

REGIMENTAL AGENCY IN THE BRITISH STANDING ARMY, 1715-1763 : A STUDY OF GEORGIAN MILITARY ADMINISTRATION¹ : I

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AMONG the various administrative bodies and fraternities of professional men concerned with the conduct of war in mid-eighteenth century England, regimental agents form an important group about whose activities surprisingly little is known. The civilian servants of proprietary colonels, they are usually introduced into the historical narrative only to be promptly condemned for financial rapacity. The difficulties encountered in trying to establish the detailed routine of agency business or the precise nature of income arising from agency have prevented most historians from arriving at a just estimate of the agent's importance to his regiment. Instead, they are usually content to endorse the prejudices of cynical contemporaries, add a measure of Fortescue's bias against all types of predatory clerk and condemn on flimsy evidence. Some worthy authorities neglect to mention the unlucky agent at all.²

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² For studies of regimental agents see: R. E. Scouller, *The Armies of Queen Anne* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 135-7 for the early period. Scouller establishes the reasons for the agent's existence, but does not explore the business in any detail. A critical view of the Georgian agent can be found in E. Hughes, "The Professions in the 18th Century", *Durham University Historical Journal*, xlv, 51 ff. Hughes asserts, with the minimum of justification, that agents were deeply involved in the

The sources of the agent's black reputation were two in number. The first, and more general, lay in the abiding suspicion of all kinds of new-fangled money men, brokers and jobbers whose skills not one in forty understood. In particular, soldiers, both ancient and modern, cherished a loathing of civilian officials growing rich on the proceeds of warlike business which was quite the equal of any Tory squire's. It appears moreover that during the wars of Queen Anne, much of the suspicion was justified.¹ The second, and more particular source, lay in the colonel's own proximity to the central supply of public money. The Paymaster General disbursed funds, the amount of which was founded on the regimental establishment and muster-rolls and, this done, neither he nor the officials of the War Office concerned themselves in the routine disbursements of monies throughout the regiment. Unfortunately for the colonel, however, in the due passage of time, the Secretary at War and the king's reviewing generals would each wish to peruse a neat and properly adjusted set of accounts for every troop and company. Upon this depended the uninterrupted continuance of pay and profit for each captain and field officer. Since the soul of the warrior and the skills of the accountant rarely exist in the same frame, the colonel usually found it in his interest to engage some adroit clerk to fashion the complex accounts, and remunerate him by some stoppage from the regimental funds. This was a very flexible arrangement indeed, and even when the customary allowances became somewhat standardized, the bargains founded upon that custom were far from uniform. Even after the increasing volume and complexity of military business led to the replacement of the humble clerks, secretaries and amanuenses by individual specialists and large concerns with permanent office premises and their own squad of clerks, the degree of personal negotiation between colonel and principal agent remained almost

shady business of commission broking, an issue discussed in the concluding pages of this article. E. E. Curtis, in his *British Army in the American Revolution* (London, 1926), does not deal with agents at all. A brief, but more balanced survey, is provided by J. Hayes in "The Military Papers of Colonel Samuel Bagshawe", *BULLETIN*, xxxix (1956-7), 373-4.

¹Scouller, loc. cit.

unchanged. The newer breed of agent might be able to bargain with his colonel upon a more equal footing, and even achieve a degree of control over his financial affairs, but the bargain itself was not a matter for public consideration. The agent shared with his officer employer a marked reluctance to disclose the extent of his profits and perquisites. This policy of discretion, the confluence of a large amount of incidental regimental business in the agent's hands and the perplexing quality of that business to those uninitiated into the mysteries ensured that agency would retain a suspicious aspect. The unprecedented expenditure of the Seven Years War and the large number of regiments suddenly available for business did nothing to lessen such suspicions.

Long before the popularity of "economical reform" it was already usual to condemn the activities of brokers and Change-Alley Israelites, especially when public money passed through their hands. The attacks made by "Junius" on Lord Barrington after he had appointed "a little Frenchified broker", Anthony Chamier, Deputy Secretary at War during 1772, exemplify the prevailing style of abuse; "Walk in gentlemen, business done by Chamier and Co.—to make your office complete, you want nothing now but a paper lanthorn at the door and the scheme of a lottery pasted upon the window".¹ John Calcraft, principal English agent operating between 1755 and 1765, was deeply concerned in a multitude of public and private ventures, the full details of which it is now scarcely possible to reveal. He began his career at the age of nineteen as deputy paymaster to the Duke of Cumberland's army in North Britain and subsequently succeeded to clerkships in the Pay and War Office under the patronage of Henry Fox, to whom he was in some obscure degree

¹ These attacks by "Junius" on Chamier and Barrington appeared under the significant pseudonym of "Veteran" on 28 Jan. 17 and 27 Feb., 10 and 23 Mar. 1772 (H. S. Woodfall's *The Letters of Junius*, cv, cvii-cxi). See also the private letters to Woodfall on 25 Jan. and 22 (?) Feb. 1772 (ibid. 52 and 56). Chamier was a more reputable species of broker than the "little three cents reduced" depicted by "Junius", who only introduced him to belabour the noble lord. Assuming that Philip Francis can be identified as "Junius" and "Veteran", such attacks were probably founded on a rupture with Barrington in 1771 which led to his own resignation from the post of first clerk at the War Office, and his loyalty to D'Oyly, Chamier's predecessor (J. Parkes and H. Merivale, *Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis* (London, 1867), i. 274).

related. He remained a clerk at the Pay Office until 1757 and at the War Office until 1756, after which he rose in status by acting as Deputy Commissary of the Musters at £1 3s. per diem until 1763 and as Paymaster of the Widow's Pensions until 1762. To these official posts he joined a rapidly growing empire of regimental agencies and the regular contract for supplying coals to the garrison of Gibraltar. His intimate connection with Fox, which lasted until the spring of 1763, was cemented by speculations undertaken by the agent on his patron's behalf, while the profits from the post of Deputy Commissary were made over to the benefit of Fox and his family.¹ Besides speculation on Fox's behalf, Calcraft took care to nurture his own business affairs, and by the close of the Seven Years War was dealing in large sums; as he admitted himself, the affairs of "the Alley" were never far from his mind.² His greatest ambition was to transcend these dubious origins and acquire the supreme respectability offered by a landed income. Accordingly, he purchased Rempstone Hall near Corfe in 1757 and Lord Bessborough's estate at Ingress near Dartford during 1760. At the end of 1764 he ostensibly quit the agency business and, reputedly worth some half a million,³ settled down to concentrate on a political career and the pursuit of a peerage.⁴ This rural opulence did not, however, bring him the status he craved, since critics continued to dwell on the opprobrious source of his riches. "Junius" reminded his readers during October 1771 that Calcraft rioted in the plunder of the army,⁵ while an anonymous assailant epitomized "Crafterio" as one of the tribe of army agents, "some of whom have amassed immense riches, squeezed out of the pittance of the poor soldiers, and the still poorer half-pay officers". This critic then classed the agents together as a group with the

¹ B.L. Add. MS. 17,496, 31, Calcraft to James, Lord Tyrawley, 17 Dec. 1763.

² B.L. Add. MS. 17,495, 12-13, Calcraft to Peter Taylor, 6 May 1760.

³ *The Public Advertiser*, 3 Dec. 1764.

⁴ The only significant notices of Calcraft's career are, firstly, the long entry by Sir Lewis Namier in L. Namier and J. Brooke, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790* (London, 1964), and W. Baring Pemberton, "John Calcraft, Army Agent", *Army Quarterly*, xxxix. 333-40.

⁵ "Woodfall's Junius," lix, 5 Oct. 1771. Philip Francis passed for a friend of Calcraft, who had helped forward his early career (Parkes and Merivale, op. cit. p. 22).

miscellaneous paymasters, contractors and commissaries forming the breed of "state vultures . . . that prey upon the vitals of the nation".¹

Throughout our period, it remained the responsibility of each colonel to appoint an agent to his regiment, although the War Office occasionally appointed interim agents or authorized existing agents to maintain continuity of affairs pending the appointment of a new colonel. It was in these instances that a close connection with the War Office was most useful. Philip Baker of King Street Court, Soho, combined agency business with the office of Deputy Secretary at War from December 1741 to February 1744, when he quitted his official post on the grounds of ill health. Under the patronage of Sir William Yonge, he had already been appointed to the agency of the six independent companies of foot at Jamaica after the collapse of the previous agent, Henry Popple, in March 1739, and to these he had added the company at Providence in April. When the Jamaican companies were regimented to form the 53rd (later the 49th) Foot under Colonel Edward Trelawney in December 1743, Baker was thus well placed to retain the agency. In addition, he had secured the agency of Thomas Wentworth's 24th Foot before November 1744 and Thomas Howard's 3rd Foot, the Old Buffs, during 1745.² John Calcraft commenced his own agency busi-

¹ "The Amorous Agent and Miss B . . . de", *Town and Country Magazine*, Oct. 1769.

² On the question of interim agency, it was often "absolutely necessary for the good of our service that some proper person should be appointed to receive the money growing due . . . not only to keep a regular Account of the payment thereof, but also to pay off and take up such Bills of Exchange as shall from time to time be drawn by the respective officers". Thus, agents could be appointed to corps still awaiting the King's choice of colonel (WO26.18.54-5, Warrant appointing Henry Popple, esq. agent to the late Colonel Hayes' regiment (34th Foot), 3 July 1731). No colonel was appointed to the regiment until 8 Jan. 1732. On less pressing occasions, it was the custom of the army to await a new colonel's instructions before changing agents (B.L. Add. MS. 17,493, 100, Calcraft to George, Viscount Howe, 8 Oct. 1757). For the career of Philip Baker, see WO4.37.113, Sir William Yonge to the Postmaster General, 24 Dec. 1741, and the note of his resignation at WO4.39.15, 15 Feb. 1743-4. Baker's agencies appear in the *Court and City Registers*, various, and Appendix II, below, "The Succession of Agents". For his appointment to the independent companies, see WO26.19.154-6, 29 Mar., 3 Apr. 1739. For Yonge's commendation of Baker's "ability and integrity in the execution of his trust", see WO4.35.56-61, Yonge to

ness with a similar nomination to independent companies in the East Indies and South Carolina, proceeding to the more profitable affairs of standing regiments with the overt assistance of Henry Fox, the Secretary at War, who attempted to influence the colonels of regiments changing agent on his clerk's behalf. From the point of view of prospective employers, it was useful to know that Calcraft was "well versed in the business of this office" and Fox strengthened his hand by additional recommendations from his brother, the Earl of Ilchester and George, Earl of Halifax, First Lord of Trade and Plantations.¹ By 1755, Calcraft was agent to twenty regiments, together with the four independent companies of New York and three independent companies of South Carolina.² His favoured status also placed Calcraft in line for the occasional interim agency, and thus he was appointed to the revived foot regiments of Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts and Sir William Pepperell, the 50th and 51st, in October 1754. He was empowered to receive monies growing due to the two corps and to assign off-reckonings to clothiers to provide uniforms up to 24 June 1756. He was to continue as agent until the two American colonels nominated men of their choice. It was scarcely surprising that they elected to confirm Calcraft as agent.³ The custom of the army which enabled an agent to maintain the continuity of business during a vacancy was

Trelawney, 8 May 1739. Henry Fox was thus not the first Secretary at War to push a subordinate for agencies. Trelawney, Governor of Jamaica, was continually urging the regimentation of the independent companies with himself as Colonel.

¹ Dorset Record Office D.86.X4 has Fox's letters of recommendation to Governor George Clinton of New York, 16 Mar. 1748-9; Governor Edward Cornwallis of Nova Scotia, prospective colonel of the 40th Foot, 15 Feb. 1749-50; Colonel Louis Dejean, 37th Foot, 11 Feb. 1750-1, and Colonel Alexander Durore, 38th Foot, 5 Mar. 1750-1. Durore appointed J. Wiseman of King Street, and it is unlikely that Calcraft held the agency of the 40th. Cornwallis appointed him agent of the 24th Foot during 1755.

² Millan's *Army List*, 1755.

³ WO26.22.322-3., Warrant appointing Calcraft agent to Shirley's and Pepperell's, 7 Oct. 1754; *ibid.* 348, Warrant authorising him to assign off-reckonings, 11 Jan. 1755. His appointment by letters of attorney is at WO.26.23.395. These two agencies were short-lived, since both corps were broken after the fall of Oswego in August 1756, when many of their officers and men were taken by the French.

much to the advantage of a sitting agent. Calcraft despatched reports to new colonels recording the state of their regiments, efficiently enclosing a blank letter of attorney (the instrument by which colonels legally appointed an agent) in the tactful expectation that his services might be retained.¹

In addition to Baker and Calcraft, a number of other agents also enjoyed official or semi-official situations giving regular access to military business, military men and the civilian heads of offices. Peregrine Furry of Pulteney Street, Golden Square was also Secretary and Accomptant at the Pay Office.² King Gould of Horse Guards doubled as Deputy Judge Advocate General.³ Leonard Morse, who embarked on a career in agency at the close of the Seven Years War, was a young clerk in the War Office.⁴ James Meyrick, a close associate of Calcraft who began in business at the same time as Morse, had also served in the War Office until his dismissal in 1758.⁵ Richard Cox, who rose to prominence as an agent only in the period after 1764 and became co-founder of the famous military business Cox and King's, began in affairs as Secretary to Lord Ligonier and agent to the First Foot Guards, of which Ligonier became colonel in November 1757.⁶

Colonels appointed their agents with an instrument known as a Letter of Attorney, authorizing the agent to receive the pay of

¹ B.L. Add. MS. 17,493, 100. Calcraft to George, Viscount Howe, 8 Oct. 1757. The corps in question was the 55th Foot, late Percy's, to which Calcraft was already agent. Howe continued him, as did John Prideaux, who succeeded to the regiment in October 1758, and Colonel James Adolphus Oughton, who followed in July 1759.

² *Court and City Register*, 1747. At one time, Furry had also been a War Office clerk (C. Clode, *The Military Forces of the Crown* (London, 1869), ii, Appendix cxxxv, 726).

³ *Court and City Register*, 1747.

⁴ John Rylands University Library, Bagshawe Muniments, B2.2.423, L. Morse to Lt.-Col. Samuel Bagshawe, 39th, Adlercron's, Foot, 19 July 1757; Millan's *Army List*, 1762. Morse became Secretary to Lord Amherst as Commander in Chief in 1793 (Clode, *op. cit.* ii. 263-4).

⁵ For Meyrick see below. His first agency was to an independent company in Mar. 1761 (WO4.64.55).

⁶ For Cox see K. R. Jones "Richard Cox, Army Agent and Banker", *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, xxxiv. 178-81, and R. H. Whitworth, *Field Marshal Lord Ligonier* (Oxford, 1958), p. 234.

the regiment and, in many instances, contract for the regimental clothing and make over the off-reckonings.¹ Clode contends that the colonel's appointees needed the approval of the Secretary of War before they were permitted to act, but no sign of this formal procedure appears during the period under review, and the appearance of discredited men like James Meyrick or Henry Kidgell among the list of agents, suggests that any vetting process was not rigorously applied.² The responsibility for regulating the activity of agents remained firmly in the hands of the colonels who appointed them, and the usual method of achieving this was for the colonel to take substantial securities from the agent to balance any sum of regimental money which might, in normal instances, be expected to be in his hands. The matter of securities demonstrated the manner in which government persisted in devolving responsibility for detailed financial administration on to the colonel and agent, taking no direct action to supervise the resulting private bargains unless a major difficulty arose. Interestingly enough, this state of affairs was ratified by the Board of General Officers who, in this instance, demonstrated an intriguing reluctance to intervene for the good of the service. No direct order for the colonels to take securities was issued, and there was no agreement forthcoming on an acceptable sum for securities which should be enforced throughout the army. When the War Office appointed agents on its own behalf, it usually demanded that the chosen agent produce a certificate from the Remembrancer of the Exchequer that an adequate sum had been deposited as security before the Paymaster General could issue money,³ but even this precaution was not invariably observed.⁴

¹ The form of a letter of attorney is at Appendix I, below.

² Clode, *op. cit.* ii. 261. This is repeated by Scouller, *op. cit.* p. 136. The *Report of the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the State of His Majesty's Land Forces and Marines, 1746*, does not mention any central regulation of agents. There is no register of letters of attorney in the P.R.O.

³ WO4.32.290, Sir William Strickland, Secretary at War to Henry Pelham, Paymaster General, on the appointment of Henry Popple, esq., as agent to the late Colonel Hayes' 34th Foot, 24 Jan. 1731-2.

⁴ WO4.29.99, Henry Pelham, Secretary at War to Sir Spencer Compton, Paymaster General, 25 Nov. 1727. Alexander Stevenson had been appointed agent to two independent companies in Jamaica during 1717. On Stevenson's death, Pelham discovered that he had never lodged any security for this trust.

Small wonder, therefore, that when the Commons Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the Land Forces and Marines in 1746 turned its attention to agents, it discovered that while some deposited cash or the equivalent in public securities up to £2,000, a number of colonels had failed to demand any.¹

A Colonel who thus allowed an agent to operate without adequate securities or with no security at all, took a considerable risk with his regiment's money. The regular inflow of subsistence and the more tempting issue of the bulky off-reckonings enabled a daring or incautious agent to speculate with regimental money on his own account, while an agent facing bankruptcy might use it as an additional asset. Captain Alexander Wilson of Queen Street, Westminster was regularly using the clothing assignments of regiments to which he was agent in concert with his own notes of hand to secure loans from the Sun Insurance Office during 1747 and 1748, and when his financial situation became desperate during 1750, he presented the office with bonds of two of his colonels, Lord Rothes and Lord John Murray, for money which he had previously lodged with them as securities. By March 1751, Wilson had gone down in bankruptcy and the colonels were now faced with demands from the Sun Office for money represented by Wilson's securities.²

When an agent went insolvent or died in the midst of his affairs, the effect on colonels and their regiments could be severe. In both instances any residual balances and the regimental accounts passed with the agent's other assets and effects into the hands of administrators or executors. They could not be recovered without many delays occasioned by the process of law or by difficulties in stating a regimental account distinct from the personal estate of the deceased. Not only the regimental and recruiting funds, but also the pay and subsistence of the troops, the arrears and private funds of the colonel and his officers

¹ *Report, 1746*, op. cit. pp. 95-97.

² Captain Wilson's dealings with the Sun Office are described in P.M.G. Dickson, *The Sun Insurance Office, 1710-1960* (London, 1960), pp. 242-55. It is doubtful whether the two colonels knew what Wilson was doing with their bonds. In any event, it proved most difficult for the Sun to get money from them. Rothes did not settle with the Office until November 1756, while Murray held out until March 1759.

remaining in the agent's hands were immediately at risk. A total failure would mean that little, if any, of this money would ever be seen again.¹ Even worse, it appeared to be the case that, even if an agent had managed to advance money to a regiment before dying in debt to it, his executors might be able to draw back the advance as part of debts due to the agent, rather than the colonel being able to retain it in part settlement of the agent's debt to the regiment.² The consequences of a financial disaster of this kind were painful, humiliating and of intolerable duration ; all the more so when poor communications prevented the news of an agent's death or bankruptcy reaching regiments in colonial garrisons. In October 1726, Lieutenant William Dodd succeeded to the acting command of one of the two independent companies in Jamaica on the demise of its captain, the Duke of Portland. In accordance with his plain duty, Dodd took up money in Jamaica with bills drawn on the London agent for the subsistence of the company from 25 October 1726 until 24 June 1727. The agent for both Jamaica companies was Alexander Stevenson, appointed directly by the War Office in 1717, without having provided, as it so turned out, any sum of money as

¹ It is probable that Lt.-Gen. Philip Anstruther, colonel of the 26th Foot, the Cameronians, lost the greatest part of his personal fortune as a result of Captain Wilson's bankruptcy (SP.41.21, Henry Fox, Secretary at War to Sir Thomas Robinson, Secretary of State, 30 Mar. 1754). The loss of his money placed Anstruther in great difficulties, and the King appointed him to the government of Kinsale at £1 per diem as compensation. Wilson, who is not mentioned by name in the correspondence, was agent to the 26th until it went to the Irish Establishment after the war of the Austrian Succession. The new agent was John Bailey (or Bayley) of Dublin. It appears, from his parliamentary career, that Anstruther did not go with his regiment to Ireland ; it would have been unlikely for such a senior colonel to do so, and he held no appointment on the Irish staff. The inference is that he retained Wilson as a personal banker in London, and an early date for the loss of his fortune is suggested by his failure to defend his parliamentary interest in the Anstruther Easter Burghs during 1753. An element of doubt remains, since Bailey's Irish agency business underwent severe contraction during 1753. The records of the Irish Board of General Officers, which might have revealed more, were destroyed in 1922. *The Court and City Registers* suggest that Bailey was in business with the 18th Foot, Folliot's Royal Irish, during 1754 and Waldegrave's 8th Dragoons as late as 1756. Thus, Wilson remains the prime suspect.

² WO71.10.17, Lord Barrington to the Judge Advocate General 24 May 1760 ; WO71.25.123-4, General Court Martial of Thomas Fisher, esq., 13-20 Dec. 1762.

security. Stevenson was dead before Lieutenant Dodd's bills reached England, and they were returned, protested, to Jamaica. Dodd's creditors promptly sued him for the sum of £417 10s. 1d., obliging him swiftly to decamp to England in order to investigate the chances of payment. Upon his arrival, he was immediately imprisoned for a debt of £200 outstanding at home on account of the company, and he remained "confin'd for some time 'till he found a friend to join with him in a Bond for the same with interest". Once out of gaol he found himself "daily threaten'd to be again arrested for the remainder". Dodd continued to petition for the payment of the bills for six years, while Gilbert Elliott, the new agent for the companies, memorialized the Treasury for assistance in adjusting the debts. All this involved continual expense for the hapless lieutenant who, after some twenty-five years service in a peculiarly vile region of the earth, was now faced with the prospect of dying in a debtor's cell. His distress was shared by Captain Joseph Delaunay of the second Jamaica company, who had been obliged by the King's peremptory order to fill up the ranks of the company with volunteers from three regiments of foot leaving the island in 1731. The volunteers were to be tempted with the offer of a bounty, an exercise which led to a total expenditure of £356. Delaunay expected to be thrown into prison at any time by Jamaican creditors waving a further bundle of protested bills on Stevenson.

The issue turned on whether funds could be extracted from Stevenson's executors as far as the agent's remaining assets would extend or whether the two officers' disbursements would be made good by Parliament in the retrospective extraordinaries of the army. However, after the filing of a bill of information against the executors, the presentation of three memorials to the Treasury and another to the King, affairs remained at a stand from Christmas 1727 to the beginning of 1735, when Richard Arnold, Deputy Secretary at War, joined with Elliott to investigate the whole question and sent a detailed report to the Treasury. Arnold pronounced that the officer's claims were just and that a settlement would be for the good of the service; part of the money owing to Delaunay's company could be recovered from the agent's effects in Jamaica, while Arnold recommended that the

Treasury pay off the outstanding balance and interest of £2781 16s. 2d. now due on Dodd's original bills with the intention of inserting a request for £1,963 14s. 4d. "in the Account of Services Rendered" for the next session of Parliament. Arnold's report was not discussed by the Treasury Board until 24 June 1736. Prior to this conference the Board had suspended judgement on whether any money should be paid on account of the companies until it was clear whether legal action against Stevenson's administrators would recover sufficient funds to indemnify the public, but now, Arnold's lengthy report was admitted, and the Board ordered the losses to be made good from balances returned to the Exchequer by the late Paymaster General, the Earl of Wilmington. The prosecution of Stevenson's executors was to continue, but with the satisfaction of the two officers' plea for funds, the whole confusion mercifully recedes from view.¹

The virtual impossibility of securing ready money from Stevenson's executors had finally made it necessary for the Treasury Board to intervene, but the damage inflicted on the service by the distress caused to officers and men, the frustration of the Jamaica creditors, the tedium of the legal process, and the inadequate investigation of the late agent's resources was already considerable. The general issue of the army's credit was at stake in the sorry affair. Punctual payment for quarters was enjoined by successive Mutiny Acts, and it was doubly unfortunate that a failure in administration had prevented the two officers from doing their duty.

The alarm and embarrassment caused by the Stevenson case was almost immediately surpassed by the collapse of Henry Popple in 1739. Popple, Deputy Secretary of the Board of

¹ Arnold's report is at WO26.18.712-15, while the deliberations of the Treasury Board are in *Calender of Treasury Papers, 1735-8*, 11 September 1735, 24 June, 1 July 1736, pp. 49, 174, 176. WO26.19.67-9 has Queen Caroline's warrant of 1 July 1736 for the balances to be paid. So far, only £140 had been recovered from Stevenson's estate. Alexander Stevenson (or Stephenson) was described as "Agent or Paymaster" to the Independent Companies. Captain Joseph Delaunay, like Lieutenant Dodd, was a veteran of the colonial service. He had been appointed to his company in 1715 (C. Dalton, *George the First's Army* (London, 1912), i., has entries for both men).

Trade and brother of Alured Popple, Governor of Bermuda, was appointed interim agent to Colonel Stephen Cornwallis' 34th Foot in January 1732¹ and confirmed in office by Cornwallis when he took up his new command. In addition, he was appointed agent and paymaster during the same month to the independent company at New Providence² and, in 1734, to the six new independent companies drafted from Gibraltar to Jamaica to act against the "rebellious negroes". It was over these companies that the most serious crisis arose. They fared wretchedly in the atrocious climate of Jamaica and, by August 1736, were reduced to half or even one third of their establishment.³ The chronic shortage of specie in Jamaica meant that the companies subsisted on a complex structure of credit. The bills for the subsistence of effectives arrived in Popple's hands months after the Jamaica merchants had furnished the companies with funds. The War Office assumed that, under these circumstances, a healthy supply of non-effective money remained in Popple's hands to fund a vigorous programme of recruiting, which continued, at great expense, during 1737 and 1738.⁴ In the spring of 1739 Popple failed, and made over the agency of the companies to Philip Baker, Deputy Secretary at War, assigning to Baker his salary at the Board of Trade under bond from his brother Alured and Samuel Gellibrand, a clerk in the Plantation Office.⁵ The extent of the disaster became evident with all the agonizing slowness of the Jamaica voyage. Popple had paid bills drawn on him up to 24 October 1738, and all those appearing after that date were returned protested to the West Indies. Their arrival threw the merchants into consternation, inflicted disaster on the head of Lieutenant Newton, paymaster to the

¹ WO4.32.290, Sir William Strickland, Secretary at War, to Henry Pelham, Paymaster General, 24 Jan. 1731-2.

² WO4.35.39, Sir William Yonge, Secretary at War, to Pelham, 6 Apr. 1739.

³ WO26.18.215-16, Warrant appointing Henry Popple agent to the six companies, 19 June 1734; WO4.33.41-2, Sir William Strickland to John Ayscough, esq., 6 Aug. 1734; WO4.34.180-81, Sir William Yonge to Popple, 4 May 1736.

⁴ Loc. cit.; also *ibid.* 503-4, Yonge to Thomas Orby Hunter, 2 Feb. 1737-8.

⁵ WO26.19.154-6, Warrants appointing Philip Baker agent and paymaster of the Jamaica and New Providence companies, 29 Mar., 3 Apr. 1739, *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1739-41*, p. 27.

companies, and caused great concern to Governor Edward Trelawney.¹ Those Jamaica captains who had contrived to remain in London, leaving subalterns to command in their absence, hurried to the Secretary at War, Sir William Yonge, with pleas for swift assistance. They heartily concurred in Sir William's appointment of Baker, who offered £5,000 in securities and was known to have a personal fortune at his back, but it was soon clear that the new agent's task would not be easy.² Henry Popple absconded, and it was discovered that brother Alured and Gellibrand were in circumstances too straitened to honour their bonds.³ Moreover, when Baker attempted to draw up a proper account, he found that Newton in Jamaica "had not . . . been as exact as he ought to have been in his manner of drawing his bills and transmitting muster-rolls and other proper vouchers". Popple, to his credit, had repeatedly exhorted Newton to do this.⁴

On 1 May 1739, the Treasury Board heard that up to £1,500 in protested bills for subsistence had been returned to Jamaica, and that the precious recruiting fund for the companies was completely exhausted.⁵ The Jamaica merchants were petitioning the Treasury for payment, while Yonge and Baker were busy trying to produce proper accounts.⁶ On 13 March 1740, an estimate of the true extent of Popple's failure reached the Board. At least £5,000 was owing, and, as time passed, the estimates rose still further until it appeared that Popple owed the Jamaica companies £6,249 16s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., and to the company at New Providence the proportionally greater sum of £2,316 17s. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.⁷ Problems had also arisen nearer home. Lieutenant Thomas Pattison, paymaster of the 34th Foot, late Cornwallis', now commanded with effect from 1 November 1738 by Lord Frederick Cavendish, had obtained £650 from the receipt of the Land Tax of 1738 by giving bills on Popple to Alan Whitefoord, Receiver General of the Land Tax for North Britain. Whitefoord duly

¹ WO4.35.56-61, Sir William Yonge to Trelawney, 8 May 1739.

² Loc. cit.

³ *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1739-41*, p. 222.

⁴ WO4.35.568-61, Yonge to Trelawney, 8 May 1739.

⁵ Loc. cit.; also *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1739-41*, p. 21.

⁶ Ibid. p. 56.

⁷ *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1739-41*, pp. 94, 263, 545.

forwarded these bills to London, only to have them returned protested.¹ The affairs of the 34th were now entrusted to Baker, who found himself holding every province of Popple's wretched empire.²

With the absent agent's effects now the object of complicated legal activity, the Treasury advised all parties to appeal directly to Parliament for relief, and, at the end of July 1741, all the pleas were granted with the exception of the New Providence company receiving only £1,816 17s. 4³d.³ The ultimate damage done to these companies was incalculable. Starved of funds, they continued, almost without exception, much under strength. This was all the more serious as, in the meantime, full scale war had broken out in the West Indies. Governor Trelawney, who conducted an anxious correspondence about them with Sir William Yonge, pressed for the companies to be regimented with himself as colonel.⁴ In 1744 his prayer was answered; the six young Jamaica companies, the two old companies and four companies from Colonel Gooch's disbanded American regiment of four battalions now based at Rattan were amalgamated to form the 53rd, later the 49th Foot.⁵ Baker continued as agent until a new colonel, John Walsh, appointed Calcraft in 1754.⁶ With Trelawney as Colonel and Baker as agent, the companies revived, earning the hearty commendation of the Captain General of the Forces, the Duke of Cumberland, in 1751. William Newton succeeded to a captaincy in the new regiment; William Dodd remained a lieutenant after thirty-three years service.⁷

Having actually been responsible for appointing Stevenson and Popple as agents and, in Stevenson's case at least, without taking securities, the government grudgingly reimbursed the captains while pursuing a long term policy of distraining the

¹ Ibid. pp. 22, 221.

² Ibid. p. 595.

³ Ibid. pp. 452, 545, 595.

⁴ WO4.36.395-6, Sir William Yonge to Trelawney, 19 Apr. 1741.

⁵ WO4.39.213, Sir William Yonge to Sir Thomas Winnington, Paymaster General, 31 May 1744; WO26.20.134, Order forming Trelawney's Regiment, 31 May 1744.

⁶ *Court and City Register*, various; *The Succession of Colonels*, incorporated in *Millan's Army List*, various.

⁷ WO4.47, Henry Fox to Governor Trelawney, 16 Jan. 1750-1; WO4.39.218, circular to the officers of the 53rd, 8 June 1744.

agent's effects. Where individual colonels and officers were concerned, it acted rather more briskly. After the failure of Captain Wilson, there was found to be £1,191 10s. 3½d. due to the stock purse of the regiment, late Lord Mark Kerr's and now Lord Ancram's 11th Dragoons. Kerr's pay as Colonel of the Regiment, Governor of Edinburgh Castle and Major General on the Irish Establishment was stopped until the equivalent was handed over to the new agent, Mr. Anthony Stuart.¹ On another occasion, a general court martial held at Minorca on 23 November 1715 and a Board of General Officers in June 1716 imposed a stoppage of £1,486 4s. on the officers of the Royal Regiment of Fuziliers, the 7th Foot, after the failure of the agent. The colonel, James Lord Tyrawley, bore £100 of this stoppage as colonel and another £50 as captain. The lieutenant-colonel and major paid £60 and £40 respectively as field officers, with another £50 each as captains. The remaining captains paid £50 each, and the twenty-four subalterns were obliged to part with £25 apiece. Those doubling as adjutant and quartermaster were expected to provide £20 each, as was the regimental surgeon. Even the chaplain was obliged to part with £26 4s.²

There appeared to be every incentive for taking adequate securities from agents, and trying to ensure that regimental funds actually in the agent's hands were not greater than the sum of those securities. During 1744 Lieutenant General Cornwall became alarmed at the amount of non-effective money belonging to his regiment of Marines, the 7th, growing in the hands of his agent, Mr. Patterson of Conduit Street. Cornwall wished

¹ WO4.48.401, Fox to Stuart, 15 Feb. 1752. The stoppage was taken off on 2 June (*ibid.* 534).

² WO71.3.178, Board of General Officer's report on the Royal Fuziliers, 30 June 1716. The pay and subsistence of a colonel and captain of foot amounted to £610 10s. per annum, that of a captain to £182 10s. Captains and above could expect to add something to this from profits of their companies, at least during peacetime, but this amounted perhaps to no more than £40 or £50 over three years (*Report, 1746*, op. cit. p. 120). Colonels could make an additional £500-£700 per annum from the off-reckonings (*ibid.* 85 and B.L. Add. MS. 17,494, 31, John Calcraft to J. Pringle, esq., 30 Sept. 1758). The pay of a lieutenant was £85 3s. 4d. per annum, that of an Ensign, £66 18s. 4d. Figures for the English Establishment computed from *Army List, published by Order of the House of Commons, 1740*.

Patterson either to pay this money over to him, or to lodge it in some place secure from temptation. Patterson, believing that he was only authorized to issue funds for authenticated regimental business, was reluctant to let Cornwall have the money without an indemnity. Cornwall memorialized Sir William Yonge, the Secretary at War, whose office at that time had the direction of the ten Marine regiments. Sir William collected the opinions of the remaining Marine colonels and agents, and then referred the whole dispute to a Board of General Officers. As he did so, he sought an opinion from the government's legal experts, the Attorney and Solicitor General. The law officers concluded that colonels and agents were both answerable to the King and to their regiments for all public money reaching the agent. The agent was responsible in that he took delivery of funds from the Pay Office, and the colonel was responsible in that he appointed the agent. Both colonel and agent had good reason to be wary of each other's actions, and of the two, it was clearly the colonel who bore the ultimate responsibility for the actions of his nominee.¹ The annual Mutiny Acts assisted somewhat by requiring agents not to detain wilfully regimental money in their hands for longer than a month on penalty of the loss of their office, prohibition from ever holding another civil place under the crown and the imposition of a fine of £100.² During peacetime, regular demands for subsistence from regiments close to their established strengths, together with the injunctions of the Act, would undoubtedly help to keep balances well within the compass of proper securities. During wartime the severe losses and wide dispersion of the men of the Marine detachments caused this arrangement completely to break down. Patterson was afraid to issue money and Cornwall was afraid to leave it with him. Tranquility was only restored by a suspension of funds from the Pay Office to all the agents of Marines until the non-effective balances already in their hands had been reduced by demands for

¹ WO4.40.195, Sir William Yonge to the Attorney and Solicitor General, 21 Dec. 1744; *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1742-5*, Report from Sir Dudley Ryder and W. Murray, Attorney and Solicitor General, 22 Feb. 1745, pp. 671-2. There already existed an exception to prove this rule, in that government had already allowed a debt to the 34th Foot caused by Popple's failure. See above pp. 437.

² *Public General Acts*, Mutiny Act, 1727-8.

the subsistence of Marines remaining effective. The regiments would thus remain in full credit with the Pay Office rather than their agents, and any future issue from the office would be kept proportionable to the agent's demands on account of known services. No steps were taken to advise colonels what securities they should take, and no order issued insisting that they take them.

In 1760 the entire question was reviewed following the death and, as it soon appeared, insolvency of Maynard Guerin of Crown Court, Westminster, agent to six regiments, on the night of 5-6 May.¹ This sad event was followed by the usual administrative confusion, and on 24 May the Secretary at War, Lord Barrington, summoned a Board of General Officers to look into the inconvenience and suggest how it might be prevented in future. To stimulate discussion, Barrington offered a memorandum of his own that agencies should be carried on in partnership, so that the surviving partner could at least maintain continuity of business and prevent regimental funds from being compounded with the deceased's effects.² The Board assembled on 5 June under the presidency of James, Lord Tyrawley. Unceremoniously rejecting Barrington's scheme as impractical, the generals maintained that the only method of avoiding future difficulties was for a colonel to take sufficient securities from his agent, either by a deposit of money, or by the agent vesting a sum in the public funds in the name of trustees, applicable on the colonel's demand to make good any deficiency arising from the death or failure of the agent.³ Undeterred, Barrington now asked the Board to determine what sum the agent should deposit.⁴ The Board retorted that :

... notwithstanding we have considered this matter with the utmost attention, so many difficulties have arisen from the different numbers of which the same corps may at different times consist, or from the different issues of pay to the agent, which must vary according to the place where any corps is situated and the service on which it is employed, that it appears to be impracticable to fix any certain sum

¹ B.L. Add. MS. 17,495, 15, John Calcraft to the Rev. Mr. Storer, 6 May 1760.

² WO71.10.17, Barrington to the Judge Advocate General, 24 May 1760.

³ Ibid. 19-21, Report of the Board of General Officers, 12 June 1760.

⁴ WO71.10.22, Barrington to the Judge Advocate General, 20 June 1760.

which may be adapted to the several circumstances which may occur . . . the sum to be deposited cannot be properly determined by any person as by the colonel of each corps, whose interest as well as regard for the service must induce him to require a sufficient security, which has always been the constant practice of the army.¹

This was an opinion shared by John Calcraft, who also chose to rely on a colonel's personal judgement. The regimental funds in Calcraft's hands were indeed dictated by the various exigencies of the service. At the height of the Seven Years War he received from the Pay Office for marching regiments in England the subsistence of effectives only. This was drawn by the regiments almost as soon as it arrived in his hands. For a regiment serving in Germany, the subsistence was remitted directly by the Paymaster General. The same method applied for regiments in North America and at the garrison of Gibraltar. In these last two instances Calcraft would receive only a sum roughly equivalent to the officer's subsistence once every two months. Regiments serving in the East Indies had their pay despatched in specie every six months, nothing remaining in Calcraft's hands except for stoppages authorized by officers to support their families. Officer's arrears were usually issued every six months and taken up directly. Calcraft considered that it was almost impossible for an agent to have either six month's arrears or a month's subsistence in his hands if he should happen to die, "at least, it must be a very particular day".² Calcraft revealed that the sum normally submitted as security for the agency of a marching regiment in England was between £1,000 and £1,200.³

Lord Barrington submitted the Board's report to the King (the normal practice), who ordered him to communicate the contents to the colonels of regiments. This Barrington did in a circular letter of 10 July 1760. The letter stated "that if any of

¹ Ibid. 23, Report of the Board, 27 June 1760.

² B.L. Add. MS. 17,495, 39-40, Calcraft to Lord Tyrawley, 11 June 1760. In this letter Calcraft gave the president of the Board a very useful summary of his dealings, but it is not clear whether Tyrawley solicited the information specifically for the meeting. Tyrawley was colonel of the 2nd Foot Guards, to which Calcraft became agent during 1760; he was also the father of the agent's mistress, George Anne Bellamy, the actress.

³ B.L. Add. MS. 17,495, no folio number, Calcraft to the Honourable Colonel? [illegible]. Possibly the Hon. George Cary, 64th Foot.

[the colonels] have omitted to require sufficient security from their agents, they may be apprized of the necessity of speedily taking that precaution, as in the case of any accident, His Majesty . . . must look upon the Colonel as the only person accountable, not only for the payment of his regiment, the regimental funds and any other money with which the agent is usually entrusted, but also for any inconvenience which may arise to H.M.'s service from the death or failure of agents".¹

In future cases the existence of this circular letter unequivocally established a colonel's ultimate responsibility for the preservation of regimental funds,² but its immediate purpose was limited to " . . . [inducing] colonels to take security who have omitted to do so ".³ It was not a direct order to take securities. Moreover, it is instructive to note that in their Report of 27 June the general officers observed that : " . . . [no] instance occurs to us wherein the service has suffered or been impeded by the Death or Insolvency of an Agent ".⁴

In the light of Tyrawley's own experience with the finances of the Royal Fuziliers many years before, the troubles caused by the recent failure of Guerin, the bankruptcy of Captain Wilson, the collapse of Popple and Stevenson and various other references to losses sustained by colonels, " particularly one instance where the loss amounted to above 2,000 L.",⁵ this forthright statement from the generals is intriguing. Two conjectural reasons can be offered to explain such apparent indifference to the King's service. Firstly, the vast majority of agency business seems to have gone smoothly on, and although serious cases of bankruptcy occurred, there was no deluge of failures to alarm the colonels. The worst instances of failure had concerned the unregimented Jamaica companies who lacked a colonel to care for and about

¹ WO4.61.367, Barrington's circular letter, 10 July 1760.

² See WO71.10, 360-5, Board of General Officers to adjudicate between Lt.-Col. Mackenzie and Col. James Adolphus Oughton, 31st Foot, 15 April 1775. Mackenzie argued that the circular made it binding on Oughton to supply deficiencies caused by the insolvency and death of the agent, Augustine Oldham. The Board's report of 5 May upheld Mackenzie on most points (*ibid.* 372-4).

³ B.L. Add. MS. 17,495, 80, Calcraft to Lt.-Gen. Louis Dejean, 29 July 1760.

⁴ WO71.10.23.

⁵ *Report, 1746*, *op. cit.* p. 95. For a report of an agent dying £3,000 in debt to Honeywood's 1st Dragoons in 1729, *ibid.* p. 96.

them. Only five certain instances of an agent's failure occur on the English Establishment between 1716 and 1760,¹ with the possibility of one more to be considered. Secondly, if the generals appeared reluctant to invite government to take a hand in regulating agents and fixing securities, it is because such action would have interfered with the customary notions of proprietary right in military command. The generals, who were all colonels of regiments, considered themselves to be the best judges of their regimental affairs, better judges, it would appear, than the Secretary at War. As we have seen, Calcraft tended to agree and advised Tyrawley to that effect. There was a degree of *amour propre* at stake here for the generals, and there was also the small matter of profits. Fixed regulations and peremptory orders would have automatically restricted the area open for bargaining between colonel and agent. Such bargaining would concentrate on three negotiable areas; the allowances to be paid to the agent from regimental funds, any purchase price or customary dole to be given to the colonel by the agent, and the amount of the agent's securities and how they should be invested.

The customary allowances to an agent were two in number. The first was an allowance of 2d. in the pound sterling on the gross pay of the regiment. These twopences were normally stopped from the pay of the non-commission officers and private men at the Pay Office on the agent's behalf, while he himself deducted additional twopences from the clearings of the commission officers when they arrived in his office.² The second allowance was the subsistence of a man per troop or company per diem. Before August 1716 this allowance was obtained by inserting a fictitious name in the rolls of each troop or company and, after the 25th of that month, by introducing a distinct "warrant man" on to the establishment of each troop or company.³ The total sum accruing per annum to an agent from these

¹ No obvious instance has survived of a bankruptcy in Ireland during this period.

² *Report, 1746*, op. cit. p. 95.

³ WO4.18.120, William Pulteney, Secretary at War, to Commissary General of the Musters, 7 May 1716; *ibid.* pp. 222-3, same to same, 11 Aug. 1716; WO4.20.261-3, James Craggs, Secretary at War, to the Rt. Hon. E. Webster for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 10 Sept. 1717. The *Report, 1746*, op. cit., gives a date of 25 Dec. 1717 for this measure (pp. 77, 95).

sources might thus be : for a regiment of Horse of six troops and estimated annual gross pay of £23,877, some £417 ; for a regiment of Dragoons of seven troops and estimated gross pay of £23,226, some £373 and for a marching regiment of foot of nine companies and estimated gross pay of £18,365, a possible income of £235.¹ Some corroborative evidence is available for these crude computations. The first comes from an unlikely source, George Anne Bellamy, second-rate actress, demi-mondaine, mistress of John Calcraft and astringent memoirist. In her scandalous "Letter to John Calcraft, esq." of 1767, she rated the agency of General Edward Braddock's 14th Foot at £500 per annum, Lord Tyrawley's 2nd Foot Guards at £500 per annum, Mordaunt's 10th Dragoons at £300 and Peregrine Lascelles's 47th Foot at the same. Allowing for the various accidents and exigencies of the service, which will be dealt with shortly, these figures are quite credible, except perhaps those for Lascelles', which received a large proportion of its funds from the Irish Establishment during the time Calcraft was agent to it, and was thus subject to agency deductions in Ireland.² Another estimate of the income from agency comes from Thomas Ramsden to Charles Jenkinson in December 1763. Ramsden reckoned that five regiments were worth £1,000 per annum to an agent, which puts the product of one (marching ?) regiment at £200. Ramsden was a colleague of Jenkinson's in the northern department of the Secretary of State's office and his military information was probably reliable ; one of his brothers was at that time a major in Lord Effingham's troop of Horse Grenadier Guards, while another had also been in the army.³

¹ Computed for Honeywood's 4th Horse, Mordaunt's 10th Dragoons, Cavendish's 37th Foot in 1761 from estimates of gross pay in *Journals of the House of Commons*, xxviii, 943-5 and numbers of troops and companies in Millan's *Army List*, 1761.

² *An Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy, written by Herself* (London, 1785 edition). The "Letter to John Calcraft, esq." of 1 Oct. 1767 is included in volume V, and the estimates are at p. 192. Mrs. Bellamy was laying claim to a consideration from agencies which she claimed to have procured for Calcraft during the 1750s—thus it is only to be expected that she would pitch the income a little high. Her evidence should be treated with caution ; she claims in her narrative that her paramour became agent to ninety regiments, but this was never true.

³ Tom Ramsden to C. Jenkinson, 11 Dec. 1763 (N. S. Jucker, ed. *The Jenkinson Papers, 1760-1766* (London, 1949), p. 228 and nn. 22, 164).

A similar computation to that already made with the sum of twopences and warrant men would provide John Calcraft with a conjectural agency income of £14,600 in 1761 and around £16,000 during 1762. In those years, the climactic phase of the Seven Years War, Calcraft was agent to fifty-two and sixty-three corps respectively. The estimated income is computed from those sources alone. There should be added sixteen independent companies of foot and invalid pensioners, four battalions of embodied militia and, according to the Army List, the Fencible Men of Argyllshire and the Earl of Sutherland's Highland Battalion during 1761.¹ In addition to this growing total, allowance should be made for occasional income arising from agency. During wartime a considerable boost could be expected to regular income on account of an agency allowance of twopence in the pound on extraordinary payments made to a regiment. These payments included levy money from the government to pay for troop augmentations, allowances of forage and baggage money for troops taking the field, and grants of money from the extraordinaries to replace lost or damaged horses, clothing and regimental equipage. Also remaining to be considered were any profits gained from handling any balances from the regimental non-effective fund, managing the personal finances of the colonel and regimental officers and, in some cases, interest paid by the colonel on the agent's securities. To be subtracted from this grand total would be twopence from the pay of every noncommission officer and private man respited at the Pay Office,² money required for the payment of the agent's own

¹ Estimates of Calcraft's income and details of corps to which he was agent are computed from *Journals of the House of Commons*, xxviii. 943-5, xxix. 27-30; Millan's *Army Lists*, 1761, 1762; *Court and City Registers*, 1761, 1762. These lists and registers, printed at different times, do not always agree with one another: see *Appendix II* below, "The Succession of Agents".

² *Report*, 1746, op. cit. p. 95. If captains failed to keep their troops and companies tolerably complete, commissaries of the musters were instructed to respite vacant men on the rolls to enable the Pay Office to put a temporary stop, "respite", on the subsistence of the vacant man and the "warrant men" allowed to the captain for company expenses. This system proved inefficient enough during peacetime, and was virtually abandoned during the Seven Years War. The losses to the agent on this account would therefore be insignificant.

clerks, and the "Charge for Contingencies of Pen, Ink, Paper, etc."¹

Such conjectural totals, together with estimates of possible additional income are, however, unreliable, since it was by no means certain that agents received their customary allowances in every case. The Report of the Commons Committee of 1746 revealed a wide range of private agreements. The most frequent arrangement was for the agent to retain his allowance of twopences on the gross pay of each corps and to make over his allowance of warrant men to the colonel. Alternatively, he might retain both allowances yet deliver a proportion of the whole to the colonel and the regimental paymaster. Other agents operated on a fixed allowance taken from the sum of both allowances, and some enjoyed both allowances without deduction. Turning to the question of securities, not all agents revealed whether they gave them or not, or if so, to what amount. As far as the actual purchase of an agency was concerned, some agents admitted paying a large sum to the colonel, as much as £800 or £850. The sum of £500 was stated to be the customary price of the agency to a regiment of foot.

In most cases it appears that those agents who deposited securities did not give a lump sum as a consideration to the colonel, but this was not invariably so. Neither is it certain that every agent who paid for his nomination did not also deposit securities. Rather, all these matters were open to private negotiation between colonel and agent, and it is entirely probable that a batch of agencies held by an individual might produce a wide range of incomes, depending on a series of personal bargains adjusted to the mutual advantage of colonel and agent and not according to one of a few well defined or regulated options. The diffidence shown by all parties allows us to infer that, despite severe problems caused by the occasional failure of agents or the neglect of individual colonels, further interference by the Secretary of War was deemed unwelcome and unnecessary.

¹ Ibid. p. 96, Mr. William Adair found that, in Huske's 23rd Foot, these charges amounted to more than the allowance of twopences; the captains and field officers did not allow him twopences on their pay. Adair then charged the bill to their accounts, and they finally agreed to give him the twopences.

It should now be clear that the obscurity surrounding agency bargains prevents us from arriving at a truly satisfactory estimate of John Calcraft's income during 1761 and 1762. The figures already offered are founded on the assumption that he secured both of the customary allowances from each of his numerous colonels, but we do not know this to be the case. Caution suggests that we should therefore diminish the estimate, especially as it already takes no account of any drawbacks on respited men or fluctuating establishments. Conversely, the estimate would once again be boosted by including incidental agency on extensive wartime transactions, together with profits made from handling the private financial affairs of officer clients. The Calcraft account books which have actually survived¹ do not contain the computations of agency, abstracts of profits, notes of office expenses, records of private bargains concluded on the allowances or records of profits made on dealing privately with officers' finances which would enable us to reach an accurate estimate of the benefits arising from direct and indirect agency business. Instead, we can observe the means by which profit was made, and note that the business was obviously rewarding. In 1771 Calcraft was credited with properties worth £10,000 per annum, and large sums available for investment.² On a smaller scale, the agent Captain Thomas Levett of Warwick Street, Golden Square, died in 1758 worth £40,000.³

The one area in which the colonels actively invited the assistance of government was in the disciplining of agents who reneged on their agreements or appeared to be threatening the safety of regimental funds. The notable recalcitrance and devious pleading of agents during the War of the Spanish Succession led to the insertion of a clause in the Mutiny Act of 1708 ordering them to obey the orders of the Queen under the

¹ D.86 X 9-10, Account Books, General and Private, of John Calcraft as agent to regiments, 1755-64.

² *Dictionary of National Biography*, "John Calcraft".

³ B2.2.437 has a note of Levett's death, 15 Feb. 1758. Levett gave up his business during the winter of 1754-5 as a result of ill health (B2.2.420, David Roberts to Lt. Colonel Samuel Bagshawe, 39th Adlercron's, Foot, 13 August 1755). Roberts, originally chief clerk to Levett, installed himself in the Calcraft office.

sign manual or of the Lord Treasurer.¹ This provision, which in itself proved somewhat ineffective, was amplified in successive acts until by 1727 there were significant restrictions placed on an agent's conduct of affairs. The most important clause, which has already been referred to as it bore upon securities in the case of the ten regiments of Marines in 1744-5, was that designed to speed the movement of subsistence money through the agent's office within a month, preventing him from engrossing it. In addition, an order to obey instructions under the royal sign manual or from the Lord Treasurer and Commissioners of the Treasury for the time being was reiterated, on pain of dismissal and prohibition from holding civil office within the realm or in the king's service. Steps were also taken to enforce regular methods of accounting throughout the regiments. Exact accounts of money due to a corps on the basis of its muster-rolls were required every four months, covering two issues of subsistence from the Pay Office. These accounts were to be made up between the Paymaster General and the Colonel or his agent, subscribed to by all parties, kept in a special book at the Pay Office and a copy, without fees, vested with the agent. By the same article, the agent was obliged to render to each captain a state of what currently belonged to his troop or company. Failure to observe these regulations made the agent liable to a fine of £200 to be paid to the informer at a court martial and the loss of his place. The same penalties were imposed upon an agent failing to settle the reasonable demands of the executors of deceased officers and soldiers.²

These detailed provisions which, contrary to the usual belief, went so far as to threaten agents with a general court martial,³ seem to have been an effective check on the malfeasance of agents during our period. Only two major enquiries took place. The first was the Cornewall-Patterson dispute of 1744-5 arising from the non-effective fund of the 7th Marines, solved, as we have seen with the co-operation of all parties before a Board of General Officers. The second instance followed from a bitter, personal

¹ Scouller, *op. cit.* p. 136.

² *Public General Acts*, Mutiny Act, 1727-8.

³ O. Wheeler, *The War Office, Past and Present* (London, 1914), p. 103.

disagreement between the elderly Field Marshal Sir Robert Rich, Colonel of the 4th Dragoons, and his agent, Thomas Fisher of Axe Yard, Westminster. This dispute first arose during the summer of 1762. Fisher wished to reclaim from Sir Robert his security of £1,500 in Exchequer tallies and orders on which interest was due, offering instead £1,500 in 3 per cent annuities which were under par. Rich refused, ignoring Fisher's assertion that the annuities would swiftly rise to par once the imminent peace was declared. Fisher responded by asking Rich forthwith to choose another agent, which he did by appointing John Richardson of Horse Guards. Fisher meanwhile withheld from Richardson the balance of the regiment's Stock Purse Fund, estimated by Rich to stand at £1,112 15s. 7½d., together with warrants for the payment of £1,582 7s. 6d. in grass money to which the corps was entitled as a result of charges incurred during the campaigning season of 1761. Fisher refused to disgorge these funds until his security of £1,500 was returned to him and an outstanding debt of £751 4s. 1½d. repaid. Rich contended that this last debt was the personal responsibility of Captain Thornton, one of his officers; Fisher insisted that it was a regimental debt. Neither side seemed prepared to allow the claims of the other, and both parties tightly clutched the monies each had in hand. Rich then embarked on the offensive with a two pronged assault on Fisher. The first was founded on the provisions of the annual Mutiny Act. He accused the agent of violating the Act by refusing his drafts to recruit horses and wilfully withholding the grass money, thus depriving the regiment of part of its pay. In addition, he accused the agent of violating a royal warrant embodied in the Regulations concerning the administration of the Stock Purse Fund of 19 June 1749. The regulations stated, among other provisions, that the stock purse was applicable at the colonel's demand "to recruit men and horses and to bear the contingent charges of the troop".¹ Fisher replied that while he had actually advanced money to the captains to provide troop necessities, he would only give up the balance and warrants when his debt was paid and his security returned.

¹ WO26.21.369-71.

In August 1762, a small board of three general officers assembled to look into the unseemly wrangle. They submitted a preliminary analysis in October, but Rich's ire was not to be deflected. He insisted that those of his charges involving alleged breaches of the Munity Act should be "solemnly heard and determined by a Court Martial". Fisher concurred. Accordingly, on 13 December, a court martial opened at the Horse Guards, composed entirely of general officers under the presidency of Lieutenant General the Earl of Panmure. Such an assemblage of rank, and presumably, wisdom, suggested the importance of the case. The aged Field Marshal, now confined to his bed, was represented by his equally combative and litigious son, Lieutenant General Sir Robert Rich; Fisher, for his part, was also in a determined mood. Thus, the points submitted by either side were strongly contested. It was this, perhaps, that prompted the litigants not to press the business to a conclusion. Sir Robert and Fisher agreed to arbitration; the Lieutenant General announced to the court that he wished to cease the prosecution and Fisher was honourably acquitted. It is not known how the disputants adjusted their affairs in private but, once again, recourse to personal negotiation is typical of the relations between colonels and their agents, rarely, it seems, as strained as upon this unhappy occasion. Perhaps the Riches only intended the panopty of the court martial to deter the recalcitrant Fisher, but the agent was not so easily frightened.¹

With the exception of these two dissimilar disputes, the agency scene remained remarkably stable throughout our period; colonels tended to leave regimental business in the hands of their chosen agents without frivolous changes. The choice of an agent was, in theory, the prerogative of an individual colonel. Some colonels felt more able to exercise this prerogative than others. Some felt free enough to reward faithful dependants in the way in which Lord Ligonier advanced the assiduous Richard Cox. Others saw the wisdom of following the advice of Henry

¹ The Fisher-Rich contest can be found in WO72.5, Rich's state of Fisher's account to 24 June 1762; loc. cit. Fisher's answer, 20 Aug. 1762; WO71.10.87-92, Board of General Officers and report, 1 Oct. 1762; WO71.25.101-57, General Court Martial of Thomas Fisher, esq., 13-20 December 1762; WO4.71.27, Welbore Ellis, Secretary at War, to the Judge Advocate General, 28 Dec. 1762.

Fox and nominating John Calcraft ; no doubt others succumbed, as she boasted, to the social charms of la Bellamy.¹ Other colonels were obliged to conform to the wishes of their own patrons, and assumed that this was the general rule. When the young War Office clerk Leonard Morse wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Bagshawe of Adlercron's 39th Foot in July 1757 asking for the nomination to the agency should Bagshawe be advanced to the colonelcy of a new young corps, Bagshawe told him that, much as he would like to honour Morse, "... I need not acquaint you how seldom the colonels have the power to name their Agents". Should he be named to a newly regimented battalion, he felt obliged to let his patrons, Sir Robert Wilmot and the Duke of Devonshire, name the agent. John Calcraft, already agent to the 39th, and always alert to the possibility of new business, received a similar answer ;

Your merit, capacity and connections make it an honour to me to have such a person manage the affairs of the Regiment, but I need not mention to you that these appointments are now reduced to method and indeed, it is very far from being unreasonable when a person by the credit of his Patron and Friend obtains Promotion to accept a person whom his Friends should recommend. The D... of D... is my Patron, Sir Robt. Wilmot has long been a disinterested Friend. It will be my desire when I obtain a Regt. that the Agent may be agreeable to them...

Bagshawe told Calcraft that he was free to mention the affair to Sir Robert and the Duke if he chose. If he obtained a corps and Calcraft proved to be the successful candidate, he simply asked Calcraft to entrust the business of the new regiment to the division of his office headed by David Roberts, lately chief clerk to Captain Levett and an old acquaintance. It is probable that Roberts was the "particular person for whom I have professed such a regard..." and the "young gentleman..." mentioned both to Calcraft and Morse as the person to whom Bagshawe would really have liked to entrust an agency.²

¹ Anon., *Memoirs of George Anne Bellamy, including all her Intrigues* (London, 1785), p. 114.

² B2.2.423, Leonard Morse to Lt.-Col. Bagshawe, 19 July 1757 ; *ibid.* 425, Bagshawe to Morse, draft ; B.L. Add. MS. 17,493, 154, Calcraft to Bagshawe, 22 April 1758 ; B2.2.448, Bagshawe to Calcraft, draft, 25 Apr. 1758. Whoever the "young gentleman" actually was, and it does not appear to have been Morse (B2.2.428), Bagshawe told Calcraft that "I believe it will not suit his occasions to

Other colonels, meanwhile, did not suffer from such inhibitions as these and were able to take a more independent line. Despite unfailing civility, Lord George Sackville divested Calcraft of the agency of the 2nd, the Queen's, Dragoons when he was appointed Colonel in succession to the Hon. William Herbert in April 1757. Sackville pitched on Mr. Ross of Conduit Street to be his new agent. Calcraft saw "these cursed politics" at the bottom of the change. Ross was a client of the Earl of Bute, and Sackville was keen to enter the orbit of Leicester House. Once, Calcraft had felt able to rely on Lord George's recommendation. On future occasions it was likely that Sackville would use his influence in favour of Ross.¹ Calcraft was similarly irritated when Major General James Abercromby removed him from the lucrative agency of the four battalion 60th Foot, the Royal Americans, in the summer of 1758. Abercromby appointed some obscure relative of his own, a "Mr. Abercrombie", who appears briefly in the pages of the Court and City Register during 1759. Calcraft admitted to Abercromby that "it is natural for a person to prefer his friend and relation" but secretly, he opined the change to be motivated by a political attack on his old acquaintance, correspondent and employer, John, Earl of Loudoun, late Colonel of the 60th, who had just returned, discredited, from the chief command in North America. The colonelcy-in-chief of the 60th was a perquisite of this command, and Calcraft had the satisfaction of recovering the agency when Major General Jefferey Amherst relieved Abercromby after the disaster at Ticonderoga.²

undertake an agency". Roberts was an experienced man, but perhaps he lacked capital for a security. It is possible that he is the "John Roberts" of Calcraft's office named as agent to Independent Companies in the *Court and City Register*, 1762, pp. 175-6. For Bagshawe's dependence on the Devonshires, see J. Hayes, op. cit. p. 357 and W. H. G. Bagshawe, *The Bagshawes of Ford* (London, 1886), pp. 156-60, 167. Bagshawe did not get a corps until he raised one himself in Ireland in 1759-60. His agent to the 93rd Foot was Captain Montgomery of Dublin.

¹ B.L. Add. MS. 17,493, 57, Calcraft to Lt.-Col. Irwin, 8 Apr. 1757; *ibid.* 58, Calcraft to John, Earl of Loudoun, 9 Apr. 1757; *ibid.* 163-4, Calcraft to Lt.-Col. Ralph Burton, 11 May 1758.

² *Ibid.* 177, Calcraft to Abercromby, 7 June 1758; *ibid.* 175-6, Calcraft to Lt.-Col. Burton, 8 June 1758. Calcraft took over the agency of Amherst's 60th Foot in Aug. 1758 (B.L. Add. MS. 17,494, 14, Calcraft to Amherst, 24 Aug. 1758).

The appearance of "Mr. Abercrombie" in the *Court and City Register*, 1759, ostensibly correct to the end of Nov. 1758, is a good indication of the unreliability of this reference source. Calcraft had been pursuing the agency of Amherst's other corps, the 15th Foot, since the sudden death of the previous agent, Henry Taylor of Charles Street, Westminster in May 1758. He did so in 1759 after Amherst's brief flirtation with Mr. Ross, who was probably recommended to him by Sackville (B.L. Add. MS. 17,493, 163-4, Calcraft to Lt.-Col. Burton, 11 May 1758).

The second part of this article will appear in the following number of the BULLETIN.