder of this study will demonstrate, Peter Boweman was just one of many men who repeatedly acted as royal officials throughout this period.

Sometimes, however, the Crown decided to send commissions directly to the owners of ships. In June 1472, around the time Woodeville’s voluntary expedition to Brittany, discussed above, received royal approval, the king commissioned numerous shipmasters to “take” mariners for their ships. 68 Interestingly, the commissions were sent to the shipmasters by name, with the names of their ships also specified. The intended role of these ships is not clear in the patent rolls. The only reason given in the entries is “for the resistance of the king’s enemies.” 69 Because the expedition led by the earl of Rivers was to be funded by the earl rather than the Crown, it is likely that the earl was responsible for securing transportation for his troops. In the same month, however, the king appointed John Kyryell, John Cole, and William Fetherstone “to the command of an armed power which the king is sending to sea to resist his enemies and rebels.” 70 John Fogge and others were appointed to take muster of the “men at arms, archers and mariners” of the said men near Sandwich. 71 This appears to be part of a defensive naval force. The commissions to shipmasters were probably intended to provide ships for this purpose rather than for Woodville. It is likely, however, that once he had retained Galliard de Dureford and Robert

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66 CPR Edward IV 1467-77, 105.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 355.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 340. Richard Haute, Philip Dymmer, and Edward Brampton were added to the list of commanders a little over a week later.
71 Ibid.
Green, the king was able to divert some of those ships to carry their retinues across the channel. In any case, sending commissions directly to shipmasters was a clear projection of the Crown’s authority to impress any ship of the realm as deemed necessary by the royal government.

Preparations for the 1475 invasion of France involved the familiar use of widespread impressment. In December 1474, the king commissioned Thomas Markham “to examine all ships and vessels of the partage of 16 tons and over in any ports, places and creeks in the ports of London and Sandwich and from thence by the sea coast to the port of Bristol and to certify thereon to the king and council with all speed and to take and impress them at his discretion for the conduct of the king’s army and ordnance to France.” A similar commission was sent to Richard Exton regarding ships “in the water of Lye to Orwell and from thence by the sea coast to the port of Newcastle on Tyne.” Commissions to procure ships continued throughout the months leading up to June 1475. In January, the king sent commissions to the masters and pursers of specific ships which instructed each recipient to “take mariners for the conduct of the said ship and workmen for its repair, as the king is going with an armed force to France for the recovery of his right there.” In February, the king issued similar commissions to the master and purser of “a ship of the king called Grace Dieu” as well as the master of “a ship called Marye Asshe.” An undated entry, but one which was almost certainly issued in the same timeframe, shows that Alvred Cornburgh was commissioned to “seize all ships of the portage of 16 tuns and over in any ports, creeks and places of the counties of Devon and Cornwall and the town of Bristol and take them to the Thames and elsewhere at the king’s command for the conduct of the king’s army to France, and to take masters and mariners for their governance and to arrest and imprison the disobedient.”

This entry is followed by commissions to Thomas Markham and Richard Exton which appear to be

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72 Ibid., 493.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 494.
75 Ibid., 495.
76 Ibid.
renewals of their previous commissions to impress ships.\textsuperscript{77} In April, the king sent a commission to John Shout, Richard Exton, and Richard Till “to take any ships along the sea coast from Lyght and Wakeryng in the hundred of Rocheford by the whole county of Essex and the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincoln to the town of Kyngeston on Hull and masters and mariners for their governance and sufficient gear and to bring the ships to the port of Suthampton with all haste.”\textsuperscript{78} Similar commissions went out regarding ships “along the sea coast by the counties of Devon and Cornwall” and “in the river Thames from the city of London to Gravesende and thence to Sandewich and thence by the sea coast to Mynehede.”\textsuperscript{79} In May, William Brambyll and John Kyryell were appointed to “take mariners for a ship called la Fawekon.”\textsuperscript{80} Other commissions to shipmasters and pursers of specific ships went out the same month.\textsuperscript{81} In late August 1475, the king commissioned Thomas Usher and Geoffrey Kent to “take certain ships in certain ports and creeks of the counties of Essex and Suffolk and masters and mariners and gear for them and to take them to the port of Calais with all haste.”\textsuperscript{82} Presumably, this unspecified number of ships was meant to support William Hastings’ retinue, the muster of which was ordered to take place at Calais the month prior.

In addition to all of these ships, which were mobilized to support the king’s invasion of France, numerous additional ships were raised for service between February and July 1475 for other purposes. Whereas the abovementioned ships were raised “for the conduct of the king’s army to France,” there were commissions sent to shipmasters, pursers, and captains on February 27, February 22, and March 3 which vaguely state that their ships were to serve “for the conduct of an armed force which the king has ordered to go to sea.”\textsuperscript{83} In April, John Dynham was appointed “to the command of an armed force which

\begin{footnotes}
\item[77] Ibid.
\item[78] Ibid., 525.
\item[79] Ibid.
\item[80] Ibid., 426.
\item[81] Ibid., 525-526.
\item[82] Ibid., 552.
\item[83] Ibid., 496.
\end{footnotes}
the king has ordered to go to sea to resist his enemies.”84 A patent roll entry shows that in July the king was indebted to John Wethepoll and John Jaye, “who at the king’s command prepared five ships of their with mariners to resist the king’s enemies of France at sea and continued in the king’s service at sea from 3 February to 10 July at their own expense.”85 The king owed the two men 190l 15s, which he repaid by granting them shipping in the ports of Bristol and Hampton “quit of customs and subsidies to the said sum.”86 The king was also indebted to Thomas Gale, who served with two ships “from 10 February last until 10 July.”87 In this instance, the total of 35£ 11s 2d was repaid with customs-free shipping in the ports of Exeter and Dartmouth.88 Given the vague wording of the records regarding the ships’ purpose, it is likely that they served as a defensive fleet.

The mobilization of ships for the Ireland campaign followed the same pattern. Ships were impressed for the retinues of Gilbert Debenham and Thomas Danyell in 1474 and 1475. In August 1474, Edward IV commissioned Robert Boolde and others to “take ships and vessels for the conduct of certain men at arms and archers whom the king has ordered to be sent to Ireland in the company of Gilbert Debeham, king’s knight, to resist the king’s enemies and rebels there, and masters and mariners for the same.”89 For Danyell, the mayor of Chester and others were to “take ships and other vessels... and masters and mariners for the same in the ports of Chester, Conway and Beawmarres and ‘bowyers’ and ‘flecchers’ and other workmen for the artillery.”90

As mentioned above, it appears that there were two methods of impressment available in this period. First, the king could send commissions directly to individual shipmasters instructing them to
provide specific ships with full crews. This allowed the king to specify the ships to be impressed and
delegate the task of procuring mariners to the shipmasters. Of course, this system required that the
king’s officials had a clear record of the ships, their tonnage, and their owners in the individual ports
where the crews and vessels were to be mobilized. Additionally, a direct commission to a named
individual may have ensured cooperation in a way reminiscent of how Henry VI placed a recognizance
on John Sharp. A shipmaster receiving a royal commission addressing him by name was unlikely to drag
his feet or feign ignorance. The other method available to the king was the familiar use of royal
commissioners appointed to impress ships within the realm at their own discretion. For this, the Crown
could draw from a host of men with a history of service. The fact that the same men served from reign
to reign, even during the transition from Lancastrian to Yorkist rule, indicates the institutionalization of
the process. Both methods of impressment were made possible by the authority of the Crown as a
centralized administrative force capable of projecting its will and commanding obedience.
III. DEFENSIVE ARMIES

Raising Forces for Coastal Defense

Domestic military matters also received considerable attention from the Crown. The defensive military organization of England during the fifteenth century was based on the need to defend the coasts against foreign invasion.\footnote{For an in-depth discussion of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century origins of England’s coastal defense system, see A. Z. Freeman, “A Moat Defensive: The Coast Defense Scheme of 1295” in \textit{Speculum} 42, no. 3 (July 1967): 442-462.} The burden of coastal defense was, unsurprisingly, born primarily by the southern localities. Anne Curry notes that throughout the Hundred Years’ War, “the south coast formed the first line of defence, bearing the brunt of enemy attack and the burden of maintenance of fortifications as well as the \textit{ad hoc} provision of soldiers through the commissions of array.”\footnote{Anne Curry, “Southern England and Campaigns to France, 1415-1453” in \textit{The Fifteenth Century, XVIII: Rulers, Regions and Retinues; Essays presented to A. J. Pollard}, ed. Linda Clark and Peter Fleming (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2020): 134. 133-149} Because of their strategic location, southern coastal towns and cities needed to consider military preparedness. Curry notes that the local authorities in places like Dover, Canterbury, Southampton, and Sandwich invested in military infrastructure with a focus on improving fortifications, acquiring guns, and maintaining “urban defence forces” with regular musters.\footnote{Ibid., 134-135.} Randall Moffett’s article on Southampton utilizes the administrative records from that town to examine defensive preparations on a local level, demonstrating that “ever improving and acquiring more and more equipment was one way in which the town of Southampton was able to fulfil its military obligation by strengthening all military aspects of the town.”\footnote{Randall Moffett, “Military Equipment in the Town of Southampton During the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries” in the \textit{Journal of Medieval Military History} 9 (2011): 199. 167-199}
Having towns like Southampton, fully invested in military preparedness, was undoubtedly beneficial to the Crown in providing for the defense of the realm. The localities had an interest in their own defense against foreigners. This meant that local authorities were more than willing to cooperate with the Crown when the threat of foreign invasion loomed. The events of 1457, as recorded in the patent rolls, demonstrate how the Crown mobilized ships and local levies to organize coastal defense.

In April of that year, several royal sergeants-at-arms, along with the customs officers and water-bailiffs in the ports of Sandwich, Dover, Winchelsea, and London, were commissioned to “arrest all ships and other vessels of the portage of 30 tuns and over in the said ports to resist the king’s enemies who daily presume to attack divers parts of the realm and other places subject to the king.” In February, Henry VI commissioned John Lisle and others to “array all men of the Isle of Wight and to cause wards and watches to be kept in the usual places to resist invasion of the king’s enemies, and to commit to prison all who refuse to keep such wards and watches.” A similar commission went out to Thomas Kyryell and others in May, instructing them to “cause watches to be kept on the seacoast of Kent and especially between the towns of Dover and Rumney by all who are held to keep such watches, the king’s enemies having attacked the said parts.”

The situation escalated at the end of August, when a French force attacked Sandwich in Kent. The Crown responded by sending commissions to the mayors and bailiffs of Great Yarmouth, Pole, Portsmouth, Southampton, and Winchelsea instructing them to “cause watches and scouts to be stationed day and night in the more convenient places” for the “safe-keeping and defense of the said

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95 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 349.
96 Ibid., 347.
97 Ibid., 348.
98 For a discussion of the political significance of this French raid and the subsequent rise of Richard Warwick, see Colin Richmond, “The Earl of Warwick’s Domination of the Channel and the Naval Dimension to the Wars of the Roses, 1456-1460” in Medieval Ships and Warfare (2008): 175-193. Richmond views the French attack as the event which “undermined English confidence” in the government of Henry VI and bolstered “popular enthusiasm for the Earl of Warwick’s ‘inspiring defence of the sea.’”
towns against invasion of the king’s enemies.” Similar commissions were sent to the captains of the garrison at Guernsey and Jersey. At the same time, John Fastolf was commissioned to “attend to the defence of Great Yarmouth and the adjacent parts.” Henry Bourghchier, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and several prominent knights were appointed to “gather all lieges of the king in Kent to resist the king’s enemies who have attacked that county with a great army.” The king also commissioned the earl of Arundel and others in Sussex to “array and try all men at arms and other fencible men, both hobelers and archers, within the county, and to lead them to the sea coast and elsewhere in the county to resist the king’s enemies, and to take muster of the same from time to time, and to cause ‘bekyns’ to be set up in the usual places.”

Throughout the following months, the royal government endeavored to make sure that forces were ready to defend the coasts. At the beginning of September, commissions of array went out to the hundreds within the county of Southampton, instructing the recipients to “array and try all men at arms and other fencible men, as well hobelers as archers... and lead them to the seacoast and other places in the county to resist the king’s enemies.” Watches were to be kept and beacons set up “in the usual places.” John Lisle and Henry Bruyn received a commission of array for the defense of the Isle of Wight and Porchestre castle. Others were sent for the defense of Wilts, Somerset, and Dorset. Later in the month, a similar commission went to Humphrey, “constable of Dover castle and warden of the Cinque Ports” and others in Kent. Similar commissions of array were sent to counties all over

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99 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 371.  
100 Ibid.  
101 Ibid.  
102 Ibid.  
103 Ibid.  
104 Ibid., 400-401.  
105 Ibid.  
106 Ibid., 405.  
107 Ibid.  
108 Ibid., 401.
England. Edward Neville was appointed to “the keeping and defence of Wynchelse, with power to array and try the king’s lieges of that town and of Sussex.” The next day, the king sent a commission to John Roger, Thomas Hestall, and William Armurer “appointing them to purvey bows, arrows, arrowheads, cords, guns, ‘gonpowder, crosbowes,’ and ‘sulphur, saltpetyr and camfer’ for making ‘gonpowder’ and workmen, artificers and labourers for the working of ‘gonpowder’ and other things and stuffs for the munition and defence of Dover castle and the adjacent ports.”

Maintenance and preparations continued well into the following year. In February 1458, the earl of Arundel and others were commissioned to “assign watches by the sea coast in Sussex and to cause the ‘bekyns’ in the county to be repaired and if necessary others to be made and put in the usual places.” In July, the king sent a commission to the mayor of Norwich and others “reciting that the walls and turrets of the city are broken and the ditches under the walls and river of the city are obstructed by weeds and rubbish thrown therein.” The royal writ instructed them to “survey the walls and turrets and clear the ditches and river and repair the former for the defence of the city and adjacent parts and to compel all residents to contribute thereto and to arrest labourers and carts, committing to prison all contrary herein.”

This ability to mobilize and coordinate local populations for coastal defense further demonstrates the authority of the Crown regarding military matters. Throughout these months of defensive action against a foreign threat, the Crown directed military matters from the center by issuing commissions of array to earls, knights, local authorities, and other men of status. These men projected the Crown’s authority into the localities in order to raise and coordinate defensive militias. The Crown

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109 Ibid., 401-403.
110 Ibid., 401.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid., 436.
113 Ibid., 441.
114 Ibid., 441.
also directed men to purvey armaments, mobilize ships, and organize work parties to repair and maintain fortifications. Without a centralized administration to coordinate a larger defense, each locality would have been left to defend itself. This was not the case in 1457.

Meanwhile, Henry VI’s government endeavored to bolster England’s naval defenses. On September 5, the crown commissioned the “mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, and commonalty of London” to “gather the men they propose to raise against the king’s enemies at their own costs, and to arrest any vessels and ships and masters and mariners necessary for them, and to array and try the men at a certain place and take the muster of the same, and to lead them against the said enemies.” 115 On October 3, the Crown commissioned the earl of Warwick “to go on the sea with an armed force and to govern the same and war against the king’s enemies.” 116 Over the following weeks, the government began impressing ships. The Crown commissioned men to “arrest the ships and other vessels and masters and mariners necessary for an armed force ordered to go on the sea against the king’s enemies, the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of London having prepared certain men to go with the said army.” 117 Others were appointed to “arrest and set mariners aboard certain ships in the port of Hull.” 118 Individual shipmasters were commissioned by name to “arrest mariners... to serve against the king’s enemies.” 119 Thomas Everyngham and James Knyghley were appointed to “arrest all ships and vessels in the port of Kyngeston upon Hull to serve against the king’s enemies.” 120 The mayor and sheriff of Bristol received a commission to “arrest all ships and vessels” in the port there, as well as “carpenters with their instruments to serve for the repairs thereof, and 300 shovels and tribulas tipped with iron and 100 ‘pykeys.’” 121 A commission to Richard Grayell and Robert Chattok instructed them to not only take ships

115 Ibid., 405.
116 Ibid., 390.
117 Ibid., 404.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid., 404-405.
120 Ibid., 405.
121 Ibid.
and mariners, but also to “purvey wheat, beer, ale, flesh, fish and other wholesome victuals for the victualling of such ships and vessels.”¹²² Evidently, Gervase Clyfton once again provided men for service. A commission to Henry Auger and others instructed them to take ships “necessary for the conduct of Gervase Clyfton, knight, and certain men in his company, appointed to go on the sea to resist the king’s enemies.”¹²³

In December 1457, the Crown delegated the task of keeping the sea to the earl of Warwick. The king commissioned Richard as follows:

Commission to the same earl, by advice and assent of the council, appointing him to go on the sea according to the tenour of indentures made between the king and him, to war against the king’s enemies and to govern all of his retinue and others flocking to him and to punish delinquents and to arrest pirates and spoilers of merchants and fishermen both English and foreign with their ships and vessels, and to punish the same, and to arrest sufficient vessels and ships to serve at the usual wages and masters and mariners for the governance thereof and the victuals necessary in this behalf during a term of three years according to his appointment on 26 November last.¹²⁴

This commission included “power... to come to terms with any places and districts of the king’s enemies, provided it be not prejudicial to the captain of Calais or his lieutenant there.” The commission also guaranteed that “if he or any of his retinue acquire any place or fortalice of the king’s enemies and the same be afterwards recovered, he or any of his retinue shall not be impeached for treason.”¹²⁵

Colin Richmond argues that Richard was “entirely independent” from the Crown, receiving negligible financial support and single-handedly raising and maintaining his own fleet.¹²⁶ However, this interpretation is not consistent with the information provided in the patent rolls and close rolls.

Although the earl of Warwick was granted a great deal of power, he did not operate entirely without

¹²² Ibid., 404.
¹²³ Ibid., 403.
¹²⁴ Ibid., 413. Again, for a discussion of the political significance of Warwick’s position as keeper of the sea, see Richmond, “The Earl of Warwick’s Domination of the Channel.”
¹²⁵ CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 413.
royal supervision and support. To help fund this endeavor, the king granted Richard “all subsidies of ‘tonnage’ and ‘poundage’ in any ports of the realm except the ports of Suthampton and Sandwich.”

Additionally, the Crown did send out orders to help provide for the earl’s fleet. In April 1458, the king commissioned John Nanfan and others to “arrest the carpenters, smiths, ‘gunners’ and other workmen necessary for the repair and munition of a ship called la Grace Dieu, which will sail with a fleet ordained to resist the king’s enemies, and mariners for the governance thereof from the port of Bristol to the sea, to serve for the money of Richard, earl of Warwick.” The commissioners were also to “purvey victuals, timber, iron, nails, ‘gunnes’ and powder for the same.” In March 1459, Henry Auger and others were commissioned to “arrest masters and mariners for the governance and conduct of certain ships and vessels going on the safe-keeping of the sea in the company of Richard, earl of Warwick, or his lieutenant, to serve at the earl’s wages.” They were also instructed to “purvey wheat, meal, ale, beer, salt, flesh and fish and other victuals necessary for the victualling of the said ships and vessels, and cannons, powder for cannons, ‘saltpetre,’ sulphur, coals, fuel, timber, arms for attack and defence, and carriage.” In the same month, the king sent out two similar commissions to “arrest masters and mariners” and “purvey victuals” for Richard’s fleet. Notably, these commissions were dispatched by the royal government and not by the earl of Warwick. Without the mobilization of a vast array of manpower and supplies provided through the administration of the royal government, it is not clear that the earl would have been able to carry out the military duties that had been assigned to him by the Crown.

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127 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 413.
128 Ibid., 439.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid., 494.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid., 495-496.
After Richard openly sided with the Yorkists, the Crown moved to recover as much of the materiel collected by the earl as possible. In December 1459, the Crown sent a commission to John Judde instructing him to “seize all ordnance and habiliments of war late of Richard, late duke of York, Richard, late earl of Warwick, and Richard, late earl of Shrewsbury” and to “visit all castles, fortified towns and fortalices in the realm and survey the ordnance and habiliments of war therein and repair those that are insufficient by indentures to be made between him and the constables or keepers thereof.” The king also commissioned the duke of Buckingham and several trustworthy knights to “cause all ships and vessels in the port of Sandwich late of Richard, earl of Warwick, to be safely kept by a fit number of gentlemen and others of Kent, so that they be not taken thence, and specially in ‘le Sprynge’ tides.” Richard Grayell, one of the commissioners, was instructed to “take masters, mariners, carpenters and smiths and other necessary for the keeping of the said ships and to arrest all wheat, flour, ale, beer, oxen, sheep and other flesh, fish and victuals bought by the earl for the victualling of the ships.” In March 1460, John Hadilsey was commissioned to “arrest divers harnesses and habiliments of war, to wit, bows, arrows, crossbows, ‘jakes,’ pikes, cuirasses, ‘brygandynes,’ darts, lances, ‘glayves,’ ‘lancegayes,’ cannons and powder therefor and other things purveyed for the defence of a ship called la Grace Dieu, and certain tackleing of the ship and meal of no small quantity for victualling the ship; certain evildoers having taken the same.”

From these records related to the earl of Warwick’s service as keeper of the sea, it is clear that the Crown never relinquished its power over matters of naval defense. The earl was granted license to act in the Crown’s best interest, receiving royal support as needed. When he rebelled, the Crown quickly moved to assert its authority over the fleet which the earl had raised. Warwick’s fleet was a projection

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133 Ibid., 527.
134 Ibid., 525-526.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 554-555.
of the Crown’s authority, not evidence of its weakness. Furthermore, the Crown still had a pool of loyal men and ships to draw from even after losing the loyalty of Warwick.

After Warwick turned rebel, Henry VI raised additional forces to keep the sea against him. In December 1459, the Crown sent a commission to Richard Woodville, Thomas Broun, and the mayor of Sandwich instructing them to “take near Sandwich the muster of the men at arms and archers ordered to go on the safe-keeping of the sea in the company of Gervase Clyfton.”

A similar commission to Thomas Broun, Thomas Kyryell, and others called for the muster of men “ordered to go on the safe-keeping of the sea in the company of Richard Wydevyle of Ryvers, knight, as above.” The next day, William Scot was commissioned “for one year... to arrest ships and other vessels necessary for the conduct of two hundred men at arms to go with him on the sea to resist the king’s enemies who do hurt to the king’s subjects and specially to fishermen and other seagoers and dwellers by the coast, and for the safe-keeping of Wynchelsee.” The commission included instructions to “arrest masters and mariners... provided that no victuals, men, arms, horses, fuel or any other thing be taken in such ships for the maintenance, victualling, fortification or relief of Calais.”

The events of this period provide a means of outlining the organization of the English coastal defense system. The seaborne portion of this system was, of course, the naval force raised by the Crown for the “safe-keeping of the sea.” Ships, mariners, and specialists were raised via impressment, just as they were for expeditionary campaigns. Because the earl of Warwick’s fleet was supposed to be funded by tonnage and poundage, men impressed for service on his ships are described as serving at “the earl’s wages.” The wages, however, were still “the usual wages” and the money still came from royal revenue.

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137 Ibid., 555.
138 Ibid. This naval force was captured during a surprise raid by a Yorkist force in January 1460. The captured ships were taken to the earl of Warwick in Calais. See Richmond, “The Earl of Warwick’s Domination of the Channel,” 9.
139 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 556.
140 Ibid.
streams which the king had diverted to this purpose. The retained soldiers who served on these ships were raised via indentures with retinue leaders like the earl of Warwick and Gervase Clyfton. Details about the numbers of men in these retinues generally were not included by royal clerks in the patent roll entries. The one exception is the commission to William Scot, which mentions that he was to serve with a force of 200 men-at-arms. Ordnance and victuals were raised by royal commissions instructing men to purvey, or take, what was needed. All of this relied on the Crown’s power to grant funding and command the obedience of its agents as well as that of local authorities.

The land-based portion of the coastal defense system was also centrally administered by the Crown. It relied on local forces raised via commissions of array in times of heightened danger. Upon intelligence (or fears) regarding a potential or ongoing invasion, the king could issue commissions of array to trusted men and local authorities in the relevant counties. The recipients of the commissions were charged with gathering their forces and leading them to designated coastal areas to keep watch and stand ready to light beacons upon sight of an enemy force. If an enemy was already present, the king could order the recipient of one of his commissions to lead his force against the threat. Again, the Crown coordinated this system from the center rather than leaving each locality to fend for itself.

Mobilizing Forces for Domestic Conflict

The defensive aspects of English military organization could also be mobilized to resist rebels during periods of domestic conflict. Michael Hicks argues that this is the kind of warfare which revealed the importance of bastard feudalism. “No civil war,” he writes, “could have occurred without the manpower [the aristocracy] deployed through the system that modern historians have called bastard feudalism.”141 Such a system allowed a lord to mobilize his loyal household retainers as well as his

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tenants, “who had unwritten obligations also to turn out for their lord.”Nevertheless, Hicks acknowledges that all of these men “owed fidelity to their lord against all men, except—as their contracts made clear—the king, to whom an overriding allegiance was due.” Those raised via commissions of array “were really the king’s men,” although Hicks emphasizes the fact that the king “needed aristocrats to raise and command them.” The evidence demonstrates that Hicks is correct in stating that the king relied on others to raise and command his forces. However, the crucial point is that it was the Crown’s centralized administration that provided those aristocrats with the authority they needed in order to mobilize men and resources.

The period of 1459 through 1461 was especially tumultuous, and permits an examination of the mechanisms through which the crown raised men and ships to fight against rebels during two separate reigns. Beginning in late 1459 and throughout most of 1460, Henry VI presided over a war against Yorkist rebels. By 1461, Edward IV was a new king fighting to secure his rule from those who maintained their loyalty to the Lancastrians. The evidence in the patent rolls suggests that both Henry VI and Edward IV relied almost exclusively on commissions of array to raise field armies for domestic conflict. Such a method of mobilization required loyal commissioners capable of compelling the obedience of local authorities.

In October 1459, Henry VI issued a commission of array to Richard Woodville and the sheriff of Kent to resist those “leagued in rebellion against the king and crown and allowed by certain persons having the keeping of the town and castle of Calais to enter the same contrary to the king’s mandates, and now preparing to arouse congregations and insurrections in the said county.” The commission also appointed the recipients to “arrest all ships and other vessels late of the said earl of Warwick and all

142 Ibid.
143 Ibid., 30.
144 Ibid., 30-31.
145 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 555.
the tackling thereof and to keep the same for the king’s use.”146 In December, commissions of array went out to various counties and cities to resist the Yorkists.147

Military preparations continued in earnest in 1460. In January, commissions of array went out to Canterbury, Kent, and Sussex “to resist the rebels, adherents of Richard, earl of Warwick, who of late entered the port of Sandwich and would have committed worse evils than they did there in divers parts of Kent, if they could have entered the same.”148 The commission to Canterbury included instructions to “keep watches and guard the gates of the city day and night.”149 In February, commissions went out to “call together all lieges” in Suffolk, Norfolk, Kngston upon Hull for the same purpose.150 At the end of the month, the king commissioned the earl of Devon and another knight to “call together all lieges of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall” to resist Yorkist rebels “if they should presume to enter the said counties.”151 The commission included instructions to “take the muster of the men at arms and archers of those counties, and to cause wards and watches and ‘bekyns’ to be appointed and set in the usual places, and to arrest all suspected persons of those counties and commit them to prison till further order.”152 Commissions from March order John Bourghchier and Robert Hungerford to “call together the knights, esquires, gentlemen and other notable persons of Surrey to resist the rebels who have divers times entered Sandwich and other parts of Kent.”153

Patent roll entries directed towards certain cities tend to provide more information than commissions of array at the county level. A commission sent to the mayor, sheriff, and bailiffs of Bristol in February instructed the recipients to “call together all armed and fencible men and archers in Bristol”

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146 Ibid.
147 Ibid., 557-561.
148 Ibid., 563-564.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid., 606.
151 Ibid., 605.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid., 604.
against the rebels and to “exhort the king’s lieges of Bristol to find a competent number of able men and archers to attend about the king’s person at the costs of the said town.”154 Another commission went to Walter Scull and Thomas Throgmarton which instructed them to “stay on the safe-keeping and defence of Worcester and to defend that city” against rebels “who intend to enter divers parts of England and subjugate cities, castle, fortified towns and fortalice and hold them against the king.”155 The commission also required these local officials to “keep the king’s lieges of that city armed and arrayed and put them on the walls and at the gates and bridge thereof.”156 Several more commissions went out in late April. One commission of array was sent to the mayor and bailiff of Winchelsea to resist rebels “and the king’s adversaries of France, who purpose to enter the said town.”157 Another went to the authorities in Southampton and included instructions to “fortify the walls and make defences called ‘loupes’ thereon, and to appoint watches, scouts and keepers of the gates day and night.”158

Henry VI continued to send out commissions throughout the year. On April 28th, Henry VI sent commissions to numerous counties instructing the recipients to “call together and lead all persons... able to labour, as soon as they hear that [the Yorkists] enter the realm or cause to be made any congregations, combinations or unlawful gatherings, and to resist the said rebels.”159 Apparently, the citizens of Norfolk proved less-than-cooperative. In late May, the king commissioned William Calthorp and several others complaining that “divers lieges of Norfolk... have been wont to make watches for the safety of the king’s lieges there” and “refuse to do so.”160 The commission instructed the recipients to “cause all such to make such watches according to the ordinance of king Edward, and to compel by

154 Ibid., 611.
155 Ibid., 566.
156 Ibid.
157 Ibid., 602.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid., 602-604.
160 Ibid., 609.
distraints all who refuse.”¹⁶¹ Commissions sent out in June instructed the recipients to arrest and imprison rebels, and to “call together all lieges” in their respective jurisdictions “to go against the said rebels and all who resist them herein.”¹⁶²

Similar methods were used to raise soldiers in Wales, where the king delegated military authority to his son, the prince of Wales, and to other officers. In February, the Crown commissioned the prince of Wales, the duke of Cornwall, and the earl of Chester to “take into the king’s hands all the possessions late of Richard, duke of York, Richard, earl of Warwick, and Richard, earl of Salisbury, traitors and rebels, in Wales and the march there, and to cause a competent number of men at arms and others to be put therein to guard the same.”¹⁶³ He also sent a commission of array to Jasper, earl of Pembroke to “take the muster of the men at arms and archers of the parts adjacent to the castle [of Denbygh] and other parts of Wales.”¹⁶⁴ The commission included power to “admit into the king’s grace any rebels in Denbygh castle willing to submit thereto, except any English and Irish holding that or any other castle or fortalice, who are to be taken by him at the king’s will, and except certain Welshmen, outlawed and attainted, to be taken and committed to prison.”¹⁶⁵ This commission also included the legal authority to “judge and execute all rebels and traitors in the said parts.”¹⁶⁶ This explicit delegation of authority suggests that such powers were usually reserved by the Crown, but were being delegated to the earl of Pembroke for the sake of expediency.

The power of the Crown is explicit in these records. In addition to projecting royal authority through commissions of array, the Crown made sure to note instances of defiance. If the people of a given locality were reluctant to obey royal commands, the Crown sent commissioners to enforce its will.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.
¹⁶² Ibid., 613-614.
¹⁶³ Ibid., 565-566.
¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 565.
¹⁶⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶⁶ Ibid.
with the threat of imprisonment. Outright rebellion could be punished by imprisonment or death. The authority to administer these punishments came from the Crown.

Loyal service, on the other hand, was rewarded. Several entries provide valuable insight into how the king expected to fund armies and reward supporters during this period. In February 1460, the king preemptively rewarded Jasper “for good service in besieging the castle of Denbigh and crushing the rebels therein” with a grant of “all moveable goods of such rebels in the castle, when it be reduced, to distribute at his discretion to such as give their services herein.” The king also granted the prince of Wales “500 marks yearly for life from the issues of the lordships of Uske, Caerlion, Glomorgan, Morgannok and Bergeveny, to the intent that knights and esquires may be retained with the king and prince, so far as the said sum will extend, by whose money and power the said lordships [under rebel control] may be brought back the more speedily to the king’s obedience.” In March, the king granted the earl of Pembroke 1,000 marks “to support his charges in the recovery of Denbigh castle and other castles, lordships and manors in Wales and the march thereof, now in the hands of the rebels, from the issues of the lordships of Denbigh, Radnore, Nerberd, Paynescastell, Elwell, Eyyas, Mellemnyth and Guerthrenyan.” The prince of Wales received a grant of 1,000£ from the issues of Usk, Karlyon, Glomorgan, Morgannok, Bergevenny, Beaudeley, Ludlowe, Fawnehop, and Wyggemore for the same reason. To compensate Humphrey, duke of Buckingham for his expenses “in attendance upon the king in his journey in Kent against the rebels there and in the suppression of other rebels,” the king granted him the fines owed by Walter Devereux, William Hastings, and Walter Hopton. An entry dated March 22nd shows that the king still owed the duke 300£ “for his expenses in suppressing the

167 Ibid., 550.
168 Ibid., 576.
169 Ibid., 574.
170 Ibid., 578.
171 Ibid., 548.
rebels.”\textsuperscript{172} This entry voided the previous grant and instead repaid the duke by granting him the keeping of various lands forfeited by the duke of York “to hold until he be satisfied of the said sum and of 200l.”\textsuperscript{173} It also granted “all sums pertaining to the king by reason of the recognizance made in Chancery whereby Walter Devereux late of Webley, co. Hereford, esquire is bound to the king in 500 marks for his rebellion.”\textsuperscript{174}

These records demonstrate that the Crown was capable of diverting funds from a variety of sources. From the center, the Crown could fund military forces and reward loyal supporters through the Exchequer, through local revenue streams, by imposing fines, or by redistributing the lands and titles of wealthy rebels. The coordination of these financial resources required a centralized administration capable of keeping track of them all and commanding the obedience of the royal officials and local authorities who directly managed them. Furthermore, the Crown’s ability to take away lands and titles is indicative of its power over even the most powerful of its noble subjects.

The impressment of ships remained an important feature of the civil wars of this period, especially considering the naval threat presented by the earl of Warwick because of his role as keeper of the sea. Throughout February and March of 1460, Henry VI impressed ships and mariners in the familiar fashion to provide for naval defense. In February, he commissioned men to “arrest the ships and vessels necessary for the conduct of an army ordered to go on the sea for the safe keeping thereof, and masters and mariners for the same.”\textsuperscript{175} Henry Coventre and John Barker were tasked with procuring mariners for two specific ships, “\textit{Le Giles of Hull} and \textit{Houghtons Barge}.”\textsuperscript{176} In March, the king commissioned on of his sergeants-at-arms, Thomas Osbern, to “arrest mariners called ‘galymen’ necessary for the conduct of

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 552.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 563.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid.
certain galleys of James, earl of Wiltshire, in the port of Suthampton.” 177 Another commission appointed Simon Hammes to purvey victuals and “arrest masters and mariners” for a ship called la Marie “to serve at the king’s wages.” 178 Two other commissions from late March call for the impressment of ships as well as “masters and mariners therefor.” 179

These ships were to serve with soldiers under the command of the duke of Exeter and Baldwin Fulford. The abovementioned commission to Simon Hammes notes that la Marie was “about to serve the king in the company of Henry, duke of Exeter, in conducting an army ordained to go on the safe-keeping of the sea, for the money of the duke.” 180 Another commission from late March instructed William Ballard, “herald at arms of Henry, duke of Exeter, to purvey 3 shots of ‘cables’ for the duke’s money for the ship called le Grace Dieu, about to go on the sea to resist the king’s enemies, which is destitute of ‘cables.’” 181 Evidently the force was ready in May, when the king sent a commission to Thomas Kiriell, John Cheyne, and others to “take near Sandwich the muster of all men at arms and archers ordered to go with Henry, duke of Exeter, on the safe-keeping of the sea to resist the king’s rebels and enemies.” 182 On March 4th, the king commissioned men to take muster of “Baldwin Fulford, knight, and the men at arms and archers of his retinue, going on the safe keeping of the sea.” 183 This naval force was intended to counter the earl of Warwick. On March 26th, the king sent a mandate to “the customers and the searcher in the port of Suthampton” instructing them to “permit the captains, patrons, merchants, pilots, galleymen, sailors and mariners of any carracks and galleys in the said port, arrested to serve the king against an army of Richard, earl of Warwick, and his accomplices on the sea, to unlade the said carracks and galleys of all goods and merchandise therein without search or forfeiture

177 Ibid., 564.
178 Ibid., 602.
179 Ibid., 605-606.
180 Ibid., 602.
181 Ibid., 566.
182 Ibid., 621.
183 Ibid., 564.
Furthermore, anyone “arrested to serve on the sea against Richard, earl of Warwick and his accomplices” received a pardon “of all trespasses and offences in shipping merchandise in the said vessels contrary to statutes, and all consequent forfeitures.”

Henry VI was captured by the Yorkists in July 1460. Because he was still the reigning king, commissions sent out in the period from July 1460 until Richard of York’s death in December 1460 bear Henry VI’s name but they were executing Yorkist policies. In effect, possession of the king gave the rebels control over the administrative machinery of the government. Consequently, the commissions demonstrate that the Yorkists used the same centralized administration to raise men for defense. In August, the earl of Salisbury was commissioned to “call together all the king’s lieges and subjects of the counties of York, Nottingham, Derby, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northumberland and Lincoln to go to the rescue of the castle of Rokesburgh and the town of Berewike, besieged by James, king of Scots, who has entered the marches towards Scotland with a great army.” Orders to the sheriffs of those counties instructed them to “cause proclamation to be made” in their bailiwick that “all lieges of the king... able to labour” are to cooperate with the earl. Commissions sent later in the year in November and December instructed the recipients to arrest and imprison rebels, “and if they resist, to call together all lieges of [their counties] and other counties adjacent to fight them.” Similar commissions instructing the recipients to “call together all lieges” within their jurisdictions went out throughout January and February of 1461.

During this period leading up to the Battle of Towton in March 1461, the administrative powers of the Crown were being invoked by both factions. Several of these commissions suggest that there was

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184 Ibid., 606.
185 Ibid., 591.
186 Ibid., 589.
187 Ibid., 612.
188 Ibid., 651-652, 653.
189 Ibid., 655-659.
resistance from the local population. One orders the arrest of “all persons in Norfolk and Suffolk who impede the king’s lieges in coming to defend the king’s person pursuant to the king’s ordinance of late.”\textsuperscript{190} Another instructs the aldermen and burgesses of Stanford to “take muster of the said lieges within the precinct of the town, punishing by imprisonment or fine all who refuse herein.”\textsuperscript{191} Several other entries call for the arrest of those who “hinder the king’s lieges from coming to defend his person” and almost all of them proclaim the criminality of assisting rebels with supplies or victuals.\textsuperscript{192} The earl of Warwick also reclaimed his role as keeper of the sea during this uncertain period. The Crown granted the appointment in December 1460.\textsuperscript{193} Just a few weeks before, the king commissioned the mayors and bailiffs of Dartmouth, Plymouth, and Fowey to “arrest a ship called \textit{la Mare Clyffe} of Dartmouth and all other ships and vessels in the said ports necessary for the retinue of Richard, earl of Warwick, ordained to go on the sea to resist the king’s enemies.”\textsuperscript{194} The commission included instructions to “purvey habiliments and tackling therefor for the earl’s money” and to “arrest masters and mariners for the governance thereof and set them aboard at the earl’s wages.”\textsuperscript{195}

Beginning in March 1461, Edward IV was the reigning king and Henry VI was a rebel who had escaped into Lancastrian custody. At this point, the Yorkists controlled the Crown’s administrative systems. The new king’s first military concern was securing his position by the quick reduction of rebels who were still holding out in fortified places. Early in March, the king sent commissions to various counties to “array all ablebodied men... for defence against Henry VI and his adherents and the king’s enemies of France and Scotland, and to arrest and imprison rebels.”\textsuperscript{196} Later that month, he commissioned Geoffrey Gate and William Glover to “fortify the castle of Corff, co. Dorset, and hold it

\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 656. \\
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 657. \\
\textsuperscript{192} Ibid., 655-659. \\
\textsuperscript{193} Ibid., 642-643. \\
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 652. \\
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{196} CPR Edward IV 1461-67, 31. \\
\end{tabular}
against the rebels.”

In April, he commissioned John Wenlok to “summon the gentry and others of the counties of Northampton, Bedford, Buckingham, Cambridge and Huntingdon to assist him to besiege the castle of Thorpwaterfeld.”

The following month, the king commissioned Robert Ogle to “take into the king’s hands his castle of Harebotell and lordship of Reddesdale and also the castle of Forde and other possessions late of John Heron of Forde, knight, deceased, and to seize Roger, son and heir of John, and keep the same; and to crush any of the county of Northumberland who may resist.”

Similar commissions instructing men to take possessions “into the king’s hands” and subdue rebels went out throughout the first months of Edward IV’s reign.

July 8th commissions to Walter Devereux and others to “array all ablebodied men in the counties of Hereford, Gloucester, and Salop, for defence against the king’s enemies of France and Scotland, and the adherents of Henry VI and Margaret his wife.”

As this last entry demonstrates, the new king also needed to defend against foreign invasion. In May, the king issued a writ of aid to “all sheriffs, mayors and others of the king’s castle of Caresbroke, lordships and island of Wight, and the counties of Southampton, Sussex and Surrey, for Geoffrey Gate, whom the king has appointed lieutenant, keeper and governor of the said castle, lordship and island.”

Another commission addressed to Geoffrey Gate, the abbot of Quarre, and others instructed the recipients to “assemble the king’s subjects of the said island and the counties of Southampton, Surrey and Sussex for defence of the castle and island against the king’s enemies of France and others, should they attempt an invasion.”

Gate himself was commissioned to “defend the said castle of Caresbroke and lordship and island of Wight, to summon the inhabitants of the island and others for watches and other accustomed services for defence when necessary, and to seize and imprison rebels; and

197 Ibid.
198 Ibid., 28.
199 Ibid., 29.
200 Ibid., 30-31.
201 Ibid., 36.
202 Ibid., 37-38.
203 Ibid., 38.
appointment of him as receiver of the castle, lordship and island, to collect all rents and profits and account for them at the Exchequer after allowance for fees to himself and his soldiers.”

The same month, the king commissioned John Audeley, William Bourghchier, and John Sourton to “urge the king’s subjects of the counties of Southampton, Wilts, Somerset, Dorset, Cornwall and Devon to resist the king’s enemies of France who have entered the island of Guernesey and besieged his castle of Cornet there.”

In August, the king sent commissions to authorities in various counties, with the earl of Warwick included as a recipient on each commission, instructing the recipients to “urge the king’s subjects [of each county] to array a force at their own expense for defence of the county and the adjoining parts of Wales against the rebels, to be at Hereford on the Nativity of the Virgin.”

In November, the king commissioned the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, the earl of Warwick, and others to “array all the king’s subjects” in Cumberland, Northumberland, York, and Westmoreland “for defence against his enemies of Scotland and Henry VI and Margaret his wife and their adherents.”

The same month, a commission to the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen of Norwich ordered the recipients to “collect divers sums of money assessed and granted by the city for the expenses of certain armed men going in the name of the city to resist the rebels in the north when the king was there.”

In October, a commission was sent to the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk and others to “take the castle of Bokenham, co. Norfolk, into the king’s hands and remove John Knyvet and William Knyver, esquires, from the custody thereof and arrest and imprison any who resist.”

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204 Ibid.
205 Ibid., 34.
206 Ibid., 98-99.
207 Ibid., 66.
208 Ibid., 67.
209 Ibid. Commissioners sent to the castle found the drawbridge raised and “Alice, the wife of the said John Knyvet, appeared in a little tower over the inner foot of the bridge, keeping the castle with slings, ‘paveises,’ faggots,
Coastal defense also remained a high priority for the new government. In May, Edward IV installed the earl of Warwick as “constable of the king’s castle of Dover” and warden of the Cinque Ports, granting “all rents and services called ‘castelwarde,’ and herbage and advowsons pertaining to the same..., all forfeitures, ‘shares,’ wreck of sea and other profits; and also 300l yearly for the sustenance of himself and priests, servants, watchmen and other officers there, in the same manner as Humphrey, late duke of Gloucester, viz. 146l from the wards pertaining to the castle and 154l from the fee farm of the town of Southampton.” The following month, the king began raising a fleet. In June, he sent a commission to the abbot of St. John’s and other clerics to “urge the king’s subjects of the counties of Suffolk, Essex and Hertford to raise a fleet for the king against his enemies of France and Scotland, after the example of the men of York and Scarburgh and other places in the north, who have provided it for half a year at their own expense, to find six ships fully equipped with men at arms and archers to the number of 700, and to take the ships’ victuals and stores.” In July, Edward IV commissioned eight men to “take ships, masters and mariners, for the king’s fleet.” Another commission to William Bourgchier and others ordered the recipients to “urge the king’s subjects of the north parts of the county of Devon to supply ships well equipped with men, victuals and habiliments of war for half a year at their own expense for defence against the king’s enemies of France and elsewhere, after the example of other subjects of the king in various parts; and to appoint persons to collect money and other supplies timber and other armaments of war and assisted by William Toby of Old Bokenham... and others to the number of fifty persons, armed with swords, ‘glayves,’ bows and arrows.”

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211 CPR Edward IV 1461-67, 33.  
212 Ibid., 36.
thus granted and to take ships and men and equipment as above.” Like commissions were sent to ranking clerics in the other parts of Devon, Wilts, and Southampton.

These commissions are interesting, as most of them suggest that Edward IV wanted the voluntary participation of the leading men in the localities. Apart from simply “taking” ships and mariners, the commissioners were tasked with “urging” the local population to provide ships to serve at their own expense. The use of abbots and other clerics in the matter seems to support the idea that the king wanted to persuade the localities rather than coerce them. This may have been a way for the new king to gauge the level of support he could expect from his subjects. On the other hand, Edward may have simply been attempting to defray the expenses of raising a fleet by calling for voluntary contributions. In any case, Edward IV did not rely exclusively on the goodwill of his subjects. Several of the commissions called for impressment in the usual fashion.

As these records demonstrate, the new king made extensive use of the existing royal systems to mobilize forces against rebels and foreign enemies. Very quickly after taking the throne, Edward IV was able to place loyal Yorkists in important administrative positions and use them to mobilize troops, ships, and other resources against his enemies. The speed at which the new king was able to take over the Crown’s administrative systems was made possible by several factors. First, the centralized administrative structure of the Crown had solid foundations capable of withstanding changes in management. In other words, the system was already in place and did not depend on the identity of the man sitting on the throne. Second, the authority of the Crown had never been challenged. The Yorkists had been invoking the authority of the Crown throughout the course of their rebellion against the government of Henry VI. This meant that the Yorkists already had numerous loyal supporters.

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213 Ibid., 37.
214 Ibid.
performing administrative functions related to mobilization. Once Edward IV became king, the activities of these men began to appear in the patent rolls and close rolls.

The overall system of mobilization for domestic conflict and coastal defense remained the same when Edward IV began raising forces for a campaign against rebels at St. Michael’s Mount in 1473. In October of that year, the king commissioned John Arundel and numerous others to “array the king’s lieges of the county of Cornwall, and of other counties adjacent if necessary, to conquer John, late earl of Oxford, and other rebels who have entered St. Michael’s Mount, co. Cornwall, and to bring back the mount into the king’s hands and provide for its safe-custody and defence.” On December 7, the king granted John Fortescu and others “full power and authority to reduce St. Michael’s Mount” and “conquer John, late earl of Oxford, and others who have entered the mount and hold it as a refuge and make excursions from thence to the adjoining parts.” The commission allowed them to “promise pardon to any rebels within the mount who may be willing to submit and take an oath of fealty, with the exception of the said earl, William Beaumond, late lord Bardolf, knight, and George Veers, Thomas Veer and Richard Veer, brothers of the earl.” A few days later, Richard Patyn and Richard Veron were appointed to “take carriage by land and sea and fresh water for divers ordnance which the king has ordered to be taken to St. Michael’s Mount against the rebels there and timber and iron and other necessaries for the same and carpenters called ‘whelewrightes’ and ‘cartwrightes’ and other carpenters.” Supporting this land force with a naval force would not require much innovation. In November 1473, the king commissioned shipmasters to procure mariners for four ships “which the king has ordered to go to sea with other ships to resist his enemies.” Whether these ships were intended for supporting operations at St. Michael’s Mount is unclear. However, the entry demonstrates that there

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\[215\] CPR Edward IV 1467-77, 399-400.
\[216\] Ibid., 418.
\[217\] Ibid.
\[218\] Ibid., 412.
\[219\] Ibid., 409.
was always a ready supply of ships available for “resisting the king’s enemies.” These ships, or any other ships already serving for coastal defense, could have been diverted to aid at St. Michael’s Mount or any other military operation as needed.

Garrisons and Strongholds

The English garrison system was a crucial aspect of military organization during the fifteenth century. Despite losing most of its continental possessions by 1453, the Crown managed to hold the Calais marches throughout this period. The king maintained a garrison at Calais itself as well as smaller garrisons at Risbank Tower and the castles of Guines and Hammes located nearby within the Calais pale. Additionally, there were English garrisons on the channel islands of Jersey and Guernsey. On the other side of the channel, there was a garrison on the Isle of Wight. In the north, there were the marches towards Scotland. In that region, the Crown maintained multiple fortified towns and other fortifications under the command of the wardens of the marches. The English kings also kept smaller English garrisons in Wales and Ireland in addition to the smaller castles which existed throughout the realm. All of these garrisons and strongholds received varying degrees of royal attention during this period.

The military and political importance of the Calais garrison during the Wars of the Roses has received considerable scholarly attention. It was from Calais, after all, that the earl of Warwick conducted military operations against Henry VI in 1459 and 1460.220 David Grummitt provides an in-depth discussion about Calais in his book The Calais Garrison: War and Military Service in England, 1436-1558. He explains that Calais, Risbank, Guines, and Hammes each had its own garrison. The crown filled the garrisons by indenting with captains, who in turn provided the necessary numbers of men-at-arms

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220 Richmond emphasizes the political significance of the earl’s naval activity from his base at Calais in “The Earl of Warwick’s Domination of the Channel.”
and archers.\textsuperscript{221} As Grummitt writes, “Just as the king indented with the captain, so the captain, free by the terms of his indenture and grant of office to recruit his own retinue to fulfil his obligation to the crown, could indent with lesser captains and they, in turn, could indent with the men who would serve as soldiers.”\textsuperscript{222}

The greatest difference between garrisons and other forces raised via indenture was the method of payment. Those serving within the garrisons of the Calais marches were accounted for by a royal officer, who held the title of treasurer of Calais. Garrison soldiers who wanted to maintain their place in the garrison but go on leave could also privately hire other soldiers to serve for “petty wages,” meaning that they served outside of the purview of the treasurer.\textsuperscript{223} Additionally, in times of war or heightened danger, the regular garrisons were augmented with temporary “crews” of reinforcements.\textsuperscript{224} Such additional forces were not paid by the treasurer of Calais either.\textsuperscript{225} Rather, payment for crews followed the model described concerning payment of expeditionary forces. The crown indented with a captain, paid him for a certain number of men-at-arms and archers, and left the maintenance of the retinue to him.

Funding for the Calais garrisons during this period was made possible by the wool trade, which passed through Calais to the Low Countries. As Grummitt states, “The costs of the defence of Calais were met by the profits of the English wool trade; indeed, the decision to move the wool staple to Calais in Edward III’s reign was governed by the need to pay for the newly acquired Pale...”\textsuperscript{226} There was even a mint established there in 1363 “to turn the profits of that trade into coin with which to pay the

\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 48.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 56-57.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 141.
garrison.” Grummitt explains how Edward IV sought to reinforce the role of the staple as the source of funding for the Calais garrison with multiple acts of retainer—one in 1466 and another in 1473. Grummitt writes, “the king ‘retained’ the services of the merchants as the financiers of his town and marches; in return the staplers received royal protection for their trade and, as far as possible, a foreign policy favourable to mercantile interests.” Grants of customs revenue to the merchants of the staple appear frequently in the records leading up to this point, as both Henry VI and Edward IV relied on the staple to pay the wages of the garrison.

The patent rolls demonstrate that the Crown remained active in the administration of Calais throughout this period. In the early 1450s, Henry VI was still preparing to defend Calais against the French. In July 1452, he granted protection to John Cheyne and his possessions “in consideration of his diligence in the purveyance of victuals and the repairs at Calais, so long as he stay in the office of victualler.” In September 1453, the king commissioned three men to “arrest carpenters for the working of timber bought for the works at Calais, and to take carriage therefor to the seacoast where they can best be shipped, and to set the carpenters to work.” In April 1454, the king commissioned Richard Wyderton and Thomas Stones to take “the muster of Henry Belknap and the men at arms and archers ordered to go with him to the defence of Guisnes castle.” In June, the king also commissioned Henry, viscount Bourgchier, to “take muster of Leo de Welles, knight, and Richard Wodevyle of Revers, knight, deputies of Edmund, duke of Somerset, lieutenant of the town and castle of Calais, the tower of Rysbanke and the marches there, and of the men at arms and archers of their retinue and of the soldiers of Calais, in any suitable place near Calais.”

227 Ibid., 143.
228 Ibid., 149.
229 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 90.
230 Ibid., 174.
231 Ibid., 171.
232 Ibid., 176.
Henry VI continued to issue orders related to Calais during the last years of his first reign. In February 1459, the he appointed Henry Yong as constable of Guines castle, “with 8d a day for his wages, 8d a day for each of four foot soldiers at arms and 6d a day for each of six archers from the issues of the lordship or county of Guysnes by the hands of the treasurer of Calais or the receivers of the lordship, and with a dwelling called ‘le Storehous’ and ‘le Artry’ in the castle, and all other profits.”  

In April, the king indented with Richard Tunstall, appointing him “master and maker of his moneys of gold and silver in the Tower of London in England and in Caleys.” The following month, William Whitlok, “late lieutenant of John, lord of Stourton, captain of the tower of Risbank,” was granted 122£ 9s 4 1/4d per year from the “issues of the lordships of Mark and Oye in Picardy.” The grant states that this was to serve as repayment of a total of 367£ 7s 9 3/4d, “whereof 277£ 7s 9 3/4d are due to [Whitlok] for his wages... and 90l are due to him of the wages of Fulk Vernon, captain of Hammes castle.”

The rebellion of the earl of Warwick put Calais at risk, and the king endeavored to bolster Lancastrian forces there in 1460. In March, Henry VI appointed Andrew Trolop as “bailiff of Guysnes and the marches thereof” as a reward for “good service in the wars” and compensation for the “loss of his goods in Calais taken by the rebels.” That May, Osbert Mountford and John Baker were “ordered... to bring 200 men at arms and archers to Henry, duke of Somerset, for the safe-keeping and defence of the castle and town of Guysnes and to resist the king’s rebels and enemies, appointing them to arrest ships and vessels necessary herein and masters and mariners therefor.” Thomas Thorp, Thomas Kyryell, John Cheyne, and others were tasked with taking the muster of this force.

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233 Ibid., 478.
234 CCR Henry VI 1454-61, 384.
235 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 484.
236 Ibid.
237 Ibid., 553.
238 Ibid., 609.
239 Ibid.
After taking the throne in 1461, Edward IV appointed numerous officers to serve at Calais. Walter Blount became the treasurer of Calais in March.\textsuperscript{240} In August, the king appointed John Martyn as “clerk of the works of the castle and walls of the king’s town of Calais and the waters there.”\textsuperscript{241} The same month, John Spevy, described as a “soldier of Calais,” received the “office of purveyor of timber for the king’s works in Calais and carriage for the same.”\textsuperscript{242} In November, Edward IV appointed Thomas Clampard as “chief smith of the town of Calais and the marches there, and surveyor of the smith’s art there.”\textsuperscript{243} The following month, he granted Thurston Hatfeld the “office of the serjeanty of Guysnes in Picardy.”\textsuperscript{244} In February 1468, the king granted Edmund Childerhos and William Alberd the “office of the king’s artillery within the town of Calais.”\textsuperscript{245} March 1472, Edward IV granted Giles can Rassyngham, smith of Calais, “the reversion of the offices of master smith and master gunner of the said town of Calais and the marches of the same on the death, surrender or forfeiture of Thomas Clampard or other occupiers.”\textsuperscript{246}

As others have remarked, the Calais garrison was the closest thing the English Crown had to a standing army. The information contained within the patent rolls and close rolls suggests that the Crown’s administration of Calais was thorough. There were numerous royal offices related to the maintenance of the garrison there, all of which were filled and funded by the Crown. Even in periods of civil war, the garrison remained loyal to whoever wielded the Crown’s authority. For instance, when the Yorkists brought them to Ludford Bridge to fight against Henry VI in 1459, the Calais soldiers refused to

\textsuperscript{240} CPR Edward IV 1461-67, 25.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., 44.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., 71.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 79.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid., 81.
\textsuperscript{245} CPR Edward IV 1467-77, 64.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid., 335.
fight. The intricate royal administration of the Calais garrison and the loyalty of its soldiers is testament to the enduring power of the Crown, as an institution, during this period.

The existence of a number of other garrisons outside of Calais further emphasizes the Crown’s authority over military matters. Outside of the Calais marches, there were the garrisons situated on islands in the channel. These garrisons were smaller than the ones at Calais, which meant that the king did not need to administer them directly as often. In September 1452, Henry VI appointed John Nanfan as “warden and governor of the isles of Gersey and Gernesey and the castles and other fortalices within the same for half a year and thereafter for five years.” This included Nanfan’s appointment as “collector and receiver of all customs, subsidies and other pence due to the king by the inhabitants of the islands” as well as power to “rule and govern all the king’s subjects and other inhabitants..., to punish delinquents, to grant safe-conducts..., to appoint and remove officers, to enquire touching crimes and correct the same and to appoint justices in eyre for assizes.” John Neweburgh and John Fyloll were appointed to take the muster of Nanfan’s force of 130 archers at Poole before it departed to the islands. As the patent roll entry makes clear, the king delegated a lot of power onto Nanfan as a projection of the Crown’s authority over the islands.

The Crown’s administration of the garrison on the Isle of Wight was not much different. In October 1457, the king granted Henry, the duke of Somerset, the “lieutenancy and keeping of the isle and lordship of Wight and the castle and lordship of Caresbrook.” In December 1460, with Henry VI in Yorkist hands, Geoffrey Gate received the position of “lieutenant, keeper and governor of Caresbroke castle and the lordship and isle of Wyght, to defend the castle, lordship and isle against the king’s adversaries of France and any rebels, and to compel the inhabitants of the island and all others to keep

247 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 15-16.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid., 55.
250 Ibid., 391.
watches and to discharge all persons from the keeping of the castle, lordship and isle for the safer keeping thereof.”251 The commission included power to arrest and imprison anyone who resisted Gate’s assumption of his office.252 In March 1465, Edward IV appointed Gate as “the king’s lieutenant of the Isle of Wight and the castle and lordship of Caresbroke within the island,” granting him “all manors, lordships, lands, rents, services, woods and revenues belonging to the king within the island.”253 According to the patent roll entry, Gate had been “bearing the burden of the payment of the wages of men-at-arms and archers there” and even “released to the king the sum of 347£ 8s due for the wages of himself and other men-at-arms and archers of his retinue and taken upon himself the safe-custody and governance of the island, castle and lordship at his own expense.”254

There were also several garrisons spread throughout the marches towards Scotland. The patent roll entries regarding these garrisons show that the Crown filled them via indentures and funded them with customs revenues and other local sources of income. According to a patent roll entry from March 1455, Henry VI had indented with William Neville and Ralph Gray for their services as “wardens of the castle of Rokesburgh from 1 March, 30 Henry VI, for twelve years.”255 The two men were to receive 1,000£ per year in peacetime and 2,000£ per year in wartime “by the hands of the treasurer of England.”256 However, Henry VI’s government found a different method of paying the garrison, drawing from the customs revenue of Newcastle upon Tyne at the beginning of each quarter.257 In May 1459, the king responded to a petition from “the mayor and burgesses of Berwick upon Tweed shewing the necessity of repairing the walls of the town and castle of Berwick.”258 To address the problem, the king

251 Ibid., 637-638.
252 Ibid.
253 CPR Edward IV 1461-67, 424.
254 Ibid.
255 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 213-214.
256 Ibid.
257 Ibid.
258 Ibid., 498.
granted 100£ per year from Berwick’s customs revenue to the clerk of the works for six years. The money was “to be spent on such repair by survey of the mayor.” In November, Henry VI owed the earl of Northumberland 16,985£ 5s 7 1/4d “for the keeping of the castle and town of Berwick upon Tweed and the east march towards Scotland.” To repay this debt, the king granted the earl authority to collect yearly funds from the issues of numerous local sources.

Edward IV also paid arrears of wages to garrison troops with customs revenue. An entry from March 1465 notes that John Neville had served as “warden and guardian of the East Marches of England towards Scotland,” paying 8,000£ “for wages and regards of captains and soldiers.” However, he had only received 6,000£ from the king. To pay the additional 2,000£ of arrears, the king granted the earl all customs revenue from Newcastle upon Tyne to the value of 2,000£. A patent roll entry from January 1466 explains that Edward IV retained the earl of Warwick as “captain and guardian of the castle and town of Carlisle and the west marches of Scotland for 20 years from 4 March, 1 Edward IV” via indenture. The earl was to receive 2,500£ per year in wartime and 1,250£ per year in peacetime “at the hands of the treasurer of England and the chamberlains of the Exchequer.” The king instructed the earl to receive as much of his wages as possible from the customs revenue from Kingston upon Hull, “rendering yearly his account at the Exchequer for any surplus” and receiving “what may be lacking yearly at the receipt of the Exchequer.”

259 Ibid.
260 Ibid.
261 Ibid., 578-579.
262 Ibid.
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid.
266 Ibid., 422.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid.
The administration and funding of these garrisons by the Crown is familiar. The king appointed men to lead and maintain the garrisons, paying them according to agreements reminiscent of those used to raise expeditionary forces. Funding for the garrisons came from a variety of sources controlled by the Crown. Apart from paying the wages owed to the wardens of these garrisons, the Crown funded the maintenance of fortifications by diverting customs revenue.

Additionally, the Crown kept records of individual men serving in these garrisons. The patent rolls contain numerous entries marking the revocation of protections which the Crown had granted to individuals recruited to serve in English garrisons. These entries refer to men who were granted protections but ultimately did not follow through with their service. They are short and formulaic, but they are a useful means of tracking royal interest in certain garrisons. The following is an entry from November 1452:

Revocation of protection with clause volumus for one year granted on 3 July last to Walter Piers late of Adescombe, co. Surrey, the younger, ‘husbondman,’ as having stayed in the company of Henry Percy, lord of Ponyges, captain of the castle and town of Berwick on Tweed in the marches of Scotland, on the safe-keeping and victualling thereof; because he tarries at Croydon, co. Surrey, as Thomas Yerd, the sheriff, has certified.269

Entries such as this appear frequently throughout the patent rolls of this period. Almost all of them refer to garrison service in places like Calais, Jersey, Ireland, and the marches towards Scotland. They also tend to appear in groups, highlighting the importance of a particular garrison at that moment in time. For instance, multiple entries referring to service under John Nanfan appear in early 1453, soon after his appointment as warden there.270 Another group of entries from late 1453 and early 1454 refers to men who were supposed to serve under Thomas Fyndern at Guines castle and John Marny at Hammes

269 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 24.
270 Ibid., 40 as an example.
The records from Edward IV’s reign are similar in this regard. The patent rolls from 1461 to 1467 contain numerous entries regarding men who were supposed to serve at Calais. The records from 1467 to 1477 have a preponderance of entries related to service in Ireland, with 1475 showing a group of entries regarding men who were supposed to serve under various royal officers in France.

The usefulness of these entries is limited, considering the fact that they are revocations of protections which had previously been granted. However, their frequency and formulaic nature throughout the reigns of two kings suggests a degree of standardization in garrison administration. They all name the officer under whom the prospective soldier was supposed to serve. For smaller garrisons like Jersey, this was the warden. For larger ones like Calais, which had various officers including captain, treasurer, and victualler, the entry specified one. The nature of the service is always described as defensive, including victualling as a basic aspect of service.

Furthermore, these entries show that the Crown relied on local authorities to keep track of individuals who had taken letters of protection. If an individual failed to follow through with his service, the king found out through the administrative ties between the central government and the localities. Without loyal service from local officials, the crown would have no way of knowing which letters of protection needed to be revoked and which needed to be honored. The fact that so many revocations are recorded demonstrates the far-reaching power of the Crown via loyal agents in the localities.

Overall, the administration of the English garrison system appears to have been standardized by the 1450s. The Crown filled garrisons by indenting with captains and funded them with local sources of revenue. For larger garrisons, the Crown appointed officers like treasurers and victuallers. The king could also support garrisons by granting additional funding, purveying materials, or sending

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271 Ibid., 141 as an example of an entry regarding service under Fyndern. Ibid., 152 for one regarding service under Marny.
reinforcements. Individuals recruited to serve in garrisons could request letters of protection from the
Crown, and the king kept track of these men to ensure that they served. All of this is evidence of a
strong Crown presiding over a robust central administration.
IV. ORDNANCE, MANPOWER, AND PROVISIONS

Administering and Mobilizing the King’s Ordnance

The mobilization of weaponry, laborers, and other specialists was another feature of warfare which required a robust central administration. During the fifteenth century, the Crown controlled a royal armory within the Tower of London as well as smaller armories located throughout the realm. The military role of the Tower in particular has received some scholarly attention. Dan Spencer highlights the importance of the Tower to the production of gunpowder weapons in the 1470s. He notes that the majority of English guns were produced “outside the premises of the Tower” during the 1450s, but that “the accession of Edward IV to the throne in 1461 resulted in the Tower once again becoming an important centre for the production and storage of artillery.”\(^{272}\) Spencer suggests that this development was “due to the establishment of the office of the Master of the Ordnance on a permanent basis there for the first time” as well as the new king’s “desire to acquire an impressive artillery train.”\(^{273}\) By 1467, the Crown kept its ordnance in the Tower to be maintained and deployed as needed.\(^{274}\) Using the records of John Wode, Edward IV’s master of ordnance, Spencer demonstrates that “Tower workshops were busy in the early 1470s, with much of the work carried out onsite rather than elsewhere.”\(^{275}\) As a center of storage and production, the Tower became “firmly established as the primary centre in England for the royal ordnance by 1472, which meant that it played a key part in the supply of firearms for subsequent expeditions to France and Scotland.”\(^{276}\)

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\(^{273}\) Ibid.

\(^{274}\) Ibid.

\(^{275}\) Ibid., 104.

\(^{276}\) Ibid.
Henry VI was using the Tower as an armory in May 1453, even if it was not producing large numbers of cannons. That month, the king granted Thomas West and John Roger the “office of keeper of the armoury within the Tower of London” upon the death of John Malepas.\textsuperscript{277} West and Roger were to receive “wages of 7 1/2d a day from the issues of Kent and all other usual profits” in addition to “a robe of the suit of the yeomen of the chamber yearly against Christmas, and a dwelling within the Tower opposite the tower in which are kept the rolls of Chancery.”\textsuperscript{278} Furthermore, the Crown controlled other armories located throughout the realm. In July, John Roger and Mordan Meredith were granted the “office of keeper of the armoury of all castles of the king in South Wales... notwithstanding that there are no armouries in all or any of the said castles at present.”\textsuperscript{279} For this office, Roger and Meredith were to receive “the usual wages and fees by the hands of the chamberlain of South Wales.”\textsuperscript{280} Later that month, the king granted Henry Werham and William Wetnale the “offices of keeping the armour and artillery within the castle of Pountefrete, co. York... with the usual wages, fees and profits from the revenues of the lordship of Pountefrete.”\textsuperscript{281}

The extent to which the English kings invested in and used gunpowder weapons during this period has received some attention from military historians. Specifically, historians have argued about the reason for the “perceived ‘lack of use’ of gunpowder weapons” by the English during the domestic fighting of the Wars of the Roses.\textsuperscript{282} John Gillingham argues that this lack of use is explained by the prevalence of decisive battles over sieges in domestic campaigns.\textsuperscript{283} Kelly DeVries argues against this

\textsuperscript{277} CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 67.
\textsuperscript{278} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{279} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., 110.
explanation, as well as Anthony Goodman’s suggestion that armies were mobilized too quickly to allow for substantial artillery trains.\textsuperscript{284} Instead, DeVries argues that there was a “loss of centralized control over these weapons... and a rise of local control in its place.”\textsuperscript{285} He suggests that this process began during the minority of Henry VI, “when historians remark that there was a breakdown in administrative centralization.”\textsuperscript{286} He also suggests that a large number of guns may have been lost along with the majority of England’s other continental possessions when France finally fell in the early 1450s.\textsuperscript{287} DeVries’ writes:

At the same time, and generally unrecorded in contemporary sources, there seems to have been a concerted and successful effort to acquire guns by various local entities in England. Why this occurred and whether such actions were purposely hidden from royal notice cannot be known. What can be known is that from the very outset of the Wars of the Roses every local entity which could afford gunpowder weapons, greater nobles, lesser nobles, and towns, had them, and when necessary used them.\textsuperscript{288}

After a summary of the use of gunpowder weapons during the Wars of the Roses, including Edward IV’s vigor in improving the royal armament, DeVries asserts that “local ownership of gunpowder weapons almost always equaled if not surpassed that of the central, royal government.”\textsuperscript{289} He provides numerous examples of guns being used in private feuds without royal involvement, guns being provided for public service by private individuals, and guns being used by towns.\textsuperscript{290}

While these examples do demonstrate that guns were in the hands of towns and individuals, they do not necessarily demonstrate a lack of centralized administration. There are several problems with DeVries’ argument. First, the idea that there was a “concerted and successful effort to acquire guns by various local entities” is an assumption based on the examples mentioned above. The fact that towns

\textsuperscript{284} DeVries, “The Use of Gunpowder Weapons,” 21.
\textsuperscript{285} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{286} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{287} Ibid., 26-28.
\textsuperscript{288} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{290} Ibid., 35-37.
and wealthy individuals possessed guns during this period does not mean that there was a “concerted effort” to acquire them. Second, DeVries’ argument about a lack of centralized control is based on the perceived lack of interest in stockpiling guns in royal armories. DeVries does not demonstrate that any English king ever attempted to restrict the ownership of guns by towns or individuals. Instead, he assumes that the possession of guns by towns and individuals at a time when the king supposedly possessed fewer guns indicates a lack of control. This in turn assumes that the relationship between the Crown, the nobility, and local authorities was antagonistic.

It is more likely that the Crown benefitted from and encouraged local ownership of ordnance, just as it benefitted from and encouraged the local ownership of bows and ships. Southampton serves as an excellent example of how local military organization played an important role in coastal defense. Moffett writes, “By 1450 there is little doubt that Southampton had fully adopted firearms into their defensive strategy. Powder, guns, chambers, carts, firearms, and specialists could all be found in the town and were kept at the ready.”291 Southampton relied on the services of specialists to clean, repair, and maintain guns; produce and transport gunpowder and stone shot; and craft necessary items like gun tampons.292 The town was also heavily involved in the production and trade of bows and bowstaves.293 Such diligent military preparation by coastal towns like Southampton is a reflection of the cooperative relationship between the Crown and local authorities, not a lack of central administration over ordnance. In fact, Henry VI appointed a chaplain, John Gadstone, to “serve the king in the tower of Southampton, to celebrate divine service there for the good estate of the king, and to keep the armouries, artilleries, victuals, machines and other goods in the tower for the munition and defence thereof, and to control all works to be done therein.”294

292 Ibid., 186-187.
293 Ibid., 195-196.
294 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 20.
The fact that arms and ammunition already existed throughout the localities meant that there was a pool for the Crown to draw from. The evidence in the patent rolls shows that the Crown continued to utilize a system of purveyance and impressment to mobilize ordnance and the manpower it required. In April 1459, Henry VI commissioned John Judde, master of the king’s ordnance, and several other men to “purvey bows, arrows and cords for bows and other things necessary to the office of the artillery and the offices of ‘des bowyers, flecchers and stryngers,’ and carriage therefor, and to arrest the workmen and labourers necessary herein.” At the end of the year, the king officially granted Judde the “wages of 50£ yearly by the hands of the sheriffs of London from their receipts of the green wax and the subsidy on strangers dwelling in the city.” As tensions grew in 1460, carpenters and other skilled workers were impressed as needed. In February, William Bungey, John Wheler, and John Smyth were commissioned to take wheelers, cartwrights, smiths “and other workmen for the working of carts for the carriage of bombards and cannons to the parts of Wales, and to purvey timber and iron therefor.” The next month, John Judde and several others were commissioned to take wheelers, cartwrights, “and other carpenters, stonemasons, smiths, plumbers, artificers and workmen for the works of the king’s ordnance, and bombards, cannons, ‘culvyns,’ ‘serpyns,’ crossbows, bows, arrows, ‘saltpetre,’ powder for cannons, lead, iron and all other stuff for the said ordnance, and carriage therefor and horses called ‘hakeney.’”

Evidently, Thomas Vaghan replaced John Judde after the Yorkists captured Henry VI. In August, a commission addressing Vaghan as “master of the king’s ordnance” instructed him to take workers and purvey ordnance and carriage, just as the abovementioned commission to Judde. Then, in June 1461, Edward IV granted the office to Philip Hervey, “with fees as in the last year of Edward III and the first of

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295 Ibid., 485.
296 Ibid., 536. According to this entry, wages had not been specified in previous grants which gave Judde his office.
297 Ibid., 564, 604.
298 Ibid., 605.
299 Ibid., 599.
Richard II.” In the meantime, the new king continued to rely on familiar systems to keep his armies equipped. In March, the king commissioned William Lee, “joynour,” to “find carriage and labourers called ‘carters’ with horses and oxen for three cannons or great bumbards which the king has ordered to be sent for the siege of the castle of Thorpwaterfeld.” In June, Nicholas Wydower, bowyer, was commissioned to “provide bows, wood for bows called ‘bowystafes,’ and other things pertaining to his mystery for the king’s equipment in bows, and carriage for the same and bowyers and labourers.” The next month, the king tasked Philip Harveys with procuring workers, ordnance, and carriage in the usual fashion. In August, the king commissioned men to procure “cables, cordage and other gear for a ship called la Grace Dieu at the expense of the king’s kinsman Richard, earl of Warwick.”

The patent rolls for the period of 1459 to 1461 also demonstrate the existence of a range of offices related to the production and keeping of military materiel. In December 1459, Henry VI granted Robert Mykawe “the keeping of the king’s armouries in Pountfret castle, co. York, as Christopher Armorer alias Robynson had, to hold himself or by deputy, with the usual wages, fees and profits.” In July 1461, Edward IV granted Thomas Gybbys the office of “king’s torchmaker and link armourer.” A separate entry states that Thomas Mountgomery also received “the office called ‘lynge armurer’ within the Tower of London.” The same month, Nicholas Wydnare received the office of “making the king’s bows within the Tower of London, with wages from the issues of the counties of Surrey and Sussex.” This is probably a misspelling of Nicholas Wydower. In December, the king affirmed Wydower in the “office of making the king’s bows within the Tower of London,” which he had apparently held since

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300 CPR Edward IV 1461-67, 14.
301 Ibid., 28.
302 Ibid., 33.
303 Ibid., 36.
304 Ibid., 38.
305 CPR Henry VI 1452-61, 537.
307 Ibid., 18.
308 Ibid., 16.
March 4th. Other entries reveal other important offices filled in the summer of 1461. The king appointed Stephen Clampard the office of “master smith within the Tower of London, receiving fees as in the times of Edward III and Richard II at the Exchequer, with a mansion, two gardens and a house called ‘Powederhous’ in the Tower, a mansion on the wharf of the Tower, a parcel of land within the king’s palace of Westminster and all other things pertaining to the office, and a robe yearly at the great wardrobe.” In August, the king appointed Thomas Sandeland as “king’s cannoneer in North Wales and the counties of Chester and Flint.” Later in the year, the king granted Henry Crane the “office of making and keeping the king’s arrows within the Tower of London” as a reward “for his good service to the king and his father.”

Again, the records show the existence of a robust central administration which did not diminish in strength or importance during civil war. The Crown continued to effectively mobilize ordnance and manpower through the use of royal officials and commissioners. The impressment of laborers and craftsmen was an essential aspect of this process. There are no instances of large-scale defiance to these demands recorded within the patent rolls, which suggests that the Crown could still expect obedience from its subjects. Additionally, the records from this period show that numerous individuals were appointed to a variety of offices related to the production and maintenance of arms and ammunition. The power of the Crown was still strong.

The mobilization of arms for expeditionary action required even more administrative activity. Because Edward IV’s preparations in the early 1470s were so extensive, there is considerable

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309 Ibid., 85.
310 Ibid., 23.
311 Ibid., 69.
312 Ibid., 52-53.
information about mobilizing men and materiel for foreign service in the patent rolls for that period. An entry dated December 25, 1472 reads as follows:

Appointment of Roger Kelsale, yeoman of the crown, to take carpenters called ‘whelers’ and ‘cartwrightes’ and other carpenters, stone-cutters, smiths, plomers, bowmakers, boltmakers and other workmen for the works of the king’s ordnance and bombards, cannons, ‘colverynes,’ ‘fowlers,’ ‘serpentynes’ and other canons and powder, sulphur, saltpetre, stone, iron, lead and other necessaries for them, crossbows and bolts for them, arrows, ‘bowstaves,’ ‘bowstringes,’ lances, ‘gleyves’ and hammers and other necessaries for the ordnance and carriage for the same and horses called ‘hakneys’ and ships and other vessels.

The like to the king’s servant Richard Milton, yeoman of the chamber.313

Entries such as this appear frequently throughout this period. Earlier the same month, the king appointed John Moklowe to the same task but included “langdebeves” in the list of arms to be procured and instructed Moklowe to procure carriage “by land and water” rather than specifying to take horses and ships.314 William Moklowe and John Colshyll received similar orders in July 1473 followed by Richard Copcote and John Scott in December 1474.315

These long entries appear often enough in the patent rolls for royal clerks to develop a formula when discussing the maintenance and distribution of royal ordnance. The formula begins by explaining the kinds of craftsmen required, go on to detail the materiel required, and end with instructions to procure transportation. Furthermore, the formula clarifies that the list is not a limitation on what the recipient is to take. The entries in the patent rolls always include instructions to take “other workmen,” “other cannons,” and “other necessaries” in addition to what is specified. In other words, the king cast his nets widely when mobilizing ordnance companies. The fact that the Crown could rely on its commissioners to mobilize so much armament, manpower, and transportation is indicative of its

313 CPR Edward IV 1467-77, 338.
314 Ibid., 365.
315 Ibid., 398, 474.
authority. It is also evidence of the loyalty of the king’s commissioners and local authorities who would have cooperated with them in these matters.

These orders related to ordnance also highlight the importance of craftsmen and other specialists. Andy King discusses the importance of such men in his article “Gunners, Aides and Archers: The Personnel of the English Ordnance Companies in Normandy in the Fifteenth Century.” As the title suggests, King’s article focuses on those serving in France during the Hundred Years’ War. King explains that the development of the artillery component of English military organization began quickening with the establishment of the office of “Master of the King’s Ordnance in Normandy” in 1423. He writes that “the master filled an administrative rather than a technical role and his office, did not, therefore, call for any gunnery expertise.” Using surviving muster records from the 1430s and 1440s, King shines a light on the composition of English artillery teams. He writes, “...it appears that a core company of seven ordnance personnel was retained at Rouen, together with an escort of a man-at-arms and twelve or eighteen archers. The seven specialists consisted of a master forger and his aide, a master carpenter and his aide, a master mason, a master gunner and a carter.” King also provides an excellent explanation of the roles which each specialist performed. He writes, “Forgers, or smiths, were employed to maintain and repair the guns. Carpenters were required to construct wooden firing carriages for the artillery, for guns were usually transported separately, without a carriage, which would be constructed on site, although these were sometimes assembled from prefabricated parts.” Additionally, carpenters constructed mantlets to protect the gun crew during reloading. Because “stone shot remained the usual form of ammunition” during this period, “masons were required to cut the stone to

317 Ibid.
318 Ibid.
319 Ibid., 66-67.
320 Ibid.
size, a task which obviously required a high degree of precision.”

Gunners loaded and fired the guns and carters moved them.

King concludes that there was a “high turnover rate and a surprising lack of specialization” within these units. He explains that “carpenters, forgers and masons must have been recruited from among those who already possessed these skills in civilian life, but nevertheless they were often required to act as jacks-of-all-trades.” The need for gunners only existed in a military context, however. King notes that serving as a gunner did not “offer much in the way of prospects of enrichment” through plunder and the ransoming of prisoners. This fact, in addition to the “dirty and deafeningly noisy environment,” probably contributed to the high turnover rate.

Unsurprisingly, the patent rolls demonstrate that the English kings continued to rely on the same types of specialists well after the end of the Hundred Years’ War. In February 1473 Edward IV appointed “William Crowe, ‘smyth,’ and John Eton, ‘wheler,’ to take carpenters called ‘whelers’ and ‘cartwrightes’ and other carpenters and workmen for the works of waggons and wheels for the king’s ordnance and smiths and timber and iron and other necessaries and carriage for the same.”

The following entry from the same month demonstrates the point:

Appointment of John Michell, ‘mason,’ to take stone-cutters and other workmen for the works of stones for cannons for the king’s ordnance, and stones and other necessaries and carriage for the same.

The like of Walter Ryvers of Wodestok to take artificers called ‘flecchers’ for the works of arrows for the king’s ordnance, and timber, wax, silk, feathers and other necessaries and carriage for the same.

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321 Ibid.
322 Ibid.
323 Ibid., 74.
324 Ibid.
325 Ibid.
326 Ibid., 74-75.
327 CPR Edward IV 1467-77, 479.
The like of John Smyth, ‘wheler,’ to take carpenters called ‘whelers’ and ‘cartwrightes’ and other carpenters and workmen for the works of carts and wheels for the king’s ordnance, and timber and iron and other necessaries and carriage for the same.\textsuperscript{328}

Specialists related to the production of bows and arrows also remained important. Evidently, Edward IV was very interested in having a large supply of bows and arrows produced in the early 1470s. In December 1472, he appointed “Thomas a Byrley of Hekelesfeld and William Swyfte of Sheffield” to “take smiths and other workmen for the works of the king’s ordnance viz for the making of ‘lez arowhedes’ within the county of York and ‘arrowhedes’ and iron and other necessaries and carriage for the same by land and water.”\textsuperscript{329} In February 1473, Thomas Blanchard was tasked with “taking” “workmen called ‘bowyers’ and ‘flecchers’ and other workmen for the works of the king’s ordnance and arrows, ‘bowestringes,’ ‘langedebeves,’ lances, ‘gleyes,’ hammers and other necessaries.”\textsuperscript{330} The following month, three different men were appointed to “take sheaves of arrows, arrowheads, timber, feathers, silk, wax and other necessaries for the king’s arrows within the Tower of London or for the present army and carriage for the same and ‘flecchers’ and other labourers and workmen.”\textsuperscript{331} In February 1474, the king granted Thomas Marsburgh “the office of surveyor of the king’s bowmakers within the Tower of London, the office of keeper of the king’s bows within the Tower and the office of keeping, making, and providing the king’s bows in the said Tower and the town of Calais, the land of Ireland and elsewhere and cords for them.”\textsuperscript{332} According to the grant, Thomas had been active in this office since August 1473.\textsuperscript{333} In May 1474, Edward IV sent commissions to men throughout England “to make payments of prest money to fletchers for the manufacture of ‘shefe arrowes,’ workmen for the manufacture of bows and ‘bowestaves,’ smiths for the manufacture of arrowheads and workmen called

\textsuperscript{328} Ibid., 369.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid., 362.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid., 379. Like entry with the same date appears on pages 372-373.
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid., 395.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid., 420. Nicholas Wydower previously held this office.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid.
‘strengers’ for the manufacture of strings for bows.”^334 The commission explicitly states that the king “caused proclamations to be made by the sheriffs... for the manufacture of the same with all speed for the ordnance of the army going with him to France for the recovery of that realm and his right there.”^335 Similar commissions were sent out again in December for the same reason.^336

The king wanted a lot more than just cannons, bows, and arrows. In the months leading up to the invasion of France in 1475, more detailed entries start to appear in the patent rolls. In February, the king commissioned James Hyet to “take 80 diggers or workmen called ‘myners’” for the expedition to France.^337 The following month, the king issued a very detailed commission to William Rosse, which reads as follows:

Commission to William Rosse, esquire, to take carpenters called ‘whelers’ and ‘cartwrightes’ and other carpenters, joiners, stonecutters, smiths, plumbers, ‘shippewrights,’ ‘coupers,’ ‘sawyers,’ ‘flecchers,’ ‘chargiotmen,’ ‘horsharneys makers’ and other workmen within the realm of England and the town and marches of Calais and elsewhere under the king’s obedience for the works of the king’s ordnance, and bombards, cannons, culverins, ‘fowelers,’ ‘serpentynes,’ and other cannon, powder, sulphur, saltpetre, stone, iron, lead and other necessaries, crossbows and bolts for them, bows, arrows, ‘arrowtymbre,’ ‘bowestaves,’ ‘bowestrynges,’ ‘billes,’ ‘axes,’ ‘langedebefes,’ lances, ‘gleyves,’ hammers, armaments of war, oaks, elms, ashes, beeches, alder, birch, holm and other timber, ‘tanned leder’ and ‘calveskynnes’ and other necessaries for the ordnance, and all ships and vessels of 16 tons and over and masters and mariners for them.^338

Also in March, Thomas Asshe and Nicholas Longe were commissioned to “take workmen called ‘brygandynemakers’ and all stuffs necessary for making ‘brygandynes.’”^339 The king’s saddler, John Jakes, received a commission to “take saddles, ‘traisis,’ hide and other necessaries for the office of saddler for the king’s voyage to France.”^340 Thomas Brewer, “bogemaker,” was commissioned to “take

^334 Ibid., 462.  
^335 Ibid.  
^336 Ibid., 492.  
^337 Ibid., 495.  
^338 Ibid., 494.  
^339 Ibid., 535.  
^340 Ibid.
hides and other necessaries for making leather bags, ‘berehides’ and ‘clothsackes,’ and workmen for the same.”\textsuperscript{341} In May, the king appointed Thomas Thomson, “aresmaker,” to “take workmen called ‘tapestre wevers’ for the king’s works of cloth called ‘tapettis’ to be made for horses called ‘somehors’ and ‘chariott hors.’”\textsuperscript{342}

All of this evidence demonstrates the range of expertise which the Crown commanded during this period. When it came to military matters, the king had the authority to impress specialists and general laborers for service overseas. More specifically, the king could delegate such authority to named individuals and expect that those individuals would wield that authority in the Crown’s best interest. The Crown could even compel localities to produce large numbers of bows and arrows. An overseas expedition could never materialize if the king could not command the obedience of the men he empowered or the men being impressed. The fact that such expeditions were organized successfully is testament to the enduring power of the English Crown, the loyalty of its agents, and the obedience of its subjects.

Provisions

A large army required large quantities of provisions. Without a centralized administration capable of mobilizing food, drink, and transportation, keeping an expeditionary army together would have been a difficult task. The information contained within the patent rolls demonstrates that the Crown presided over a robust administration capable of victualling its expeditionary armies. The success of a large-scale mobilization of food and drink, like the one required for Edward IV’s invasion of France in 1475, depended on the Crown’s ability to project its authority through royal agents.

\textsuperscript{341} Ibid., 537.
\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., 525.
The records related to the expedition of 1475 are particularly informative about how the Crown provided for its forces. Because food is perishable, victuals were prepared in May and June, just before the invading army departed. On May 8, the king appointed Stephen Frynde to “take wheat, beeves, muttons, sea-fish and fresh-water fish and all victuals for the king’s army soon to be sent to France.”

The same month, Edmund Countes and William Felsted were appointed to “take wheat, malt, beeves, muttons, pigs, sea-fish and fresh-water fish and all necessaries for the king’s army... and carriage for the same.” Other entries concerning victuals follow the same formula with only slight variations. On May 14, Robert Chattok and Robert Talbott were appointed to “take wheat, wine, ale, beeves, muttons, sea-fish and fresh-water fish and other victuals for the king’s army... and carriage for the same.” On June 1, Robert Waryngton was appointed to “take wheat, flour, beeves, muttons, sea fish and fresh-water fish and all other victuals for the king’s army... and carriage for the same.” On June 14, John Lynfورد was ordered to “take beeves, muttons, sea fish and fresh-water fish and other victuals for the army... and carriage for the same.” Days later, Thomas Desford was ordered to “take beeves, muttons, fish etc” and Druett Gossiplyn was appointed to “take wheat, oats, beeves, muttons, sea fish and fresh-water fish etc.” As late as July 1, George Grenefeld was appointed to “take wheat, beeves, muttons, sea fish and fresh-water fish and other victuals for the king’s army... and carriage for the same.”

As these records demonstrate, the Crown called on a number of men to mobilize provisions for the army. If there were any instances in which local authorities refused to cooperate with the Crown in these matters, they do not appear in the records. Given the Crown’s usual diligence about recording the

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343 Ibid., 516.
344 Ibid.
345 Ibid., 515.
346 Ibid., 529.
347 Ibid., 537.
348 Ibid.
349 Ibid., 532.
consequences of disobedience, it is reasonable to assume that a refusal to provide provisions for the army would have warranted an entry in the patent rolls. The fact that no such entry appears suggests that the king’s commissioners faced minimal resistance from the localities.

Some entries provide more information about what sort of “carriage” was required for so many provisions. On May 11, Robert Michelson was commissioned to “take ships and vessels for the carriage of 4,000 quarters of wheat for the victualling of the king’s army to be sent to France... and masters and mariners for them and carriage by land if necessary.” On May 24, John Cauthorn was similarly commissioned to “take ships and vessels in the ports of Boston and Grymesby and elsewhere if necessary for the carriage of 2,000 quarters of wheat flour for the victualling of the king’s army... and masters and mariners for them and carriage by land if necessary.” These commissions refer only to the specified quantities of wheat and make no mention of all of the meat, fish, ale, and other provisions mentioned in other orders. Whether all of the above-mentioned victuals were procured from within the British Isles is unclear from the records. It is possible that some were acquired on the continent and did not require transportation across the channel. In any case, a number of the ships which sailed across the channel with Edward IV’s army were filled with wheat and other victuals.

Again, the king’s power to command his subjects and mobilize their resources is apparent. To provide enough victuals for a large overseas expedition, the king needed to be able to delegate the authority to purvey and seize what the army required. Royal agents, acting on the king’s authority, needed to be able to compel obedience from the subjects who were expected to provide services, victuals, or transportation. Furthermore, diverting large quantities of wheat and other foodstuffs to the use of the army must have had an impact on the civilian population of England. The fact that the army

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350 Ibid., 526.
351 Ibid., 527.
was mobilized and victualled despite the strain it must have placed upon the domestic food supply is indicative of the Crown’s ability to project its authority.

Domestic conflict did not require the same degree of logistical planning as overseas service, but provisions still warranted royal administration. As Henry VI mobilized naval forces against the earl of Warwick in March 1460, he commissioned Robert Sende and Henry Bisshop to “purvey wheat, meal, oxen, sheep, and other flesh and fish, and ale, beer and all other victuals for the money of Henry, duke of Exeter, to victual the ships.” Henry VI’s commission to Simon Hammes to arrest masters and mariners for Exeter’s fleet included similar instructions to purvey victuals for *la Marie.* In March 1461, Edward IV commissioned Robert Elmham and several others to “buy and provide wheat, rye, barley, beans, peas, and other kinds of grain for the king’s store.” Around the same time, he appointed William Rippley and William Harpcote to “provide victuals and habiliments of war and carriage for the same for the king’s use in marching against the rebels.” In May, several men were appointed to “provide wheat, malt, oxen, muttons, fish, salt, and other things for the victualling of the king’s ships, and carriage for the same.” John Stokes, John Aldey, Henry Auger, and Thomas Meliour each received vague commissions to “provide all kinds of victuals for an expedition by sea against the king’s enemies.” In August, John Otter and several others were ordered to “provide wheat, beans, peas, fish, wine, ale and other victuals” for *la Grace Dieu* in addition to ordnance and workers.

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352 *CPR Henry VI 1452-61*, 567.
353 Ibid., 602.
355 Ibid., 9.
356 Ibid., 13.
357 Ibid., 14.
358 Ibid., 38.
V. CONCLUSION

As the evidence from the patent rolls suggests, English military organization during this period depended on a functional relationship between the Crown and its subjects. Expeditionary forces relied on the Crown’s ability to provide funding, transportation, victuals, ordnance, and specialists. Mobilization for coastal defense and other domestic service was based on the Crown’s authority to raise local forces via commissions of array. The maintenance and administration of garrisons required royal officers and constant funding. Whenever possible, the Crown funded military forces by granting access to local sources of revenue which he had the authority to manipulate. In short, the Crown commanded the manpower and resources which made English military forces function.

The Crown was never weak and the nobility never rallied against it. If Henry VI was indeed a flawed king, as many suggest, the nobility had a vested interest in propping him up to maintain the Crown’s prestige. The coercive authority of the Crown is what made military action legitimate and possible. This is why the period of civil war from 1459 until Edward IV’s ascension to the throne in 1461 played out as a war over custody of Henry VI. He represented the Crown, the source of legitimate military authority. The Yorkists could not legitimately fight against the king, but they could “rescue” him from the influence of the Lancastrians. With Henry VI in their custody, the Yorkists were able to wield his military authority for a while. In the king’s name, they mobilized men and resources against the Lancastrians. They could not dispose of Henry VI until the Crown was placed on the head of Edward IV. From that point on, Edward IV could and did wield royal authority openly as reigning king. People chose sides, but everyone claimed to act on behalf of who they believed to be the true king of England.
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