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Banner With the Lion of St. Mark (banner) Italy, Venice, 1675.
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Hamilton's Expedition of 1639: The Contours of Amphibious Warfare

BY MARK CHARLES FISSEL

ABSTRACT. This essay considers the challenges faced by amphibious operations, namely formulating a realistic strategy. Early-modern European states sometimes attempted bold strategies that incorporated conjunct amphibious operations, for example the Marquess of Hamilton's expedition, up Britain's eastern coastline, in 1639. That enterprise was bedeviled by a host of logistical problems, stemming from administrative and institutional failures. Disparities between Court and Country material interests (and *mentalité*) made it difficult for the Crown to fathom below the surface of local governmental *apparati*. Monarchical myopia further extended to the organs of central government as well as to the realm's geographically distant local administrations. The results included military defeat, wastage of limited resources, and the inflammation of Britain's political crisis.

KEYWORDS. AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE – FIRST BISHOPS' WAR – COVENANTERS – CHARLES I – MARQUESS OF HAMILTON – BRITISH CIVIL WAR – MILITIA – STUART ENGLAND



[Fig. 1: A royal vessel during the reign of Charles I. The mainmast flies a command flag. Note the Royal Arms emblazoned on her stern. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]



[Fig. 2: An imaginary clash between English and Scottish warships, in “The Kingdome of Scotland” (1610) by cartographer John Speed; a curiously portentous embellishment because when published, the likelihood of Scots and English warring against each other was virtually nil given the Union of Crowns and that a Scot (James VI and I) sat upon the “British” throne. Indeed, the first Stuart king

strove to minimize the traditional enmity between these his two kingdoms. Ironically, Charles I (portrayed in the margin of Speed’s 1610 map as a royal youth) would foment (British civil) wars lasting from 1639 to 1651. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

During the twentieth century amphibious operations enjoyed monumental successes. That perspective obscures inherent difficulties in mounting combined operations in the pre-industrial world. The Marquess of Hamilton’s expedition of 1639, which never culminated in an assault or was even tested, nevertheless betrays the obstacles in waging early-modern warfare. That the expedition failed to “hit the beach” illustrates the initial challenge in amphibious operations, namely formulating a realistic strategy. This essay considers the latter, and its tangential impediments in fighting amphibious wars, (a) institutional complications, (b) recruitment of “marines”, (c) logistics and supply, (d) insufficiently standardized weapons, and (e) weather and associated environmental conditions.¹

As royal commissioner appointed to defuse the Scottish Prayer Book Rebellion of 1637, the Marquess of Hamilton (James Hamilton, third Marquess, later Duke) was dispatched by Charles I to quell the turmoil resulting from the imposition of an English liturgy and prayer book upon a Presbyterian Kirk.

To Hamilton fell the charge to achieve by force what he had failed to gain by statecraft. The King mobilized England for a spring 1639 Scottish war. Charles envisioned four seaborne offensives in combined operations with land forces.

¹ For a narrative, see Mark C. FISSSEL, *The Bishops’ Wars. Charles I’s campaigns against Scotland, 1638-1640*, CUP, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 1-61. The author thanks Virgilio Ilari and Ian Copestake for assistance above and beyond the call of duty. An anonymous reader generously offered recommendations that improved the final draft.



[Fig. 3: The St. Giles “riot” in Edinburgh. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

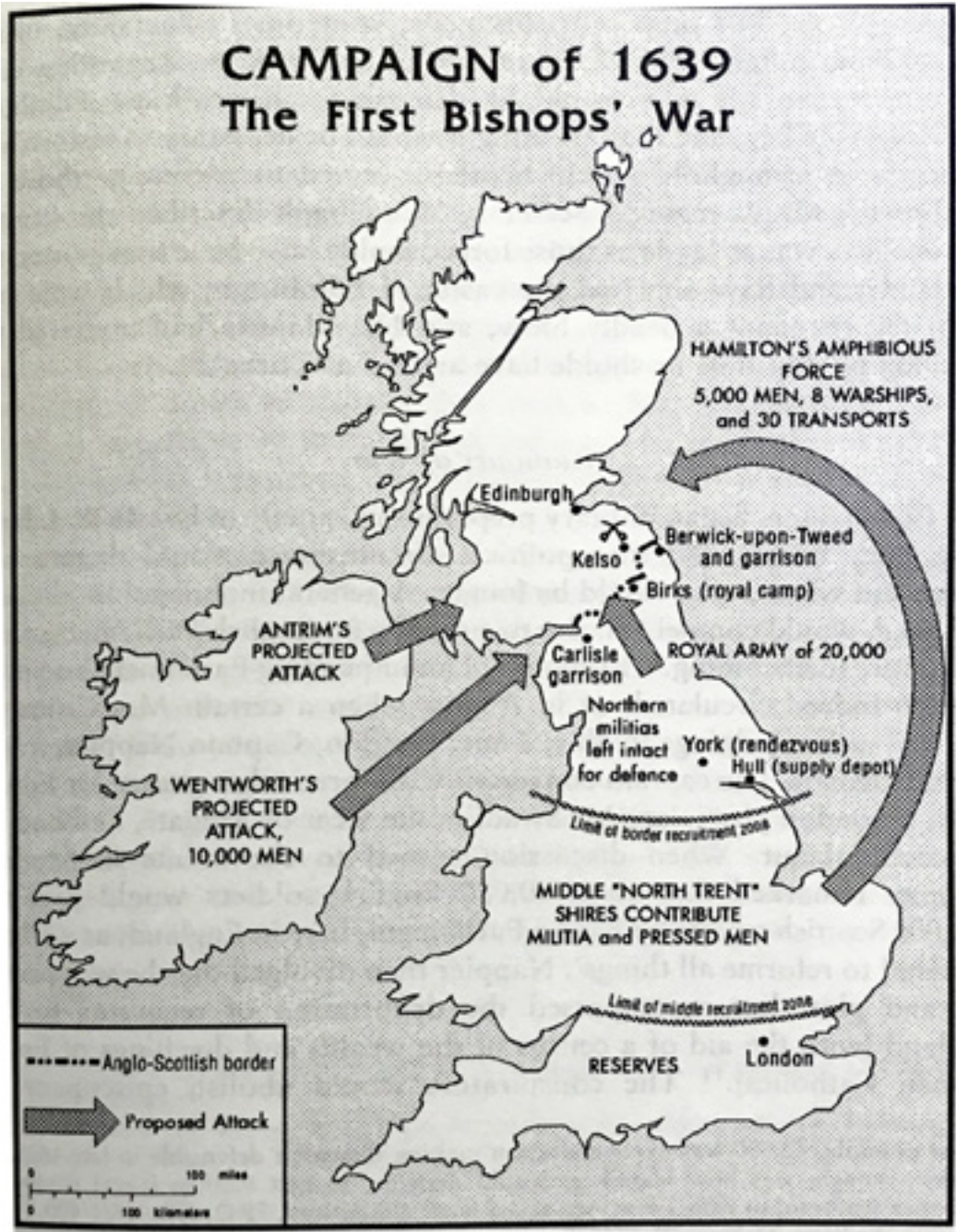
Whilst a royal army moved north to the Scottish border, the King would unleash amphibious expeditions to engage the flanks and rear of the Covenanters on guard beyond the River Tweed. Lord Deputy Sir Thomas Wentworth’s Irish army, and that of Randall MacDonnell Earl of Antrim’s clansmen, would alight separately upon the Scottish west coast. Hamilton and the Earl of Lindsey respectively planned to disembark on the eastern shores of Scotland, or (in Lindsey’s case) northern England if tactics dictated a change in plan. During the first week in April 1639, Secretary Sir Henry Vane, Hamilton, and Antrim refined their concocted plan, a strategy incorporating three independent amphibious forces, those of Wentworth, Antrim, and Hamilton. The design was communicated immediately to the King upon Vane’s arrival at York. Charles approved. When the time came, the Marquess would decide whether “too goe fer Scotland” or hold the flotilla in readiness at Holy Island, awaiting further orders². The Marquess’ tactics depended upon a synchronized conjunction of the royal army and Wentworth’s and Antrim’s Irish expeditionary forces.

Hamilton’s and Lindsey’s “marines” would be the shire-trained bands, mili-

² The National Records of Scotland (NRS), Hamilton Muniments, GD 406/1/1213.



[Fig. 4: The Marquess of Hamilton (1606-1649). Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]



[Fig. 5: Map copyright by the author. Source: FISSEL, *Bishops' Wars*, cit., p. 5.]

tiamen experienced in handling weapons. There would be little opportunity for drilling raw men. From the country's point-of-view, however, the "perfect militia" existed for defense, not offensive actions far from home (despite Tudor precedents for sending trained band soldiers to Ireland and to the Continent). The King knew not to draw manpower from the counties above the River Trent, reserving a full-strength northern militia once war commenced. East Anglia and the adjoining southeastern shires of Essex, Kent, and Lincolnshire, however, lay far behind the army's staging areas. This region could supply Hamilton with three trained regiments, supplemented by Lincolnshiresmen under the Earl of Lindsey.

Hamilton expected to escort his "select" militiamen to the ports of Harwich (County Essex), Yarmouth (Norfolk), and Gravesend (Kent). Essex would (ultimately) contribute 1,100 soldiers, and Suffolk 1,200, to Harwich. Norfolk was tasked with dispatching 1,500 trained bandsmen to Yarmouth, where they would rendezvous with 300 Cambridgeshire militia. Kent's 1,000 infantrymen would congregate at Gravesend. Simultaneously Lindsey would raise militiamen in Lincolnshire and coordinate with Hamilton along the eastern coast.

Contingents of two-thirds musketeers and one-third pikemen commenced drilling immediately. The county community provided "armes compleate", money, and victuals³. Hamilton would command 5,100 militiamen, seconded by Lindsey's Lincolnshire trained bandsmen. The Marquess would sail north, disembark, and harass the Covenanters from the rear, threatening Edinburgh, diverting Covenanter forces from the Borders, thus succoring that English army advancing by land. Combined operations augmented the main English force that ultimately fielded roughly between 15,000 to 19,000 men (though a 40,000-man army had been touted early on) that would trudge to the Anglo-Scottish borders.

The expedition of 1639 should have impressed – Charles's vaunted "ship money" fleet (financed by an annual nationwide tax levy) would convey the "perfect militia" (the trained bands reinvigorated during Charles' reign). In reality, bureaucratic impediments stymied the royal strategy, for example the regional difficulties in recruitment of "marines", the logistics of supply, and insufficiently standardized weapons. Nevertheless, Hamilton's fleet made its way north in April and May of 1639. Troops and transports materialized. However, the structural

³ E.g., B.W. QUINTRELL (Ed.), *The Maynard Lieutenancy Book, 1608-1639*, Essex Historical Documents, vol. 3, part 2, Chelmsford, 1993, p. 326, item 708.



[Fig. 6: Hamilton's recruiting area: Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Suffolk, from a Jansson-Hondius map of 1638. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

collapses of the expedition invite examination. Great Yarmouth specifically quarreled with Charles I over taxation. The town constituted “a serious challenge to order and authority”. Yarmouth aggravated Charles, who agreed with his Attorney General that it was a “towne of sectaryes, averse to all government but ther owne popular way . . .” Regional governance confounded military preparations.⁴

All Norfolk had groaned under the demands of war in the 1620s. Fiscal grievances and confessional unrest made Hamilton's recruiting ground recalcitrant. Although in 1639 Charles would be operating within Britain, there were precedents for long-range expeditions. Charles' amphibious operations of 1625 and

4 Richard CUST, «Anti-puritanism and urban politics: Charles I and Great Yarmouth», *The Historical Journal*, 35, 1 (March 1992), pp. 2-3, 5-6.

1627 had aimed at continental targets. Successive presses for Cadiz, the Danish King, and Rhé inflamed resistance to military charges. Violence between civilians and soldiers further incited the localities against the Crown. For example, five companies of Irish soldiers, who had fought at Rhé in 1627, brawled with the inhabitants of Witham, Essex on St Patrick's Day 1628.⁵ These Roman Catholic warriors were subsequently transferred to billets in Norfolk – 200 in Norwich, 100 in King's Lynn, 100 in the hundreds of Harleston and Rednall, and last but not least, 100 lodged in Yarmouth.⁶ In August 1628, at a public meeting in King's Lynn, "a man grave in years" and "learned in the Lawes" questioned the legal basis of military charges, especially billeting rates. This occurred within the context of the Forced Loan and Petition of Right controversies, which provided a conceptual framework for resistance, civic and religious outrage, and legal justification for dragging one's heels in service of the Caroline regime. The deputy lieutenants reported that the remarks "called into question the leauye of monye which we were necessited to make for the instant payment and conduct for the Irish Souldiers heere billited"⁷ The central government's suppression of puritan preaching, coinciding with imposition of the 1628 Forced Loan further provoked Norfolk's "wilfullness to oppose"⁸.

Into this hornets' nest strode Hamilton. A strategic port, Yarmouth carried the responsibility of finding mariners for the Crown's naval activities. Ships, too, were financed from throughout the shire, but as a harbor, Yarmouth also shouldered duties regarding the outfitting of royal naval vessels. In early 1639, the corporation discovered its liability for pressed soldiers for both the army's overland expedition, as well as for supporting Hamilton's enterprise. East Anglia and its entire region (Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, and Kent) would field trained soldiers for Hamilton whilst pressing recruits destined to rendezvous at York. This confluence of military burdens resuscitated the obstreperousness of the 1620s. Along with the levy of men, Great Yarmouth's corporation would also have to raise £20 5s. for coats and conduct. And then there was the

5 Mark C. FISSEL, *English Warfare, 1511-1642*, Routledge, London, 2001, pp. 110-111.

6 W. RYE (Ed.), *State Papers relating to Musters, Beacons, Shipmoney, etc., in Norfolk, from 1626 chiefly to the Beginning of the Civil War*, Norwich, 1907, p. 132. Also pp. 121, 123-124, and 141.

7 RYE, cit., p. 141.

8 CUST, cit., p. 1, 10

matter of finding billets for Hamilton's 1,500 "marines"⁹.

When the shire companies gathered, their primary weakness, namely lack of training, was not so apparent. Sir Nicholas Byron's Essex infantry consisted of two parts musket and one part pike, and were so "commodiously coated, well-armed, well-clothed and able-bodied that the Colonel himselfe did confesse he never saw any better"¹⁰. Problems were identified, though. Obtaining boats in which to convey the men to the embarkation point had been expensive. Nor had the deputy lieutenants and justices of the peace compiled a "list of the souldiers unto the Lord General," because neither the muster-master nor his deputy had attended.¹¹ The conductors possessing the muster rolls refused to "come over the water" (presumably from Shotly) to Harwich and departed without leave. Nonetheless, the justices and lieutenants persevered, supplying Byron with £680 for 17 days' pay at the rate of an 8d. *per diem* per soldier¹².

Closer inspection, however, revealed numerous untrained men in the ranks.¹³ On November 18, 1638, the Council had uncharacteristically authorized winter musters to ascertain whether training and equipment were sufficient for immediate service. The Lords Lieutenant relayed these orders to the deputy lieutenants and justices of the peace, going further by requiring appointment of sergeants and corporals to hone the militiamen's training. The deputy lieutenants, too, went beyond the call of duty by ordering the foot company captains to require muskets to be of a single uniform bore¹⁴.

The Crown's February 18, 1639 instructions later directed 1,500 Essex trained bandsmen to a rendezvous at York (or elsewhere). Then on March 15, 400 Essex conscripts were summoned to Selby-upon-Ouse in Yorkshire. None of these new-

9 Norwich Record Office (NRO), Y/C19/6, Great Yarmouth Assembly Book, October 1625-September 1642, ff. 433-433v.

10 The National Archives, Kew (TNA), State Papers Domestic, Charles I, SP 16 /417/117.

11 TNA, SP 16/417/117.

12 TNA, SP 16/417/117.

13 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Firth MS. c.4, a letter-book containing correspondence of deputy lieutenants and justices of the peace in Essex, 1608-1639, ff. 604-605; QUINTRELL, cit., pp. 326-327, no. 708, cross-referencing TNA, SP 16/413/111; *Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), Calendar of the manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Salisbury ... preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, 1612-1668*, vol. 22, OWEN, G.D., ed., p. 299; SP 16/412/88; SP 16/412/95.

14 QUINTRELL, cit., pp. 320-324, nos. 700, 701, 704.

ly pressed 400 infantry, however, were “to bee taken out of the trayned bands”¹⁵. A postscript then rerouted the 400 raw men to Harwich rather than to Selby, ostensibly because the Crown preferred to waft the men to Hull, rather than march them. Five days later, 1,100 of the 1,500 trained bandsmen that had been ordered to be selected back in February were now also diverted from the York rendezvous to Harwich and prepared to embark by April 10¹⁶. Scotland was mentioned only on March 19, in Charles’s letter to the Lords Lieutenant¹⁷.

In what appears to be a compromise when faced with resistance to military charges, as seen in Norfolk, a “substitution clause” (for which there was legal precedent) was permitted¹⁸. The Crown’s directions of February 18 included a subtle but fatal modification on orders which bore the royal signature as well as those members of the Privy Council. The Earl of Warwick and Lord Maynard relayed these instructions to their deputy lieutenants, that infantry captains should “take speciall Care in this choyce to spare such as are housholders and that are by reason of severall Charges [financial burdens] lesse fitt for this service and . . . appointe others in their steade”¹⁹. King and Council somehow blinked and admitted substitutes (I have found no documentation illustrative of those deliberations, but the action resembles the Council’s dismantling of objectionable monopolies and patents in November 1638, one week before the musters order)²⁰.

Allowance for substitution (which flew in the face of what was needed in an expeditionary force) had been semi-official policy amongst the Lieutenancy²¹. Substitution exemplifies how politics (within the context of Caroline military impositions) encouraged socially tolerable policies within the localities, far from Whitehall’s council chambers. The judicious use of the substitution clause depleted the number of trained soldiers. The Marquess’ marines were “almost all hyred, raw and inexpert in the use of their armes and consequently unfit for present

15 Bodleian Library, Firth MS. cit., ff. 606-607, 15 March 1638/9; QUINTRELL, cit., pp. 327-329, item 709, and p. 413, note 545; TNA, SP 16/418/8.

16 QUINTRELL, cit., p. 329 no. 710.

17 QUINTRELL, cit., p. 330, no. 711.

18 FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., pp. 215-263.

19 Bodleian Library, Firth MS., cit., f. 610; QUINTRELL, cit., p. 331, item 713.

20 FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., pp. 69-70, note 25.

21 British Library, London, Additional Ms. 39,245, Wodehouse Lieutenancy Papers, XXVIII, f. 174v/386; University of Minnesota Library, Phillipps Ms. 3863, ff. 90-92; FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., p. 248.

service”²². Hamilton’s regiments needed to be militia because they would be executing an amphibious landing and would have little opportunity to train aboard ship. Hamilton’s regiments would likely face immediate combat.

The flawed nature of this strategy is evidenced in a dispatch from the Marquess to the King on May 7: “[S]ume days must pase before I shal be abill to offend them [the Covenanters] in anie considerabill uay more then by stoping of the trade, and keeping of them in allarmes, in regard thatt my men can not handill, lett be discharge, ther muscats”²³. England’s mobilization was chaotically orchestrated. Hierarchies of power negotiated how Hamilton’s military needs were to be met. Indulgence in the substitution clause rendered Kent’s contribution to Hamilton’s expedition nescient of the art of war. On April 9, an officer in Kent’s contingent appeared at the Drury Lane offices of Sir Francis Windebank, secretary to the King, and disclosed the insufficiency of Kent’s men and arms. The officer noted the absence of the shire’s Lord Lieutenant, who was attending the royal standard at York, which necessitated that the King’s secretary meddle in the affairs of the deputy lieutenants²⁴. The regime’s leadership was thus thinly spread and the troops unsatisfactory.

Hamilton, too, complained about the Kentish men and now railed about Essex and Cambridgeshire: “I find the men and armes, which are Come out of Esex, and Cambridge shyres to be woorst”²⁵. When on April 10, Sir Thomas Morton inspected his regiment of Kentish militiamen at Gravesend the rampant invocation of the substitution clause was obvious. Morton faulted not the deputy lieutenants but the “subordinate officers” who flagrantly abused the well-meant clause provided that the replacements were able and armed (which was not always the case)²⁶. Morton fumed to London,

I finde divers defectes in their armes, and in the persons of the men . . . some who being dubble arm’d have made choice to furnish these men with the worst and retained their best The men indeede are not any

22 TNA, SP 16/418/1.

23 S.R. GARDINER (Ed.), *The Hamilton Papers*, Camden Society, new series, vol. 28, London, 1880, p. 79, May 7; *Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC), Report on the manuscripts of the Duke of Hamilton*, London, 1887, p. 102, no. 158.

24 NRS, GD 406/1/812; FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., p. 206.

25 NRS, GD 406/1/82, f. 2.

26 TNA, SP 16/417/72; FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., pp. 241-263.

of them of the trained bandes²⁷.

Morton set about remedying the defects of the arms, and would requisition weapons from the Tower if need be, while waiting on the “one shipp not yet fallen down” into the port of Gravesend. Hamilton underscored Morton’s discontent. Delayed, then hurried, departures confounded training. The Marquess wrote to Laud on April 12, 1639,

“that which is irremediable is, the men which are come from Kent are hardly any one of them of the trained bandes, altogether untrained, there being hardly 50 of the 1000 that ever had a Muskett in their hands. If the rest of the Shires send such [men] it is easie to coniecture what service they will performe.”²⁸

Inadequately commanded untrained men engaged in combat, having never fired muskets, was a troubling prospect²⁹. Hamilton repeated his complaints nearly verbatim two days later, to Charles I, on April 15, that of the 5,000 soldiers supplied by the counties only 200 “euer had a muscatt in their hand”. Their training was “the only thing trubbles me”, for the men were “extrem good bodies” and “uell clothed”³⁰. The muskets were of various bores. Other arms were also defective, but the primary deficiency in the force was the dearth of training.

Too few experienced officers (which many county lieutenants had anticipated), also discouraged drilling. Amphibious assault needed to be well-officered, especially at the non-commissioned level. Sir Nicholas Byron attempted to exchange a score of his substitutes for 20 veterans of the Low Countries Wars, who would serve as sergeants in his regiment. On April 7, the Privy Council foisted the matter on the Lord Mayor of London, who was to press a score of the city’s residents to take the “first passage into Holland to supply the roomes of so many old soldiers” fit to be sergeants.³¹ In Morton’s regiment, Captain Humphrey Brookbench hurried to London to recruit, by impressment if necessary, a dozen “fitt” sergeants³². All three regiments, and especially that of Sir Simon Harcourt, lacked junior officers. Harcourt’s regiment, consisting “of souldiers totallie igno-

27 TNA, SP 16/417/72.

28 NRS, GD 406/1/909.

29 NRS, GD 406/1/820.

30 GARDINER, cit., p. 73.

31 TNA, Privy Council Register, PC 2/50, ff. 225-226.

32 TNA, PC 2/50, f. 235.

rant and without officers", was typical. Furthermore, Harcourt experienced severe seasickness. A lieutenant appointed in his stead had not yet arrived from the Low Countries. Three captaincies and many lieutenantcies remained unfilled³³. The lack of trained soldiers of course complicated finding sergeants and corporals. The contingents from Norfolk, Suffolk, Kent, Essex, and Cambridgeshire, as they debouched from village and town to their respective ports, were deficient in training, leadership, and standardized equipment.

At 1:00 pm on the 18th April, Morton and Byron marched their regiments into Yarmouth rendezvousing with Hamilton and Harcourt. The Marquess shared his assessment the King:

what service [these untrained men] will be able to doe, or how to gouerne them without officers, I leaue it to your Matties consideration. Your Mattie, I expected trained men, uel armed and expert in the handling of them, who at our verie first landing might a been able to haue done service. It is true that when I wryte last I kneu what the Kentishe men were, but I hoped that they had been the worst, but nou I find them all alike³⁴.

Hamilton's complaints would be pursued, ultimately. The Privy Council questioned the deputy lieutenants of Cambridgeshire³⁵. Lord Lieutenant the Earl of Suffolk, too, inquired into the matter. As the deputies understood it, Hamilton and his colonels were

much unsatisfied touching the soldiers delivered over to his officers out of this countie [Cambridgeshire] not only by reason of the insufficiencye and defects as well in the men as the armes, but likewise of our negligense and illecariage [ill-carriage] there For the habilitie of the men wee doe confidently affirm that those wee sent are as able as any that were ever sent out of this countye, and for their persons better than if the trayned men had been sent. For their armes, they were the choicest of the whole countie, which appeared by the captaines takeing them with them, notwithstanding they had of us above £140 for defect of head pieces and £15 for drums³⁶.

The deputy lieutenants allowed trained bandsmen to substitute, provided they alleged just cause for the switch. They then mustered an able-bodied man to fill

33 NRS, GD 406/1/11144; GARDINER, cit., pp. 73-74; HMC, *Hamilton*, cit., p. 102.

34 NRS, GD 406/1/1213.

35 TNA, SP 16/420/112.

36 TNA, SP 16/421/56.

their place in the ranks. If terms were agreeable to both parties, the lieutenants deferred. When a contractual agreement had not or could not be achieved, local authorities implemented a general rule (to which the militiamen consented) that £3 would be provided to substitutes that had been clothed by their “sponsor”; where no clothing had been proffered, then 40 shillings would be the acceptable rate, in addition to the standard fee of £3³⁷. The Crown authorized instructions regarding the circumstances under which “pressed” or “selected” militia might opt out of service, and these criteria were passed on (sometimes paraphrased) by the deputy lieutenants³⁸. In comparison with Kent’s poor performance, Cambridgeshire’s contingents did not seem terribly defective, though Hamilton justifiably disputed such an argument³⁹.

The recruits selected for Hamilton’s expedition were not uniformly unsatisfactory. Because Suffolk’s detachment was “both weill armed, and cloathed”, its lieutenants were commended as more diligent than the recalcitrant authorities in Essex⁴⁰. On May 18, the shire’s Lord Lieutenant heaped encomia upon his deputies, conveying the Privy Council’s contentment “for your great Care and well performance of his Majesties Service in sending your men of the Trayned Bands by Marques Hambleton which was soe well liked of”⁴¹ Given the accepted practice of the substitution clause and the furor over the quality of soldiers proffered to Hamilton, a glimpse into the identity of Suffolk’s troops should be gleaned from Sir Robert Crane’s lieutenancy book⁴². Crane had served as trained band captain, justice of the peace, and deputy lieutenant, so his account of recruitment in his corner of South Suffolk is reliable. The Crown had originally required of Suffolk 1,500 militia, 75 men from each company. That figure was then reduced to 1,200, so Crane selected 60 trained bandsmen, with the caveat that substitutes were included in the contingent and gentlemen had provided arms in lieu of sponsoring a recruit. The occupations of the 60 chosen from Crane’s band connote skilled men. Their trades included shoemaker, feltmaker, gardener, weaver, husbandman, tanner, shearman, cooper, comber,

37 TNA, SP 16/421/55.

38 FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., pp. 247-248.

39 FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., pp. 253-255.

40 NRS, GD 406/1/939, f. 2.

41 British Library, Additional Ms. 39,245, cit., f. 182/402.

42 British Library, Additional Ms. 39,245, cit., ff. 177v-179v.



[Fig. 7: A militiaman. From Jacob De Gheyn's *The Exercise of Armes* (1607).
Source: author's collection.]

tailor, and joiner. The names, occupations, and dwellings (from settlements in the vicinity east of Ipswich) of some trailing pikes for Hamilton were William Lightman (a gardener from Sudbury), Roger Greene and Robert Warren (husbandmen from Acton), Robert Paine (a sheerman from Boxford), Simon Arnold (a tanner from Wiston), Roger Ranson (a feltmaker from Stoke) and Christopher Scarlet of Nayland sponsored an agricultural laborer, Bartholomew Marsh, to tote a pike⁴³. Sturdy farming lads and clothmaking tradesmen made up Hamilton's contingent, garnished with a few craftsmen (tanner, tailor, shoemaker, etc.)⁴⁴. Suffolk did not send rogues and vagabonds, nor empty its jails. The institutional failures of the expedition were surmountable.

The deputy lieutenants of Suffolk were investigated nonetheless, despite their favorable performance in 1639. On May 23, those involved in selecting militiamen were ordered to "make a particular and speedie certificate, of all such faultes as may have bin by some Committed, in perverteing of his most excellent Majesties grace . . . towching treyned soldiers, that were, either, unfit, or unable, by reason of Charge, or other wise to serve . . ." The Council demanded the list in 11 days. The local authorities requested more time for "searching a trueth from each particular soldier". All the deputy lieutenants and high constables were needed to help⁴⁵.

Further, the Council directed the county "to inquire and finde out, what some, or somes of money or other considerations have ben taken, or required from any trained men to free them from his Majesties late service, or for the putting of others in their Romes . . . [Identify] whoe they are that have exacted or taken any such consideration and how much and from whome." From henceforth authorities were to "stopp and hinder such exactions . . ." The lieutenants responded that

ther have not yet ben presented unto us any complainte of such Exaction againste any of this countie for freeing any trained man . . . or admitting others in their places. Althoughe a whispering rumor have ben spread of it; and of which rumor, wee have taken spetiall notice before your Lordshipps letter came to our hands . . . [w]hat bargaines have ben between any of the trained men, and their supplies, wee could not

43 British Library, Additional Ms. 39,245, cit., f. 180/396.

44 British Library, Additional Ms. 39,245, cit., ff. 177v-182.

45 TNA, SP 16/421/136.

take knowledg of, but such of the trained men as appealed unto us for admission to that part of his Majesties gracious favour, wee eased by moderating the somes of money demanded and brought them to such proportions, as in our discretions, wee for the hireling held a necessary provision.

Nevertheless, they would check at the upcoming muster to see if any such complaints had been overlooked⁴⁶.

Armaments likewise received scrutiny. On April 2, 1639, the Council of War appointed an officer to inventory the arms of Hamilton's regiments at their embarkation points at Gravesend on April 8, then to Harwich by the tenth, and finally at Great Yarmouth on April 12. The lateness of this decision reveals concern about the quality (and standardization) of weaponry. The Privy Council and Council of War then further tasked the Ordnance Office. Royal gunsmith Henry Rowland was dispatched to Gravesend and Harwich to gauge trained band muskets. His deputy headed to Yarmouth. Armorers from the Ordnance Office would also inspect arms and equipment shouldered by Hamilton's regiments⁴⁷.

Two ships carrying 40 cannon sailed to meet Hamilton's convoy (though by April 22 Hamilton already had a score of cannon, suggesting that only one of the pair of ships had got through by that time). Powder, match, shot, uncast lead, and arms sufficient for 6,000 infantry would be shipped by the end of the week. This panoply included pikes, 3,000 muskets, rests, bandoleers, and swords. Indeed, 3,000 Dutch blades had already arrived at the Hull depot, while 3,000 corslets would be off that very day, 1,400 being already packed up by the surveyor of the armory⁴⁸.

Charles I planted his standard at York on April 1, rallying his forces. From that point the adventures of Hamilton and his colonels become a bewildering intermingling of institutional malfunction, inhospitable weather, equipment-related bureaucratic chaos, shortages of wholesome food and fresh water, and delay upon delay, all factors compounded by a fluid strategic situation. Hamilton envisioned his descent upon Scotland in mid-to-late April. Delays in lading and sailing had

46 TNA, SP 16/421/137.

47 TNA, SP 16/417/28.

48 TNA, SP 16/417/28. Edward Sherburne of the Ordnance Office inspected militia arms at Yarmouth. TNA, War Office 49/69, Ordnance Office, bills and debentures, naval ordnance, February 1638 to June 1640, ff. 90v-93v; SP 16/425/58.

been anticipated. Should contrary winds postpone embarkation, quartering arrangements were made. The Privy Council noted on April 8 that accommodation for the soldiers was underway “neere the Port of Yarmouthe”. In Essex, the Earl of Warwick delivered 1,100 militiamen to Harwich on April 10, but “found noe shipping . . . to reciyve them”. Not all the “recruits” had come up, the colliers and landing boats were not entirely satisfactory, and weapons requisitioned from the Tower of London had not appeared⁴⁹. As for the Harwich convoy, ten ships still awaited full provisions, but victuals were expected hourly⁵⁰. As Hamilton anxiously awaited favorable winds at Yarmouth, he fretted over the diminution of foodstuffs. The officers had not made provision for supply of victuals in the port, and “from the Colonell to the Corporall” were now dipping into the royal stores, which had been reserved for the “Common Soldiers.” Amongst the troops was a “general desire to be on land.” Although paid (“full of money”), soldiers could not spend it aboard ship. Hamilton soon satiated them with “fresh victuals” and wine, but they remained restless. He reminded Secretary Vane that the resupply ships should proceed into the Firth of Forth and to Leith Road. Transports required protection. If Hamilton was not awaiting them in the Firth, then a convoy would escort them to the expedition’s anchorage⁵¹.

Delays compounded the expense of wafting troops. Meeting unanticipated costs was convoluted due to the Exchequer of Receipt’s procedures (and resources) for managing cash for military expenses⁵². On the regional level, Essex’s leviation fell £500 short of expectation, and officials had abandoned hope of prying more money from the localities⁵³. The confluence of financial shortfalls and logistical hindrances magnified supply problems. In Lincolnshire, Lindsey dared not risk bringing his troops into the port of Grimsby prematurely for fear of exhausting victuals there. The Marquess confided to Archbishop Laud, “neither are all our Shippes with their victuals come, nor yet the Shippes with the ammunition . . .”⁵⁴. Lord Admiral the Earl of Northumberland had directed Sir John Pennington the Admiral of the Fleet (who accompanied the Marquess aboard the *Rainbow*)

49 NRS, GD 406/1/938 I, /938 II.

50 NRS, GD 406/1/1209.

51 NRS, GD 406/1/1209.

52 FISSEL, *Bishops’ Wars*, cit., pp. 137-149.

53 TNA, SP 16/417/69.

54 NRS, GD 406/1/909; GD 406/1/1144.



[Fig. 8: Van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles I (National Gallery, London). Likely executed between 1636 and 1639, art historians remain divided as to whether iconographic details confirm the portrait was an artistic retort to the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1637. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

to place at Hamilton's disposal a convoy at whatever place or port the Marquess chose⁵⁵. Pennington and Hamilton had collaborated before. On July 19, 1631, the two men had sailed from Yarmouth together aboard the *Bonaventure* to assist Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. Their flotilla had included 38 vessels, 6,000 troops, 1,500 pikes, 1,500 corselets, plus 1,500 muskets replete with rests and bandoliers. That expedition, too, had contended with substandard recruits⁵⁶. In short, Pennington and Hamilton were cognizant of the challenges in 1639.

Hamilton expressed concern regarding cables, colliers, anchors, delayed delivery of ammunition, and more. Still, should a fair wind blow he would sail for Holy Island with the recently arrived regiments⁵⁷. The vessels would cast off even if incompletely supplied (or set forth piecemeal) upon the perilous journey of tacking northward up the coast. Northumberland avinced to Hamilton that "the victuallers . . . this morning againe assured . . . the last [of] the provisions for the colliers was shipt away . . . which was only a small proportion of bread . . . [thus] in the whole there is nothing wanting"⁵⁸. Naval stores should be adequate: "[T]he boats have such ores and sayles as are fitting for them"⁵⁹. Ground tackle and cable were requisite for amphibious operations, considering inshore versus ocean-going situations. Northumberland opined that Hamilton's operations would be "lying with roads [safe anchorages proximate to a port or harbor] that are reasonably secure" and therefore there was little need for an "extraordinary proportion of ground tackle" and cables. Nevertheless, Hamilton would receive the additional cables requested. Northumberland summed up: "[I]t is almost impossible but something will be amisse"⁶⁰.

One hardened veteran considered the tempestuous coastal journey too daunting a prospect. Sir Simon Harcourt, the veteran colonel whose service on the Continent had thus required a rough Channel crossing (and he would traverse the Irish sea in 1641) dreaded the proposed operation, sufficiently so that the Privy Council registered his reluctance. The Council noted that "hee [Sir Simon

55 TNA, SP 16/417/54.

56 H. RUBINSTEIN, *Captain Luckless. James, First Duke of Hamilton*, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh, 1975, p. 31.

57 NRS, GD 406/1/940; GD 406/1/1215.

58 NRS, GD 406/1/1082.

59 NRS, GD 406/11082.

60 NRS, GD 406/1/1082.



[Fig. 9: Britain's coastline in 1639. A contemporaneous Jansson-Hondius map. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

Harcourt] doubts hee may not bee able to brook the Sea”⁶¹. Still, on April 18 at Yarmouth, the colonel received his 1,700 men, “with all their Armes with Sergeants and drums”⁶².

Harcourt’s initial assessment, like Byron’s estimation of the Essex men, was positive. The aforesaid marines were “generally well-cloathed and able-bodied”. However, upon inspection “theyr armes are very faulty, and many altogether un-serviceable, theyr musketts being old ship-muskets, and too heavy for the souldier, the corslets also old fashioned, helmetts indifferently good, and the pikes of unequall length and decayed. Harcourt and the deputy lieutenants had attempted “on the suddaine to gett the armes repaired”⁶³. The arrival of 200 Cambridgeshire soldiers “verie ill armed, both musketiers and pikes” likewise failed to pass muster⁶⁴. If the troops were “irregular”, one should not have expected their weapons to be of high-quality standards, puzzlingly something that the Council of War and Ordnance Office had not foreseen.

Transporting arms and victuals in stages plagued the expedition. Drums, ordnance, and partizans were laden at Hull on a vessel bound for Holy Island that sailed April 15⁶⁵. More arms destined for Hull had not yet completed that leg of their journey. Perishable provisions were ready on April 19, and Vane asked Hamilton if six weeks’ worth of foodstuffs ought presently to be sent northward⁶⁶. However, Hamilton remained bottled up at Yarmouth Road, buffeted by violent winds and mists obscuring shifting sands. He could neither receive dispatches nor “gett out of this misereable road”⁶⁷. The same foul weather afflicted arms conveyance to Hull. Critically, as it turned out, naval stores (anchors, cables, and spare masts) later needed by Hamilton had been abandoned at Yarmouth. The vessels had delivered some “equipage of warr” but “eskapet narrowly with their lives” through the teeth of storms⁶⁸.

On April 19, Harcourt’s men embarked. The next day, gales battered the flotil-

61 TNA, PC 2/50, f. 237.

62 TNA, PC 2/50, f. 237.

63 TNA, SP 16/418/1.

64 TNA, SP 16/418/1.

65 NRS, GD 406/1/1211.

66 NRS, GD 406/1/1212.

67 NRS, GD 406/1/1208.

68 NRS, GD 406/1/1209.



[Fig. 10: A vessel of 1639. For inshore operations, ground tackle (tackle, cables, anchors, etc.) was essential to secure one's vessel whilst anchored.
Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

la, while April 21 was spent replenishing water, distributing cables amongst the colliers, and ammunition (for firing exercises aboard ship and in case the troop transports separated from the colliers carrying powder and shot). By 4:00 am on Monday 22 April, the fleet had raised anchor. Thick fog rolled in, not to be burned off until noon, followed by a stiff easterly wind. Finally, arranging to have another ship loaded with victuals follow the fleet, Hamilton's flotilla belatedly set sail⁶⁹. At 5:00 am, on April 23, *Rainbow* and its convoy slipped out of Yarmouth Road. Writing before dawn, the Marquess protested that the late departure was

⁶⁹ NRS, GD 406/1/821, f. 1; GD 406/1/939.

“no falt of myne”⁷⁰. He turned his attention to navigation. The fleet battled contrary winds, struggling up England’s eastern coast over the next several days⁷¹.

On April 25, gusts slowed the Fleet’s progress toward Holy Island (on Northumberland’s coastline)⁷². Off Scarborough the next day, tempests scattered Hamilton’s fleet. The *Mary*’s bowsprit cracked. The *Third Whelp* sprung a leak. Two of the colliers had cables swept away. Hamilton “resolved to keepe the rest [of the expedition] together (to my infinite grief)” by sheltering in Scarborough Roads, “from whence we cannot stirre till the wind shift Southerly”. Should north or easterly winds predominate “then we shall be forced to stand for Flanbororow head”⁷³. If the winds blew fair, the Marquess’ ships would maneuver alongside the ammunition ship from Hull and transfer cargo. Hamilton’s flotilla would also attempt to conjunct with three colliers⁷⁴. On Friday the 26th, the Marquess spied four sail making for Scarborough, his own destination at that time. These vessels wafted 1,000 Lincolnshire men who had embarked three days before Hamilton’s departure, “but not being able to keepe the seas”, had been driven into a haven. The following morning of 27 April, the fleet sailed for Berwick and arrived Sunday evening. Lindsey’s transports moored in Berwick harbor. The Marquess’s vessels anchored just outside, in Berwick Hope, “the most dangerous roade that ever fleet was in”, due to the confinement and shallowness of Berwick’s anchorage⁷⁵. On April 29, Hamilton arrived at Holy Island and received a royal dispatch ordering him to “proceed with Fire and Sword against all those that shall disobey” the royal proclamations⁷⁶. Hamilton replied to the King with a reminder that navigation on England’s eastern coast was perilous. In his current position, “if the wind come not easterlie . . . it is deathe to ryde in this place”⁷⁷.

The night of April 30, aboard the *Rainbow*, he penned his strategy. A demonstration of royal power would overawe the Covenanters: “[T]error will be strucke in their hearts when they shall not onlie hear of your Majesties preparations but

70 NRS, GD 406/1/821, f. 1.

71 NRS, GD 406/1/1206.

72 NRS, GD 406/1/1206.

73 NRS, GD 406/1/1205, ff. 1-2.

74 GARDINER, cit., pp. 77-78.

75 NRS, GD 406/1/1203.

76 Gilbert BURNET (Ed.), *Memoires of the Lives and Actions of James and William, Dukes of Hamilton and Castle-Herald*, London, 1667, pp. 122-123; RUBINSTEIN, cit., p. 98.

77 GARDINER, cit., pp. 77-78.



[Fig. 11: Hamilton arrives at Berwick-upon-Tweed, contemplating his foray into the Firth of Forth. Contemporaneous Jansson-Hondius map.

Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

see them⁷⁷⁸. His bold words did not advocate an immediate descent upon the shoreline; an attack was out of the question. Hamilton's incursion into Scotland was intended as a show of force. As it sailed from Berwick Roads, the flotilla made no better headway northwards than the latitude between Dunbar and the isle of the Bass Rock, winds "blowing hard"⁷⁷⁹. Whilst bobbing at sea, Hamilton wrote to Secretary Vane asking that arms and ammunition be relayed to Holy Island⁸⁰. On May 1, Hamilton's vessels traversed four leagues north, then finally coursed through the Firth on May 2.

The new month would reveal problems regarding weapons and the Crown's supply chain. Replacement bullet moulds promised by the Ordnance Office had tarried the fleet⁸¹. Norfolk's deputy lieutenants declared that "your Lordships . . . command us to send up the Gage of the Musquetts of the 1500 trained men . . . [We] took care that so many of the Musqueteers as possiblye could be furnished (in so shorte a time as was allotted us for the performance of the saide service) carried moulds with them, of the fitt bore of their Musquetts"⁸². Throughout the

78 GARDINER, cit., p. 76; HMC, *Hamilton*, cit., p. 102, no. 157.

79 NRS, GD 406/1/1200; GD 406/1/1201.

80 NRS, GD 406/1/1202.

81 NRS, GD 406/1/941.

82 TNA, SP 16/421/137.

1630s the Crown had unsuccessfully urged standardization of gauge in the localized world of the trained bands. In 1639, the Council dictated that Hamilton's militiamen bring their own moulds⁸³. Locally provided moulds varied. Uniformly sized shot was incompatible with many of the trained band firearms, thus the Ordnance Office was forced to improvise regarding ammunition at the height of its preparations.

Chaos over mundane bullet moulds exemplifies the assumption that campaigns utilizing amphibious conjunctions naturally sorted themselves out. Consider the Earl of Antrim's assurances in 1638 that despite the absence of shipwright facilities and sufficient naval stores within his territories he could build from scratch an amphibious attack force. Masts? The Earl knew of lumberjacks and owned a forest abundant with tall trees. The price tag for such incompetence was astounding. Antrim, for all his bluster, could not get his fanciful mobilization underway without £20,000⁸⁴. Coordination of amphibious operations remained relatively clumsy, unsurprisingly since most of the Crown's servants remained unversed in that mode of warfare.

Expecting untested militia to coalesce as an impromptu expeditionary force and go into action immediately was foolhardy. Not purchasing and inspecting 3,000 muskets of identical bore and transporting them in lots to the embarkation points was an appalling oversight. The strategic utilization of such troops (and the campaign's timetable) relied upon "part-time" administrators within the shires. The Lords Lieutenants that supervised county government were summoned to the royal standard at York, separating them geographically from their deputy lieutenants at the peak of the shire mobilizations. Strategies shuffled abruptly, sometimes daily. Hamilton was never assured of a fixed landing site – how could he have reconnoitered a point of disembarkation?

The tentative perambulations of Hamilton's flotilla of roughly 30 to 40 sea craft complicated matching up troops with the correct arms and supplies. As for the weaponry that followed Hamilton or awaited his arrival, how to transport it

83 TNA, SP 16/396, Council of War entry book, f. 151; SP 16/418/13; TNA, PC 2/50, f. 226; SP 16/538/85.

84 NRS, GD 406/1/1199, f. 1; FISSEL, *Bishops' Wars*, cit., pp. 168-169, especially p. 168; Mark C. FISSEL, «English Amphibious Warfare, 1587-1656: Galleons, Galleys, Longboats, and Cots», in D.J.B. TRIM, and Mark C. FISSEL (Eds.), *Amphibious Warfare 1000-1700*, Leiden, 2006, pp. 244-247.

and where to store it? Docking up with ammunition ships (referenced above), for example that of Sir William Boswell, involved precarious and sometimes random conjunctions. Hamilton wrote that the supply ship currently at hand had brought what “I have now noe soe great need as yet, though I could wish some of her muskets hear, for those which we have hear defective, otherwise I have cannon and powther enough”⁸⁵. Those notoriously bad muskets still haunted Hamilton:

I could [use?] 1000 of the Musketts which Sir William Boswell sent over, for so many as [we?] have that are defective, yet I shall not desire that shee [the arms and ammunition ship] come till my next advertisement, but that the Armes may either remaine wher if they do not spoile [rust] at the holy Iland, and in that case they may be put in Barwick, for from thence we can allwaies have them⁸⁶.

Hamilton’s willingness to cache arms at Berwick was well-conceived. The army’s equipment, too, lagged behind on the trek northward. On May 8, the Master of the Ordnance, the Earl of Newport, accompanying the march, snapped at the Lieutenant of the Ordnance:

I was in a greate trowble [at Durham] meeting there with a complainte from oure regiments that thay wanted of there [their] number of armes sent down from London, which must needs be a great faulte in those that had the trust of packing them uppe. The same neglect I found in those things directed heather [hither]⁸⁷.

Weapons and munitions, including Charles’s artillery train, were ferried down the Thames estuary from the Tower of London and up the east coast to Kingston-upon-Hull. South Yorkshire’s riverways shunted equipment, shot and powder, until draught horses shouldered the burden. By mid-May, the royal artillery train was approaching Newcastle, later to proceed towards Berwick⁸⁸. The Ordnance Office’s artificers had arrived from London “without their toules which is a hindrance to the service and a greate neglect of those that sente them”. Newport again raged, “the keeper of the stores relies to [too] muche on his clarcks. The proportions [consignments] that came from the Tower [of London] in many things faules short of the directions, and the officers of the armoury have not performed their dutie I find by the badnes of oure armes thay have rather

85 NRS, GD 406/1/1201, f. 4; GD 406/1/1200.

86 NRS, GD 406/1/1200, f. 4.

87 TNA, SP 16/420/108.

88 TNA, SP 16/421/14 I.

dun the contrary”⁸⁹. The physical separation of the Master of the Ordnance from his Lieutenant and clerks created bureaucratic nightmares. The “problem of distance” compounded institutional failure resulting from poor strategic planning at the executive level: “The Clerk of the Armory [is] to have notice that many of these armes Lately sent are defective: for which they are blamed in respect of the charge” sustained by the King for their repair. “Most of the Artihficers [are] very uncapable and have no tooles”. Miscellaneous but essential items were rushed north, for example, “spare bandaliers 1000 and a good Quantity of firestones [iron pyrites for wheellock pistols and flints] . . . horeshoes and nailes, that are in the store and likewise of all other sorts of nailes, . . . spades and some muskett moulds”⁹⁰. Charles set the timetable. He might have allocated greater time for logistical preparation.

The royal strategists at York had envisioned Hamilton at Holy Island as early as mid-April, from whence the Marquess could be deployed⁹¹. The King expected to be upon the Borders sometime between May 8 and 10⁹². Around May 10, the mobilization of the shires’ land army should have reached its crescendo. However, logistical complications postponed the county contingents’ general rendezvous until early June⁹³. Therefore, Hamilton’s availability to shore up northern defenses became critical whilst royal army regiments remained strewn along the roads leading north. The army had set off without tarrying for sufficient rations, tents, and bedding, resulting in deteriorating living conditions. Soldiers camped on cold and barren ground in northernmost England⁹⁴.

On May 2, Hamilton’s flotilla occupied the Firth of Forth, anchored around the islets of Inchkeith and Inchcolm. The 30 to 40 vessels heaving upon the waters could not ride in that channel indefinitely. The East Anglian troops began “to sicken” and the ships became “nastie”⁹⁵. Therefore, Byron’s regiment debarked at Inchkeith, where a ruined fort stood. The regiments of Morton and Harcourt off-loaded to Inchcolm, where the Covenanters had poisoned the island’s well with

89 TNA, SP 16/421/16; SP 16/422/128.

90 TNA, SP 16/421/22.

91 NRS, GD 406/1/1214, f. 2.

92 NRS, GD 406/1/1214.

93 TNA, SP 16/420/127.

94 TNA, SP 16/420/161.

95 TNA, SP 16/420/7; SP 16/420/77.

“dead Carrion” and dammed it up. Nevertheless, Hamilton set about making both isles defensible⁹⁶. The commanders finally found occasion to train their men. On Inchcolm, colonels Harcourt and Morton established a court of martial law for the “furtherance of good order” amongst their troops⁹⁷.

Fresh water was obtained with difficulty because the Covenanters patrolled the shoreline. A Dr. Moseley, a vicar of Newark, witnessed a party from Hamilton’s ships come ashore near Leith, seeking fresh water. The foragers were seized and brought before Alexander Leslie, who was inspecting fortifications. He asked the Englishmen where their water vessels were; perhaps (Leslie suggested) their intent was to fire houses or worse. In the end, the Englishmen were allowed to collect water and return to their boats⁹⁸.

Hamilton made due on the islands. The troops “censed” a small spring on Inchkeith and fashioned tents from sails. The Marquess had dispatched a collier back to Newcastle to purchase “deales” to sleep on and to obtain coal to build fires. Basic amenities would enable transplanted East Anglians to endure the “cold nights and dresse their meat when they gett any”⁹⁹. Hamilton scavenged fresh victuals, and oatmeal for his officers and to improve the diet of the enlisted men who had fallen ill. He continuously sought “suplis of victualls [which] most be immediatly sent or eles we ar all undone” The crews of the colliers needed sustenance, their stores depleted to ten days’ worth of rations. Hamilton’s men were better off but reduced to “colde” repast¹⁰⁰. Contending with snow, hail, and blustery weather while awaiting the English army compelled Hamilton’s men to consume precious provisions. On May 14 the Marquess told the King, the Covenanters “ar fully as apreheniue of this fleet As they ar of all the forces that ar with youre Majestie, nay perhaps more, and I trust I shall be able as muche to vex them . . . if you send me victuals”¹⁰¹.

All depended upon resupply. Hamilton pledged that provided his men were victualled, “ther is noe fear but we shall doe our busnes as much as cann be ex-

96 TNA, SP 16/420/77; SP 16/420/77.

97 NRS, GD 406/1/834.

98 TNA, SP 16/421/60.

99 NRS, GD 406/1/1201, ff. 2-3; GD 406/1/1200, f. 3.

100 NRS, GD 406/1/1197, f. 1.

101 GARDINER, *cit.*, p. 82, May 14, 1639; HMC, *Hamilton*, *cit.*, p. 103, no. 161.



[Fig. 12: Detail of the Firth of Forth: Edinburgh, Leith, Leith Road, and the Isle of Inchkeith with its fort, 1638-1639, from the Jansson-Hondius map of Edinburgh (1638) and its environs. Source: Wikimedia Commons, online.]

pected . . . [I]n the mean time my soldiers may be exercised in the arms which they daylie and dilligently practiz, the use was which made of the shootinge of of [sic] the ordinance”¹⁰². Sir Henry Vane was fitting out colliers at Holy Island. These would swiftly sail for the Firth¹⁰³.

Vane could not locate a convoy in the vicinity of Holy Island’s depot. He instructed the commander of the resupply vessels to check Holy Island again, and “if hee finde none to make sayle with hazard of the rest; but I shal beseche you to send a whelpe or pinace theither”¹⁰⁴ Vane promised to replace the rancid butter and bad cheese that had been sent to Hamilton. The victuallers would be punished. He had also tried to requisition beer in Newcastle, but there was

¹⁰² NRS, GD 406/1/1201, ff. 2-3; GD 406/1/1200, f. 3.

¹⁰³ NRS, GD 406/1/1197, f. 1.

¹⁰⁴ NRS, GD 406/1/1199, f. 1.

none¹⁰⁵. Mr. Marley of Newcastle had promised 40 tuns of the brew. Given the shortage of casks there, Vane implored the Marquess to return the empty ones¹⁰⁶. Mr. Marley had “embarked the vittayle” requested, which would be speedily sent “into the Furth for your officers, and the barque staves now only for a wind-e”¹⁰⁷. For Hamilton’s 5,000 infantry and the crews of the eight ships immediately at hand, the Lord Admiral pledged two months’ victuals “as fast as money can be gotten for it” and blamed shortages on seasonal factors. The old store was depleted and the new one not yet stocked, confirming yet another puzzling institutional infelicity¹⁰⁸.

Logistical deficiencies motivated the Marquess to offer two of his three regiments as reinforcements in buttressing Charles’s infantry on the Borders¹⁰⁹. By reducing his force by two-thirds Hamilton excused himself from major operations against his countrymen. From May 22 to 23, Hamilton’s pair of regiments transferred to Holy Island, from whence they joined the King at Goswick.

While cruising off Dunbar, Hamilton explained that in his haste to dispatch the pair of regiments he had neglected to mention that “the officers have compleetly received payment for 2 monthes”¹¹⁰. The rest of his officers and men were paid in full, through Captain Francis Vernon¹¹¹. Hamilton further noted that he had made soldiers out of raw men, “good menn, well clothed and dissiplind, and full 3000 besides officers”. He closed, “give me leave to desire this that the remainder of the victuals of those 2 regiments which I have sent you be put aboard of some of the colliers and sent me with 3 or 4 of the ablest purces, with an Inventory of what is sent, soe by this means this [remaining] regiment wilbe excellentlie supplied . . .”¹¹²

The Marquess now made for the eastern point of Fife, leaving in Leith Roads three ships, seven colliers, and Byron’s regiment, the latter divided up between

105 NRS, GD 406/1/1199, f. 2.

106 NRS, GD 406/1/1199, f. 3.

107 NRS, GD 406/1/1199, f. 1.

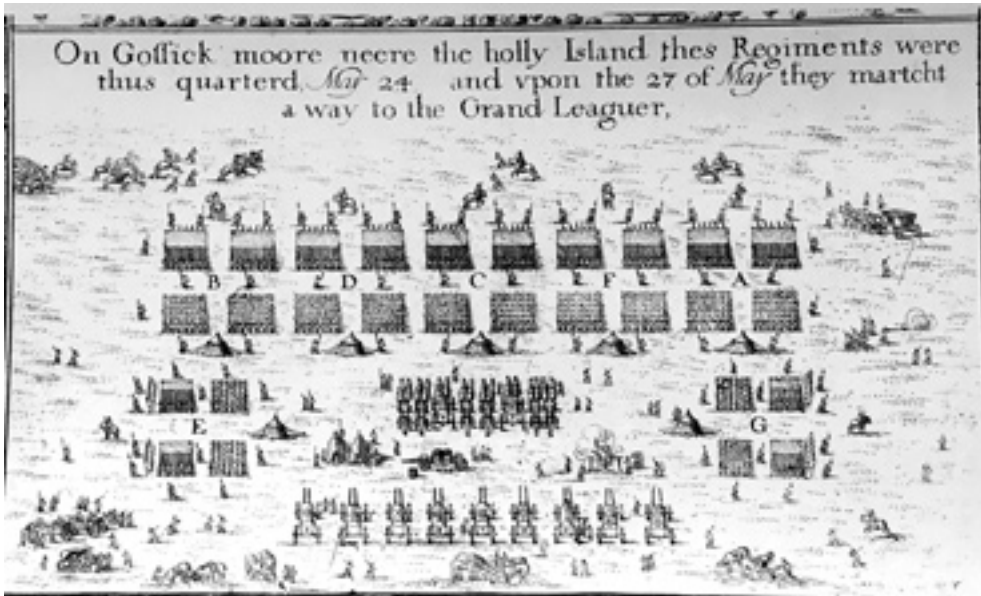
108 NRS, GD 406/1/815.

109 GARDINER, *cit.*, no. 37, p. 83.

110 TNA, SP 16/417/54.

111 TNA, E 351/298, Exchequer of Receipt, declared account of Francis Vernon, 31 March to 30 November 1639.

112 NRS, GD 406/1/1183, ff. 1-2.

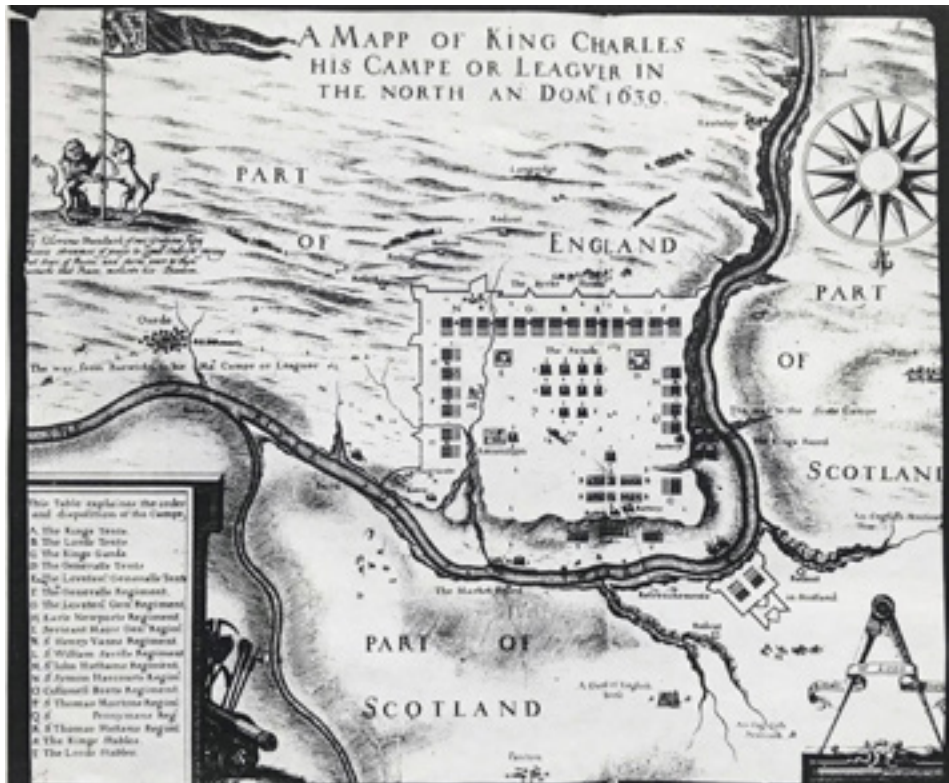


[Fig. 13: The royal army's field camp 24-27 May at Goswick. The two regiments from Hamilton's command had not yet arrived when these quarters were established. IMAGE SOURCE: detail from "THE SEVERALL FORMES How King Charles his ARMEY enquartered in the feilds being past *New Castle* on the march toward Scotland Anno Domini 1639". Source: *A History of Northumberland* (London 1893) published by the Northumberland County History Committee.]

Inchkeith and aboard ship. Hamilton bid farewell to his regiments destined to reinforce the King, "though my hart be readie to burst for the partinge with theis 2 Regiments". But he had no choice, "fearinge how his Majestie might be put to it, and knowinge how slowlye the levies goe on . . ." ¹¹³ Such was indeed the case. Reinforcements were needed on the Borders. On May 28, Edward Norgate was at Berwick, settling down on rushes on a hard floor (straw was too dear he complained). Norgate fretted, "the narrow extent and ill condition of our armye, our discomposed and unready officers . . . [I] could wish, that our royall Master, so great a king as to command 100,000 trayned soldiers at his call might have appeared surrounded with a proportionable and considerable army, gallantly appointed and provided for" ¹¹⁴. Nineteen sail bearing Hamilton's 3,000 infantry was sighted four or five miles out to sea, waiting on the tide. Those two regiments

¹¹³ NRS, GD 406/1/1183, f. 1.

¹¹⁴ TNA, SP 16/422/62.



[Fig. 14: The royal encampment at The Birks, late May 1639. Note the presence of two “Hamilton regiments”, the Essex men of Morton and Harcourt’s Kentish regiment. Source: British Library, Additional MS. 38,847, ff. 17v-18].

landed at Holy Island, eight miles from Norgate’s vantage point. Vane praised the newly arrived regiments, who “came seasonably and are gallant men”¹¹⁵. The newly arrived 3,000 East Anglians boosted morale. While the military situation improved, so did supply. A ship laden with salt arrived, and the royal army could expect a substantial fish ration, therefore.

Ranks bolstered the army departed Goswick on May 28. The King rode alongside his marching army, his men *en battalia*, moving northwards. By 5:00 pm, Charles reached Berwick and took up rooms in the town, while his attendants erected a pavilion and encampment at the Birks, a bend in the river Tweed.

Infantry numbering 8,000 had already assembled, and 5,000 additional

¹¹⁵ NRS, GD 406/1/1195, ff. 1-2.



[Fig. 15: The royal army advances northward in spring 1639. A representation of the Earl of Holland's 1,200 cavalry? Horsemen tote carabines, Cross of St. George flags unfurled, pikemen marching. Detail from a contemporary engraving featuring the Earl of Arundel as Lord General of England's forces in 1639. Thanks to Rosanna van den Bogaerde of the Picture Library in securing permission to publish. The Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford.]

foot-soldiers were expected from Yorkshire. With Hamilton's two regiments combined with 1,000 foot soldiers from Lindsey's Lincolnshire regiment, Charles fielded roughly 16,000 infantrymen. The Earl of Holland's seven cavalry troops (perhaps 1,200 horsemen) were positioned four miles upriver, west of the royal leaguer at the Birks. With companies straggling to the border exact numbers are conjectural, but the English army of the First Bishops' War probably did not exceed 19,000 men (excluding Wentworth's Irish army).

The last half of May witnessed brinkmanship on the Borders. On May 19, subdued skirmishing occurred during an unauthorized reconnoitering of the Scottish side of the Tweed. Covenanter cavalry intercepted the interlopers. Gunfire, perhaps unintentionally, erupted. One Englishman was seriously wounded, a Scot



[Fig. 16: Wencenslaus Holler engraving (1642). Source: The British Library, Rare Books.]

dead. The horsemen on both sides galloped away¹¹⁶. Neither detachment fancied a battle. Around June 4, Hamilton was summoned to Berwick to attend the King. At about the same time the Earl of Holland sallied forth from the royal encampment with 1,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry to confront and if possible rout Covenanter forces ensconced near Kelso¹¹⁷. The Scots spied from atop a slope near Kelso approaching columns of English cavalry. Pikemen hurriedly obstructed the path of the horsemen. Holland unsheathed his sword, thinking to ride over the still-coalescing Covenanter formation. However, numerous flags and rising dust suggested that the Scottish ranks were much deeper than the English had anticipated. With no foot soldiers at hand for support, and Covenanter infantry flanking him, Holland hesitated¹¹⁸. Lancers now appeared. A parley was arranged. The English queried why the Scots had mustered an army in proximity to the Border (contrary

¹¹⁶ NRS, GD 406/1/1188/1; GD 406/1/1188/2; TNA, SP 16/421/94.

¹¹⁷ Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MS. b. 210, account of the First Bishops' War, ff. 15-16; TNA, SP 16/423/16, /11, /49, and /22; NRS, GD 406/1/1179.

¹¹⁸ Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Ms. cit., ff. 17-18; TNA, SP 16/423/29; SP 16/423/49.

to royal proclamation). The Covenanters in turn asked why English horse troops had crossed the Tweed. The Scottish commander suggested that Holland's cavalry withdraw to their side of the river, advice which the English took. As in the case of the May 19 affray, at this confrontation at Kelso an engagement might have resulted but did not. Another standoff occurred at six o'clock in the morning the following day, 5 June. Alarms awakened the English camp at the Birks. Atop Duns Law, a hill on the Scottish side of the Tweed, a Covenanter army arrayed fitted for battle. The King surveyed the Scottish host through a telescope. Given the royal army's weaknesses, Charles eschewed battle. One of the King's Scottish pages forded the Tweed, approached Alexander Leslie and his command staff, and proposed negotiation. On June 18, 1639, the Pacification of Berwick was signed, and the "war" ended¹¹⁹. Hamilton's soldiers never fired a hostile round in 1639.

Hamilton had arrived at Berwick on June 7, amidst negotiations leading to the cessation of hostilities. Such was the anticlimax of Hamilton's expedition. The badly managed amphibious strike touted as a potential death blow to the Covenant did little more than consume resources that could have been allocated to the main land army. The strategic lesson was that amphibious operations be not risked without optimal preparations.

Early-modern amphibious warfare required well-defined strategies factoring in local geography not necessarily fully represented in contemporary cartography, in conjunction with institutional capabilities that met those specific spatial challenges. Both considerations were complicated by political vacillations among competing hierarchies of power that existed within the early-modern state during the wars of religion. Thorough assessment of bureaucratic processes was imperative. Weak linkages could doom even the most well-organized expedition. Monarchical government was flawed in that unilateral executive authority rested with an individual who generally had no practical experience with the nuances (and pitfalls) of conjunct warfare. Leadership exercised by councils, too, was unreliable when dominated by courtiers. Better was the perpetuation and participation of an influential military elite involved both in experiential and theoretical dissemination of the amphibious art of war¹²⁰. The contours of power in early-modern

119 FISSEL, *Bishops' Wars*, cit., pp. 30-38.

120 For example, in Mark C. FISSEL, "Byzantium's Amphibious Ways of War, 810-961" in *Nuova Antologia Militare*, Storia Militare Antica 5, 18 (March 2024), pp. 317, 324-325, 333, 339, 342, 347, and 359.

Britain made it difficult to appraise realistically institutional capabilities, not the least because royal servants contended with that familiar dichotomy of center and periphery. For example, the Earl of Newport found that fulfilling executive decisions through subordinates was risky, particularly when London-based bureaucrats relied on those amateur administrators that discharged the duties of the lieutenancy, shrievalty, and justices of the peace. As recruitment of Hamilton's regiments demonstrated, efficiency varied widely. Kent's performance did not match the efforts of Suffolk. Delegation of weighty responsibilities via patronage led to unwarranted assumptions and unrealistic expectations. Given the multiplex nature of amphibious operations, the Earl of Northumberland's remark that inevitably something would go awry was an astute observation that not all his colleagues comprehended.

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