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# ABRAHAM TOVEY (1687–1759) – MATROSS, MASTER GUNNER AND MASTERMIND OF SCILLY’S DEFENCES

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*In Scilly the walls surrounding the Garrison were extended dramatically during the 1740s. Abraham Tovey, the Master Gunner, began this programme though in later years he was replaced by professional men from the mainland to run this complex project. The walls are Tovey’s most obvious achievement in Scilly, but documents demonstrate that he had a successful military career as an artillery man in Spain before arriving in Scilly in 1714. Three of his sons followed their father into the artillery, one rising to be a Lieutenant Colonel while Isaac succeeded his father as Scilly’s Master Gunner.*

People who live in Scilly or visitors to the islands will have passed through the Garrison Gate that bears the initials ‘AT’ and the date 1742. (Fig. 1) Abraham Tovey, Master Gunner and Storekeeper appointed in 1714, had the temerity to place his initials alongside those of King George II and Francis, 2nd Earl of Godolphin, Governor of the Islands from 1733 until 1766 and this has led to the conclusion that he extended the Garrison Walls, terminating in 1742. However, the date simply marks the widening of the gate, a necessary step to allow men and materials to pass through during the extension of the walls.

Nevertheless, Tovey was a central figure in their construction, but he also managed the affairs of the Board of Ordnance on the islands from 1714 until 1757, and he commanded Scilly’s six gunners. This article will examine his time on the islands, but it will begin by exploring his service in Spain from 1706

until 1713. It is possible to follow some of the steps in his early military career through pay records and lists of items of uniform issued to soldiers in the artillery train fighting in Spain and by tracing his commanding officer’s activities it is possible at times to locate where he was based during the War of Spanish Succession.<sup>1</sup>

Once Tovey arrived in Scilly, his career can be followed, at least in outline, from the records of payments to him by the Board of Ordnance and the bills he submitted for work carried out. Occasionally more detail can be gleaned about his life, including an extraordinary conflict with the commanding officer of troops based on the islands in the 1730s. Some information about his family can be found in his and his children’s wills, and they reveal that at least some of them chose to follow their father’s career in the recently-created Royal Regiment of Artillery.

## TOVEY IN SPAIN

In military history, the name Abraham Tovey is usually associated with the Lieutenant Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Artillery who died during the siege of Gibraltar in 1781, but this is not the Tovey whose initials appear above the Garrison Gate. Scilly’s Tovey is first mentioned in connection with the islands on 2 October 1714, but before this he had been a soldier fighting in Spain.<sup>2</sup> In the International

Genealogical Index the only person who conforms to a late-17th century date of birth is an Abraham Tovy, whose birth was registered on 12 December 1687 at Kingswood in Wiltshire.<sup>3</sup>

Tovey is first mentioned in 1706 when, as a matross in the artillery train in Spain, he was issued with a hat. He was replacing one that he had already received, as no other pieces of uniform were issued during that year. A matross' role was to assist gunners in loading, firing and sponging the guns, as well as providing protection for the artillery pieces from any infantry attack. Tovey was in Spain as England was fighting in the War of Spanish Succession, which broke out on 4 May 1702, less than two months after Queen Anne's accession. This conflict pitched England, the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, Portugal and Savoy against France and Spain in a struggle over the Spanish throne.<sup>4</sup> Although Philip V, the candidate of France and Spain, ended the war as monarch, he had to concede any rights to the French throne, thus removing the



Fig. 1. Abraham Tovey's initials celebrate his long life on Scilly, as well as his role in the extension of the Garrison Walls. [DP085284]

threat of a unified Franco-Spanish Bourbon state dominating Europe.

Initially, English forces fought in the Low Countries, but in 1703 a force was assembled to fight in Portugal, including a small artillery train.<sup>5</sup> It consisted of two officers, twenty gunners, six engineers, five bombardiers and ten miners armed with only five sakers and a 5¼-pounder.<sup>6</sup> This expedition was not sent until the following year, but it was soon realised that it lacked firepower, specialised artillery officers and matrosses and in 1705 it was reorganised and reinforced with a captain, a lieutenant, a fireworker, a surgeon, forty-two matrosses and some NCOs, and six mountain 3-pounders added to its firepower.<sup>7</sup>

In May 1706 a new force of 11,000 men set sail under Earl Rivers were ordered to sail in a fleet commanded by Sir Cloudesley Shovel to invade France, a fleet that ended up by October at Lisbon, where it remained for a few months.<sup>8</sup> Included in this force was a substantial artillery train led by a colonel, who commanded four engineers, two sub-engineers, a paymaster, a surgeon, a captain, a lieutenant, two gentlemen of the ordnance, three sergeants, three corporals, thirty-two gunners and sixty-four matrosses as well as miners and labourers. This train was armed with twenty 24-pounders, four 12-pounders, six culverins, four demi-culverins, six sakers and sixty cohorn mortars. Despite efforts by the Portuguese to retain this force, it sailed again to Alicante where it landed on 8 February 1707.<sup>9</sup> In 1707 a combined artillery train was created.<sup>10</sup> The heroic and long-lived Albert Borgard was initially in overall command after his transfer from Flanders to Portugal in 1703.<sup>11</sup> The train was divided into two companies, each commanded by a captain with a lieutenant, a gentleman of the ordnance, three sergeants, three corporals, twenty gunners, forty matrosses and two drummers.

Tovey's first mention as a matross in 1706 suggests two possibilities, namely that he arrived in 1705 in the contingent of forty-two matrosses added

to the original train, or that he formed part of the 1706 expedition. The sole reference to the issue of a hat is the only direct evidence on which to base a decision. Had he outgrown, worn out or lost a hat that he had been issued a year before, or had he mislaid or lost overboard his newly-issued hat? Fanciful speculation aside, in 1707 he was in a company that was operating in the Tarragona and Tortosa area, rather than near Alicante and therefore it is more likely that he had arrived as part of the 1705 reinforcements. Records of monies paid to the artillery train occasionally contain a reference to where the recipients were based or where they had travelled from. Tovey cannot be followed in these documents, but some of the movements of his commanding officers can be traced. The artillery train was commanded in 1707 by Colonel Michael Richards with Lieutenant Colonel Albrecht Borgard as his second in command.<sup>12</sup> Tovey was originally in the First Company. His commander was Captain Richard Silver and on 24 January 1707/8 he was paid for moving from Tarragona to Barcelona, while on 20 March 1707/8 he was reimbursed for moving from Tarragona to Tortosa. On 11 July 1708 Tortosa fell to the Bourbon forces after a month-long siege.<sup>13</sup>

In clothing records for the year from 25 March 1707 to 22 March 1708 Tovey was provided with a new coat, waistcoat, breeches, a hat, four pairs of shoes and three pairs of blue stockings as he had been promoted to the rank of gunner on 30 October 1707.<sup>14</sup> On 6 September 1708 Tovey was promoted again to the rank of corporal and on 5 November 1708 he transferred to the Second Company, which was commanded by Captain George Bradbury.<sup>15</sup>

The lists of items of uniform issued to the artillery train in Spain between 1706 and 1713 are fairly complete, but there is a definite gap in the records during which Abraham Tovey does not appear. This occurs between 22 March 1709, when he is a corporal and 13 August 1710 when he had become a sergeant in Captain Bradbury's Company. Why does he disappear from these records? If a

soldier had been captured, this is recorded in pay records, so was he injured and if he remained in Spain why was he not paid? His absence may be due to him returning to England after spending three years in Spain. This gap coincides with the return of Borgard's troops from capturing and fortifying Minorca in February 1708/9 until the eve of the Battle of Saragossa on 20 August 1710.<sup>16</sup> On 13 August 1710 Tovey was first mentioned as a sergeant; by 1712 he was the senior sergeant of the company. Pay records show that for 1713 he was only paid for 283 days, meaning he was discharged on 9 October 1713. The Treaty of Utrecht, signed on 11 April 1713, marked the official end of the War of Spanish Succession, and by October he was released, presumably to make his way back to Britain.<sup>17</sup>

Official records document Tovey's movements and his rapid rise through the ranks, and they demonstrate that he was a successful soldier. An anonymous commentator recorded eloquently the life of artillery men in temperate Flanders, taking place at the same time as the war in sun-drenched Spain:

'Eye-witnesses are unanimous in their praise of the efficiency, devotion, and untiring energy of the officers and men, both in working their guns and in getting their cumbrous pieces over the execrable roads in time to take their share in gaining the Duke's victories.'<sup>18</sup>

#### TOVEY IN SCILLY 1714-40

The earliest reference to Abraham Tovey in Scilly occurs on 2 October 1714:

'That Capt'n Abra'm Tovey's Letter, of ye 14th Sep'br last, w'th an Acc't of ye Remains of stores, in his Maj'y's Garrison's at Island of Scilly, be referred to Mr Ayres to make his Report upon, to ye Board, what Number of Guns he thinks ought to be Mounted there, and what Condition those places where in, when he was last there.'<sup>19</sup>

This suggests that he had arrived recently and was being asked to appraise the situation on the islands.



Fig. 2. This map of 1715 by Colonel Christian Lilly shows Star Castle at the right (north); at the southern end of the Garrison was the 'old Fort'. Around the Garrison can be seen the walls that existed (shown with a red outer line) with earthworks shown in black.

Above is a view of the Garrison from approximately where Harry's Walls was built.

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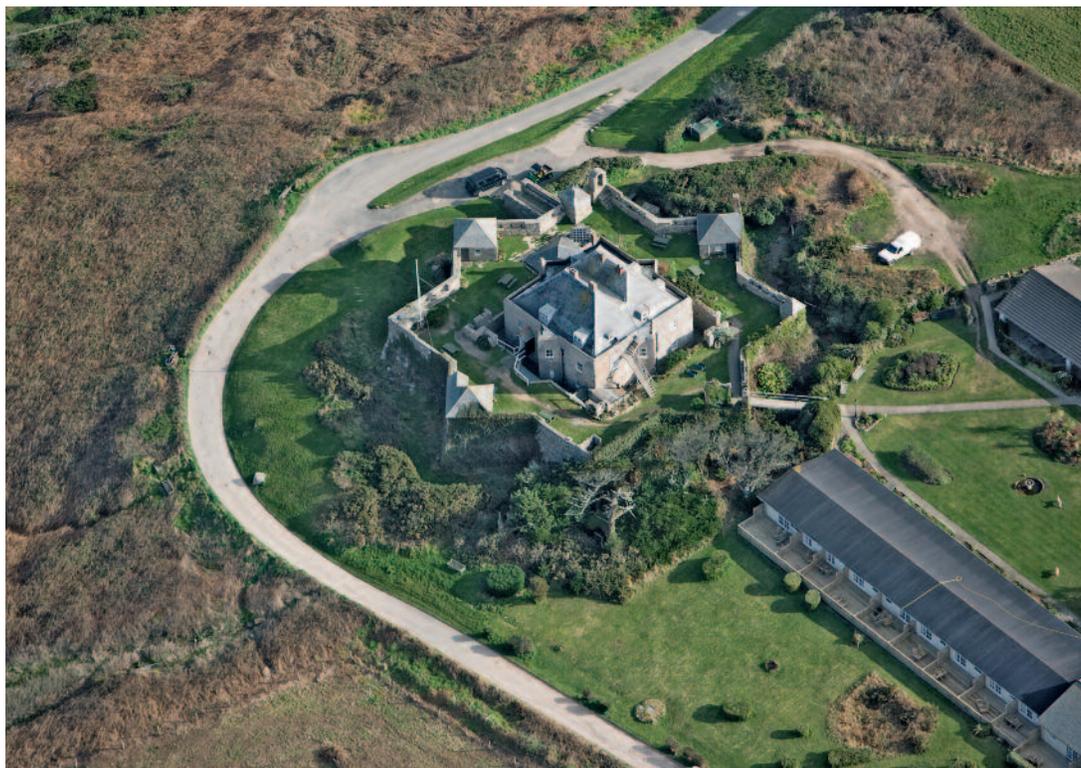


Fig. 3. This aerial photograph of Star Castle (1593-4) shows the castle in the centre with a narrow passage around it. Outside this are the ramparts and the whole site is surrounded by a dry ditch. [*NMR 26576/036*]

A year later Tovey's financial room for manoeuvre was outlined:

'that hes not to Exceed 40s in small repairs before he gives the Board an Acct, for wch he must give his reasons by the first post, otherwise 't will not be allowed; Approve his getting 30 small Arm's repaired for the Service of the Invalids, but not to enter into any further Expence till Coll Lilly's report – is made'<sup>20</sup>

On 1 August 1714 George I had become King, and the new Whig Government came to power in March 1714/5.<sup>21</sup> To deal with the limitations of the Board of Ordnance, seven engineers were dispatched to complete surveys of their allotted regions as part of the reforms undertaken by the Duke of Marlborough and therefore Colonel Christian Lilly visited the Isles of Scilly.<sup>22</sup> The manuscript he compiled includes a

section on Scilly consisting of a short introduction, a number of architectural drawings of proposed buildings inside the Garrison and a table detailing the work that would be required to make the fortifications serviceable. (Fig. 2)

Lilly concluded that the buildings within the Garrison were in a poor state of repair:

'for besides what Accommodations and Conveniences are in the Castle, it Self, there has been two large Storehouses, Severall Guard-houses, and many Barracks, with other Offices fitt to receive and accommodate, a Considerable number of men, all of which have been built at great Expence, but are now so many heaps of Ruines.'<sup>23</sup>

The castle required repairs totalling £121 9s 9d and the three barracks or 'little lodging rooms' on the

ramparts of the castle were ruinous and needed to be repaired. (Fig. 3) Lilly also suggested converting the old guard house and store house flanking the Garrison gate into barracks with twenty bedsteads. He also felt that there was a need for more accommodation to house a further 120 men and he provided a design for this barrack building, though this was never built.<sup>24</sup> Lilly proposed the construction of a Storehouse overlooking Newman's Rock.<sup>25</sup> This five-bay, stone building was built and survives today as Newman House. In style it is similar to buildings flanking the slightly earlier gate of Pendennis Castle. Lilly also concluded that Tovey should have his own house within the Garrison rather than having to live in Hugh Town.<sup>26</sup> He designed a small three-bay, lobby-entry house containing two rooms on the ground floor with a central stair leading to an attic that probably also contained two rooms. In 1750 Robert Heath described Tovey's house: 'Under the hill, towards the North Part of the Garrison, stands a convenient

Dwelling, in which resides Mr Abraham Tovey, Master-Gunner'.<sup>27</sup> It contains 'good Apartments, Yards, Garden, Out-houses, and Cellars, (well stored) also a little House that stands under the Hill, betwixt his Dwelling-House (next the Sea) and the parade above it'.<sup>28</sup> This house is now the White House.

After addressing the buildings of the Garrison, Lilly turned to the walls and earthworks. He estimated that the cost of the work would be £598 1s 7d for Sodwork and £375 1s 5d for earthwork, but if some materials were reused, the total cost could be reduced to £879 7s 7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. Parts of the stone walls also required significant repairs. The left flank and most of the face of Newman's Battery had disappeared, and to repair this would cost £93 12s. The south-west corner of the Lower Benham Bastion had collapsed and this would require £40 to correct. This battery today may still bear the evidence of where this major repair took place, though it has certainly also been repaired more recently. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4. Lower Benham Battery was built on the shore to prevent any enemy forces outflanking the new Garrison Walls. However, its location by the seashore means that it has had to be regularly repaired and rebuilt, at least from the early 18th century. [DP022418]

Lilly also provided a detailed breakdown of the work required and the state of the guns on the Garrison. These ranged from a handful of 3-pounders to two 12-pounders and three 16-pounders. As well as these probably relatively modern guns, Lilly recorded more archaic types of gun, including eight culverins, twenty demi-culverins, twenty-four minions and seven sakers. He had to recommend providing 101 new gun carriages, an indication of the poor state of the artillery and he estimated that £620 0s 9d would be needed to provide new carriages. On 5 August 1718 Portsmouth, presumably the Dockyard, was instructed to provide Scilly with oak carriages on plank wheels for three 18-pounders, fourteen 9-pounders, eleven 5¼-pounders and eighteen 4-pounders.<sup>29</sup> Providing forty-six new carriages falls short of the 101 recommended by Lilly, but probably reflected the true number of serviceable pieces of artillery in Scilly.

Lilly had suggested that the whole cost of his scheme would be £3,914 1s 3d, but the large barrack block, which would have cost £1,304 3s 2½d, was not built.<sup>30</sup> On 13 March 1715/6 £1,000 was allocated to Scilly, and on 18 May 1716 a separate instruction was given to him to spend £825 19s 3¼d, with a further large request for an imprest to pay a bill of £456 21s (sic) dated 23 August 1716.<sup>31</sup>

Lilly had carried out his survey in 1715, but he did not manage the works. On 25 July 1715 he paid Captain Chadwick £3 4s 6d for his passage from Plymouth and two days later he paid a further £1 9s 6d for boat hire to take him to Tresco to inspect the island.<sup>32</sup> On 3 September 1715 Lilly paid the Master of a Collier for his passage from Scilly to Falmouth, marking the completion of his immediate work on the islands. Thereafter, Tovey was presumably left in charge of the repairs and renewal of the earthworks and he may have supervised the construction of buildings, though the quality of the structures and the presence of buildings with similar details at Pendennis, suggests external help.<sup>33</sup>

In 1717 Lilly returned to the islands presumably to

supervise the completion of work. On 2 September 1717 he had spent £3 4s 6d travelling to Scilly from Plymouth and back with 'Artificers'.<sup>34</sup> As this was a two-way trip, no date for his return is recorded, but on 15 November 1717 he hired a horse to ride from Plymouth to Falmouth, demonstrating that he had returned from Scilly.<sup>35</sup> In the same bill a £35 14s payment was made to James Fawcett 'for his Assistance in Surveying & Writing 204 days at 3s 6d' and Isaac Pearson was paid £8 6s 6d for his assistance in carrying the chain between 22 August and 11 December.<sup>36</sup> Fawcett and Pearson were presumably surveying the island's defences and perhaps they were responsible for the beautiful plan of the Garrison in Lilly's manuscript.<sup>37</sup> (Fig. 2)

After 1717 Scilly returned to being a minor player in the Ordnance papers. Lilly's work was complete by the end of the year and thereafter Tovey submitted his bills and drew imprests annually or twice-annually to cover minor repairs. As Storekeeper he managed the everyday needs of the garrison and carried out minor repairs to buildings; while wearing his other hat he normally managed six gunners.<sup>38</sup> These soldiers were sometimes ill-disciplined and during 1717 Tovey was asked to keep them under tighter control.<sup>39</sup>

In the 1720s and 1730s Tovey normally confined his work to minor repairs, but in a bill dated 31 December 1728 he included £44 'To Building 32 Perch & ½ of Masonry Worke on Sadlers Battery' and 'Cutting 909 ft of Moor Stone and Laying 1596ft for ditto'.<sup>40</sup> This was the battery sometimes known as Mount Holles, located in front of the Garrison gate, and in the 1738/9 survey of the defences it was described as follows: 'Saddlers Battery has 11 Guns serv'ble but on uns'ble Carriages, the Battery is in good Order'.<sup>41</sup> Despite being 'in good Order' it was not maintained as part of the new defences in the 1740s.

Little emerges from Ordnance papers about everyday life on the Garrison, but a couple of incidents suggest that Tovey may not have got on with everyone on the islands. On 20 January 1720 he complained that Ensign Hanning had allowed women and

children to sleep in the barracks and that other abuses taking place included ‘feeding their Hogg & Poultry therein’.<sup>42</sup> By 11 February 1720 this dispute had escalated to the Secretary of War’s desk, though he seems to have ignored it, and the last time that this incident was mentioned was on 13 September 1723 when Tovey complained that Hanning had locked him up.<sup>43</sup>

A more serious dispute broke out in the late 1720s and it demonstrates that Tovey enjoyed a difficult relationship with at least one commander of the military forces in Scilly. Tovey’s responsibilities potentially put him into conflict with the commanding officer of the infantry garrisoning Scilly. A testimony was published by Tovey in response to charges laid against him by Captain Lloyd and while it purports to be a dispassionate record of events, it presents Tovey’s perspective on the case.<sup>44</sup>

This dispute began in 1728 over small repairs to Captain Lloyd’s house, but Tovey’s testimonial suggests that the fundamental problem was that Lloyd did not follow the written procedures needed by the Board of Ordnance, and instead issued verbal orders that Tovey was expected to obey. ‘The Captain calls him Rebellious, abuses him, gives him the Lie, calls him Rascal and Scoundrel, threatens to beat him’ – following these heated outbursts, Tovey carried out the work, but only after Lloyd agreed to pay the cost if the Board of Ordnance did not pay. Inevitably, it did not pay and Lloyd was tardy in reimbursing Tovey. In January 1732/3 a new row broke out about the gunners not firing a salute in reply to Captain Lloyd’s signal and a few days later a soldier, William Fulton, stabbed Tovey between the eyes. Frustratingly the bottom of the page of the testimonial is missing and so the outcome of this incident is not recorded.

Matters escalated during 1733. In May Tovey was arrested by a corporal sent by Captain Lloyd, accused of ‘shewing Strangers the nakedness of the garrison’. Tovey seems to have walked around the fortifications with Captain Atkins, from a naval vessel moored offshore, but Tovey was soon at liberty, if he had ever

been arrested. In August 1733 Lloyd denied Tovey use of a well beside his house and therefore Tovey had to bring water from another well that was stagnant.

In January 1732/3 Captain Lloyd had apparently allowed Tovey to enclose land beside his house to create a vegetable garden, but in September 1733 Lloyd ordered that its wooden gates should be pulled down and the garden destroyed. To prevent animals from eating his produce Tovey threw some ‘Chichester Wheaten Flower’ on his plants, leading Lloyd to arrest him on charges of spreading poison. Tovey seems to have been held under house arrest for five months and his wife who was ‘lame and helpless’ was forbidden to have a maid to attend her. Tovey attributed her early death to this and he recorded that on her death bed she had denounced Lloyd. As Tovey was under arrest he had to attend his wife’s funeral under guard.

Tovey wished to be tried in Scilly where people would support his testimony, but instead his case was heard in front of the Duke of Argyll in London. The bill submitted to the Board of Ordnance for Tovey’s costs in relation to the hearing has survived:<sup>45</sup>

‘Scilly Island 2 November 1734

To Abraham Tovey for the following Disbursements at this place between the 8 April 1734 and the date above

	£	s	d
Passage of the Master Gunner & 3 Witness’s to London, provisions &c	5	5	–
Maintenance of the said Witness while in Town 210 days	62	14	–
Passage of 4 other Evidences to London	4	4	–
Maintenance of Do 50 days	20	–	–
Passage of the Master Gun’r back to Scilly	7	7	–
Master Gunners Extraordinary			
Expence in the said Business	13	2	6
Rec’d 8 March 1734/5	112	12	6 <sup>7</sup>

The amount of money expended on this case demonstrates how far the conflict between Tovey and Lloyd had escalated. Although the official outcome has not been found, records regarding the



Fig. 5. From the late 16th century it was realised that a heavily-fortified Garrison on St Mary's could guarantee control of the waters around the islands. In the 1740s new walls were built around large parts of it while in c.1900 6-inch gun batteries surrounded by earthworks were set into the hillside. [*NMR 26571/028*]

maintenance of the Garrison show that Tovey returned to the islands and continued with his work, presumably exonerated, and by the end of the 1730s Captain Charles Jeffreyson had replaced Lloyd in command of forces on the islands.

#### TOVEY AND THE GARRISON WALLS

The plaque above the gate into the Garrison bears the date 1742 and three sets of initials, those of King George II, Francis, 2nd Earl of Godolphin, Governor of the Islands and Abraham Tovey. (Fig. 1) The Master Gunner had placed himself alongside these nationally-important figures and presumably it was an accolade that was agreed by the Governor. Far from this marking the end of the building programme, it seems only to

commemorate the widening of the gate to enable work on the extension of the Garrison Walls. The Garrison was the smaller of the pair of islands that form St Mary's with a sandbank between the two landmasses, similar in form to the pairing of St Agnes and The Gugh. Hugh Town, the largest settlement in Scilly, has been built on this sandbank, between two beaches. The defences of the Garrison are roughly oval in plan, with their maximum distance from north to south being approximately 900 yards, while the distance from east to west is around 600 yards. (Fig. 5) These walls and earthworks measure around 1.5 miles in length and enclose almost 100 acres.

In the 1590s the first section of wall, measuring around 500 yards in length, running from the northern tip of the Garrison to the pair of Benham Batteries on the east side, was designed to prevent any troops

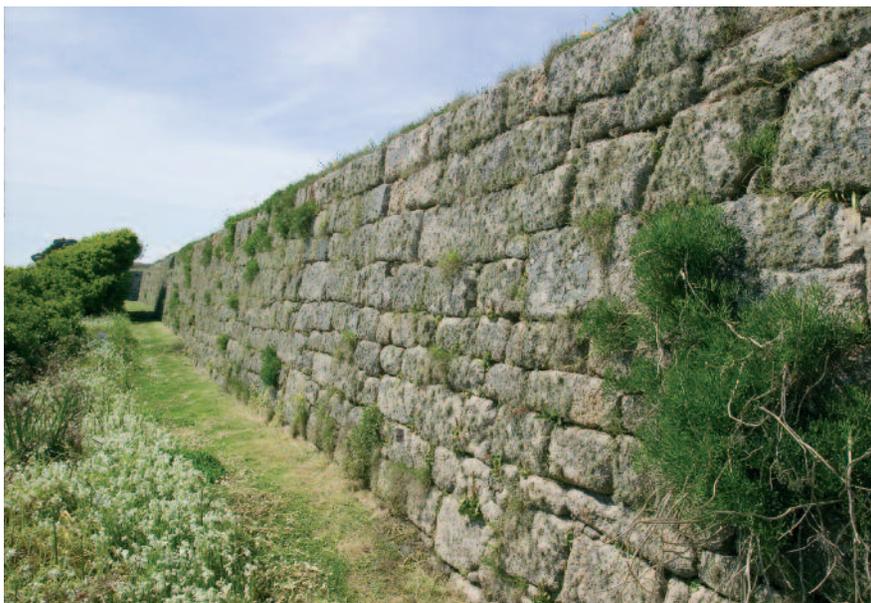


Fig. 6. On the south side of the Garrison between Morning Point and the Woolpack Battery the stone is small though well-coursed. It was quarried nearby while Abraham Tovey was in charge of the works, probably in 1742-3. [DP022527]

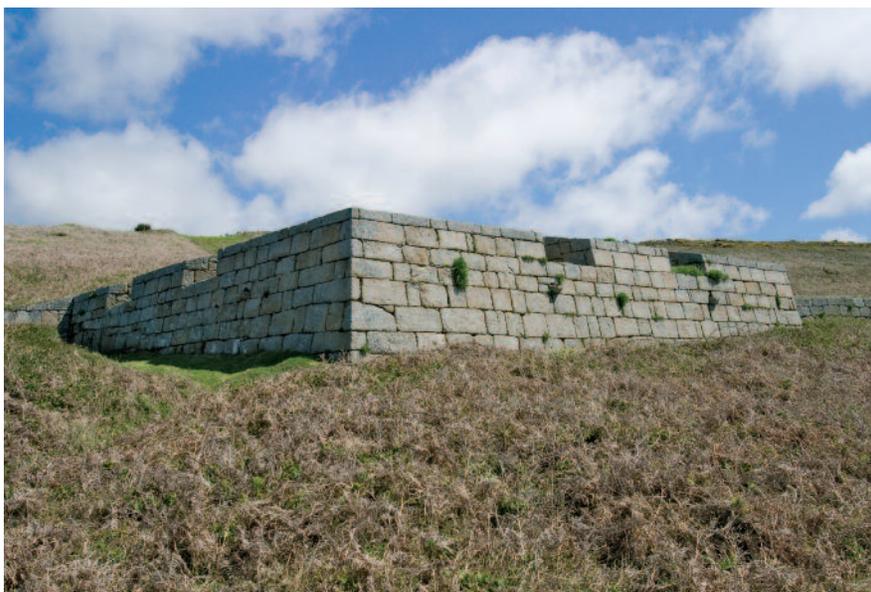


Fig. 7. Bartholomew's Battery was built between 1744 and 1746 with the finest quality stonework and the projecting drainage spouts employed in the last phases of construction, after Tovey had been sidelined. [DP022489]

that had landed at Hugh Town from attacking Star Castle. During the Civil War earthwork defences were created around the rest of the Garrison and a long stretch survives at the west side of the Garrison, where walls were never built to replace them. In 1715 Christian Lilly recommended that the earthwork defences and the early section of stone walls should be repaired and renewed. Despite these repairs the defences were still in a poor state in the late 1730s when the new commanding officer, Captain Charles Jeffreyson, produced a lengthy and damning report detailing how the earthworks needed to be replaced. Frances Godolphin submitted this to the Privy Council who ordered that Thomas Armstrong, an 'Engineer in Ordinary', should confirm the work that was needed. His assessment does not seem to survive, but the events that followed demonstrate that he concurred with Jeffreyson's report.

In 1741 building work began in earnest. Work proceeded broadly clockwise from the Broom Batteries on the east side of the Garrison southwards to Morning Point, where the walls turned westwards until they terminated abruptly in 1746 at Steval Point. Each year's work can be followed using evidence found in Board of Ordnance papers, in maps of the Garrison and by examining the fabric of the walls. All the work was of good quality, but in the later years of the building campaign, particularly from 1744 to 1746, the stonework of the walls was of a higher quality. (Figs. 6 & 7) This change seems to coincide with responsibility shifting from Tovey to men from the mainland working for the Board of Ordnance, as well as being due to the use of an outside contractor and a supplier of stone.

In most years between 1714 and 1740 Abraham Tovey submitted bills for payments ranging from a few pounds to perhaps £100, but in 1741 he submitted a bewildering range of financial documents. He drew advances of money worth £746 and submitted bills to this value, a process called vacating. He also vacated a further £60, the imprest for which seems to be missing from the ledgers. He also submitted other

major bills. On 30 September 1741 the ledger stated that:

'To Ditto [Abraham Tovey] the Sum of One thousand two hundred & thirty one pounds two shillings & 1d being so much by him disbursed for Materials, and Pay to Artificers and labourers in carrying on the several Works at St Marys Island at Scilly, pursuant to the Honble Boards Orders & Mr Thomas Armstrongs Estimate between 1st of March 1741-2 and the date above ...'<sup>46</sup>

On the same day another bill for £167 4s 2d was paid to Abraham Tovey, though rather frustratingly there is confusion within the entries about the date of the works covered.<sup>47</sup>

In 1742 Tovey drew and vacated imprests worth £1,195, though some of the large bills entered in the register as being from 1741 could belong to this year. In 1743 he drew and vacated imprests worth £1,600, but at the end of 1743 he was paid £1,269 10s 7½d for work itemised in a bill documenting the works done to that date (see Appendix).<sup>48</sup>

In 1743 William Horneck, Director of Engineers, spent some time in Scilly and perhaps his presence prompted Tovey to submit this detailed bill.<sup>49</sup> Tovey's bill and contemporary maps reveal that since the campaign began, work had been undertaken from Lower Broom on the east side to Woolpack at the southernmost point of the Garrison, as well as from King Charles to Newman's Platform along the northern part. The bill reveals that the stone for the building work had been quarried on the island. It seems that Woolpack Battery and the works in the south-eastern half of the Garrison were not entirely complete, but Kane William Horneck's Map of 1744 reveals that during that year work had reached a short distance to the west of Redan B, about 200 yards west of Woolpack, where there is a clear joint in the masonry.<sup>50</sup>

During 1744 Tovey did not draw any imprests, but at the end of the year he submitted a bill for £1,474 16s 0d.<sup>51</sup> He itemised it according to the type of workmen and by the part of the year in which the

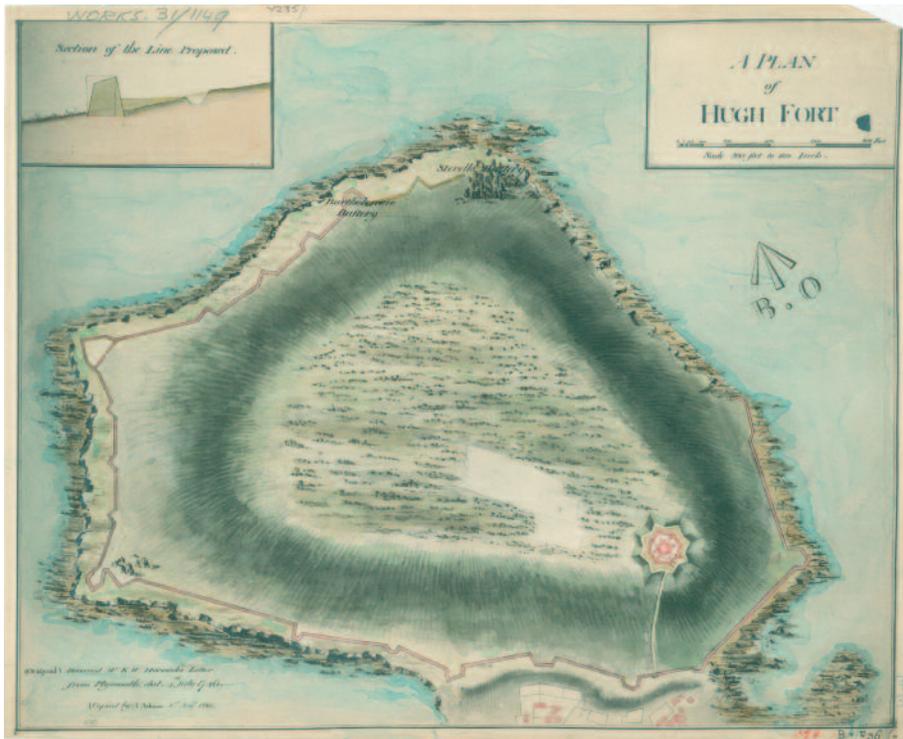


Fig. 8. This 1810 copy of a 1746 map shows the walls as they exist today, but the final stretch of wall from the wrongly labelled Bartholomew's Battery (actually Colonel George Boscawen's Battery) to Steval Point is shown in yellow, as if not complete. *National Monuments Record*.

expenses were accrued, but unfortunately he did not specify it in the same detail as in the previous year. Until 1744 Tovey seems to have been largely unchecked in his management of the building programme. However, from 1745-7 a number of new names appear, including engineers, overseers and two men who seem to have been drafted in to deal with the complex finances. Nevertheless, in 1745 Tovey still drew imprests worth £500, while William Redstone, described as the 'Assistant Storekeeper at Plymouth & Paymaster to the Works at Scilly Island' drew over £1,100.<sup>52</sup> In 1746 Tovey took a secondary role, receiving only £37 16s 11d for 'Incident Charges' while Nicholas Mercator, the 'Pay Master to the Works at Islands of Scilly' during that year, drew imprests worth £850 and also submitted a bill for £826 9s 1d.<sup>53</sup>

Isaac Tovey, Abraham's son, took on the role of Overseer of Works in 1745 and John Hargrave exercised this responsibility from 1746 until early 1747, by which time work had finished completely.<sup>54</sup> (Fig. 8)

Although Abraham Tovey was perhaps relegated to a secondary role during the later years of the building project, his overall contribution was nevertheless significant. Robert Heath writing in 1750 was impressed by what Tovey had achieved:

'He has greatly improved the Garrison-Roads, as well as the Batteries, by making them convenient for removing Cannon upon, which before was done with the utmost Difficulty. One of which Roads he has almost compleated round the Line, next the several Batteries of Cannon, and has caused Part of it to be hewn thro' a vast Rock, or Quarry-Substance, where before it was impassable.'<sup>55</sup>

After the completion of the Garrison Walls, Tovey's previous freedom to act largely unsupervised by the centralised administration of the Board of Ordnance seems to have been tempered. In April 1750 a storm damaged two small, old buildings, apparently those flanking the gate and Tovey estimated that 20,000 slates were needed.<sup>56</sup> A letter to the Board of Ordnance, not written by Tovey, also noted:

'And that the Parapet has been falling ever since Tovey built it, being mostly stone laid in Earth without Lime and so close to the Edge of the Cliff that as that is undermined it must fall in Course, but that it would be cheaper to build a new Parapet more retired upon the Land than to secure this by building against the Sea.'

The roof repairs were accepted and on 31 July 1750 Kane William Horneck agreed to the purchase of the slates, but the repair to the 'parapet', presumably part of the Garrison Walls, was put on hold until Horneck had inspected the proposed work.<sup>57</sup>

#### POSTSCRIPT

Abraham Tovey's will was proved on 23 February 1759 at which date he was said to have died recently.<sup>58</sup> His will dates from 13 April 1751, when he described that 'being Sick and weak in Body but of perfect mind' he decided that he should make a will.<sup>59</sup> His wife was alive when he wrote his final testament, suggesting that he had remarried, but he entrusted the execution of his will to his daughter Winnifred Cork. He also had four sons, Michael, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, most of whom followed their father's choice of career.

On 1 February 1734 Isaac Tovey was appointed as a gunner under his father's command.<sup>60</sup> In 1745, during the construction of the Garrison Walls he was described as the Overseer of Works and in the late 1740s Isaac seems to have begun to succeed his father, at least in terms of maintaining the Garrison. On 24 May 1748 Isaac was ordered to repair the barrack bedding, a task that might have been expected

to be done by his father and on 10th March 1748/9 the Ordnance Minutes recorded that: 'Ordered That Abraham Tovey late Contractor be Allowed and Paid for what is due to him to the time his contract expired, And that the doing of the Repairs &c to the Garrison and Barracks be referred to the Surveyor General.'<sup>61</sup> A week later father and son were both reporting to the Board of Ordnance on the fabric of the Garrison: 'From Abraham and Isaac Tovey setting forth the Damage done to the Barracks and Works in Scilly Island, by the late Storms and Inundations.'<sup>62</sup> On 18 April 1749 it is clear that Abraham was still the Master Gunner, but his son was allowed to stay in the newly-repaired Star Castle until the Governor of the islands needed it.<sup>63</sup> A warrant dated 20 December 1757 finally appointed Isaac as the Master Gunner of Scilly, in succession to his father.<sup>64</sup>

There are also references in official documents to an Abraham Tovey and a Jacob Tovey serving in the artillery. Abraham was appointed as a matross in the Royal Regiment of Artillery on 5 May 1734, serving under Brigadier Albert Borgard, who had been one of the commanders of the artillery train in Spain when his father served there.<sup>65</sup> By 1738 he had risen to be a gunner and by 1740 he was recorded as a corporal.<sup>66</sup> He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 1 January 1745 and two years later became a First Lieutenant.<sup>67</sup> In 1759, as a Captain, he commanded an artillery company at the Battle of Minden in north-west Germany and he served during the siege of Belleisle in 1761.<sup>68</sup> Abraham Tovey died on 27 November 1781 while taking part in a night attack on Spanish forward positions during the siege of Gibraltar and his will was proved on 6 February 1782.<sup>69</sup> He has sometimes been confused with the subject of this article, but as has already been demonstrated Scilly's Abraham had died in 1759. However, the Lieutenant Colonel was Abraham's son, the boy who began his career as a matross in 1734. In his will he left money to his sister Winifred Cork, who was the wife of William Cork on the Isles of Scilly and as mentioned above Abraham senior

had entrusted the execution of his will to his daughter Winnifred Cork, proving the connection between the two Abrahams.

Jacob Tovey also began his career as a matross on 16 June 1737 and by 1740 he seems to have risen to the rank of corporal.<sup>70</sup> On 22 November 1751 he became an officer and by 1 October 1755 he had become a captain.<sup>71</sup> In the notes accompanying his service record he was recorded in India in the mid-1750s, taking part in action at Gheriah in 1756, but by 1761 he was no longer in the army. In the National Archives there is a will proved on 20 October 1761, written by Jacob Tovey 'Gentleman of Bombay'.<sup>72</sup> A reference in the proof of the will to 'Abraham Tovey the natural and lawful brother' proves that after a long career in the artillery Jacob had remained abroad to try to create a successful business career.

The life of anyone as humble as a simple artillery man would be difficult to follow in the early 18th century, but in Abraham Tovey's case we are fortunate that records of his military service and his work for the Ordnance have survived. And on St Mary's the walls of the Garrison, and particularly its gate serve as a tangible reminder of his colourful and long career.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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and suggested some interesting new sources.

Mike Hesketh-Roberts took the excellent terrestrial photographs and Damian Grady was responsible for the stunning aerial photography for the project.

#### APPENDIX

Bill of works done on the defences of Scilly to the end of 1743<sup>73</sup>:

'To Abraham Tovey Master Gunner at Scilly the Sum of One thousand two hundred & sixty nine pounds, ten shillings & 9d (sic) being so much by him disbursed in the Islands of Scilly on His Majestys Service between the 1st of January 1742-3 and the Date above as by Vouchers (viz)'.  
 Paid Masons for raising the Curtains and

Battery and Parrapet of King Charles Battery & Paying the Smiths Work ...	£153 12s 0½d
Paid Do for Cleaving and Cutting Morestone taking up and new Setting the Gunstone, & paying the Smiths Work	£170 3s 4d
Paid Do for building the Curtain from Lower Broom Battery to Morning Point Battery & paying Smiths Work &c	£160 19s 11d
Paid Do for new building the Woolpack Battery & setting the Gunstone &c and paying the Blacksmith's Work &c	£131 8s 9½d
Paid Labourers for raising Stones for the Curtains &c	£50 8s 0d
Paid Do for raising Stones for King Charles Battery	£22 8s 0d
Paid Do for carrying back the Gunstone &c	£16 9s 0d
Paid Do for filling up the Battery on the inside and Carrying in the Gunstone &c	£46 13s 0d
Paid Do for raising the Roads & tending the Masons in their several Employments &c	£29 8s 0d
Paid Do for raising the Roads, beating Lime, bringing Clay & making Mortar &c	£19 11s 0d
Paid Do for raising and carrying Stones to build the Curtain from the Lower Broom to the Morning Point Battery &c	£44 15s 6d

Paid Do for raising and carrying Stones to build part of the urtain from Morning Point to the Woolpack Battery	£35 10s 0d
Paid Do for beating & carrying Lime for ruffcasting & pointing also raising & carrying Stones	£43 14s 0d
Paid Do for carrying back the old Gunstone from the Woolpack Battery & also for clearing for a Foundation	£66 12s 0d
Paid Do for raising & carrying Stones to New build the Woolpack Battery quenching and beating Lime etc	£32 10s 0d
Paid Do for carrying the Gunstone to be new set & filling up the Battery on the inside &c	£12 19s 0d
Paid Carpenters for mending Handbarrows Wheelbarrows & making a Platform for the Gunner's Exercise &c	£16 9s 6d
Paid Gunners, Glaziers, Gunsmiths, Cooper, Chimneysweeper and for looking after Tresco Castle &c	£14 8s 9d
Paid for Materials	£170 1s 6½d
Total	£1238 11s 4½d
To the remittance of £1238.11.4 ½ at 6d per pound	£30 19s 3d

## NOTES

- 1 National Archives (NA), WO 54/678 – the records regarding Abraham Tovey between 1706 and 1713 come from this source unless separately referenced.
- 2 NA, WO47/27, 63.
- 3 International Genealogical Index  
[http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/ancestorsearchresults.asp?last\\_name=Tovee](http://www.familysearch.org/Eng/Search/ancestorsearchresults.asp?last_name=Tovee) (accessed 23 September 2010) This small settlement near Wotton-under-Edge has been part of Gloucestershire since 1844.
- 4 Portugal was briefly allied with France and Spain at the outbreak, but soon switched sides: H Kamen, *The War of Succession in Spain 1700-15* (1969), p. 9.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 9; A. Parnell, *The War of Succession in Spain: During the Reign of Queen Anne, 1702 - 1711* (London, 1905), p. 42; D. Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (London, 1976), p. 168.
- 6 Chandler, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
- 7 F. Duncan, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery* (London, 1872), p. 66.
- 8 Parnell, *op. cit.*, p. 204; Duncan, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-8.
- 9 NA, WO 54/678.
- 10 Duncan, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9; Chandler, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
- 11 Lefroy, JH (1916-7) 'An Account of the Battels, Seiges etc, wherein Lieut-General Albert Borgard hath served' *Journal of the Royal Artillery* 43, pp. 49-57, 53. Borgard's long and illustrious career can be followed in this article and in W.H. Askwith, *List of Officers of the Royal Regiment of Artillery from the Year 1716 to the Year 1899* (London: Royal Artillery Institution, 1900)), p. 1.
- 12 NA, WO 54/678.
- 13 Kamen, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- 14 Four pairs of shoes seem excessive and probably represent a mistake in the ledger.
- 15 Pattison joined as a cadet in 1706 and rose to be a Lieutenant-Colonel in 1741. He retired in 1748 and died in 1753: Askwith, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
- 16 Lefroy, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-57, 54.
- 17 Kamen, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- 18 J. Headlam, *Six Centuries of Royal Artillery History* (Woolwich, 1944), p. 83.
- 19 NA, WO47/27, 2 October 1714, 63.
- 20 NA, WO47/28, 365 - 20 December 1715.
- 21 B. Williams, *The Whig Supremacy 1714-1760* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 155-6.
- 22 H. Tomlinson, 'The Ordnance Office and the

- King's forts, 1660–1714', *JSAH* 16 (1973), pp. 5–25, 20; W. Porter, *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers* (Chatham, 1951), p. 145; N. Barker, 'The Building Practice of the English Board of Ordnance, 1680–1720', in J. Bold and E. Chaney (eds), *English Architecture Public and Private* (London, 1993), p. 199; British Library (BL), King's MS 45; Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online; NA, WO47/28, 77.
- 23 BL, King's MS 45, f. 5r.
- 24 *Ibid.*, ff. 5v, 9r.
- 25 *Ibid.*, f.14r (plan and elevation of storehouse).
- 26 *Ibid.*, f.16r (plan and elevation of Master Gunner's house).
- 27 R. Heath, *A Natural and Historical Account of the Islands of Scilly . . .*? London, 1750, p. 72.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- 29 NA, WO47/31, 214.
- 30 BL, King's MS 45, f. 12r (plan and elevation of proposed barracks).
- 31 NA, WO47/29, 62; WO47/29, 119; WO48/56 no pagination.
- 32 NA, WO51/96, ff.72v–73r.
- 33 Tovey's high status in the 1717 is suggested in a brief entry in an Ordnance register in which he is permitted to lodge in the Castle until the 'small house is built for him': NA, WO47/30, 142.
- 34 NA, WO51/100, 191.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 BL, King's MS 45.
- 38 NA, WO55/509, 36, 1 October 1727; WO54/204 no pagination, 4 April 1735.
- 39 NA, WO47/30, 142, 195, 202.
- 40 NA, WO51/124, 11v.
- 41 NA, WO55/350, 45.
- 42 NA, WO55/347, 260.
- 43 NA, WO55/347, 265, 341.
- 44 BL, 1418.k.38.(1).
- 45 NA, WO51/135, 118.
- 46 NA, WO51/151, 189. Tovey's bill for £843 17s 10d, which was considered on 30 September 1741, is scored out but a few days later on 5 October 1741 a bill for the same amount was dealt with.
- 47 NA, WO51/151, 190.
- 48 NA, WO51/154, 61 – Bill dated 31st December 1743.
- 49 NA, WO55/508, 108.
- 50 Kane William Horneck was the illegitimate son of William Horneck.
- 51 NA, WO51/159, 54.
- 52 NA, WO51/157, 123; WO48/86, 511ff.
- 53 NA, WO51/161, 132; WO48/87, 482, 486, 488.
- 54 NA, WO51/164, 135, 137.
- 55 Heath, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–4.
- 56 NA, WO47/35, 315, 377.
- 57 NA, WO47/35, 378; WO 47/36, 69.
- 58 Cornwall Record Office AP/T/2795/2.
- 59 Cornwall Record Office AP/T/2795/1.
- 60 NA, WO55/509, 36, WO54/204 no pagination.
- 61 NA, WO55/539, 161; WO47/34, f73r.
- 62 NA, WO47/34, f. 87r.
- 63 NA, WO47/34, f. 149r.
- 64 NA, WO54/239, 31.
- 65 NA, WO55/509, 161.
- 66 NA, WO55/509, 184; WO55/512, 118.
- 67 Askwith, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
- 68 Duncan, *op. cit.*, pp. 206ff and 230; P.W. Mead, 'Four Gunner Battles', *Journal of the Royal Artillery*, 93 (1960), pp. 34–47; M.E.S. Laws, 'The Royal Artillery at Belleisle 1761', *Journal of the Royal Artillery*, 77 (1950), pp. 263–74.
- 69 BL, Add. MS 38605, p. 48 (General Boyd's Log Book); J. Drinkwater, *A History of the late Siege of Gibraltar* (London, 1785), p. 210; NA, Prob 11/1088. General Boyd's Log Book, a contemporary handwritten account, records that 'Lt Col Tovey of the Royal Artillery died this morning and left an amiable daughter with a handsome fortune.'
- 70 NA, WO55/509, 180; WO55/136, 136.
- 71 Askwith, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 4A.
- 72 NA, Prob 11/870, ff. 41v–42r.
- 73 NA, WO51/154, 61 – Bill dated 31st December 1743.