



# Squires, Knights, Barons, Kings: War and Politics in Fifteenth Century England

*Wm E. Baumgaertner*

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Many who have a passing interest in English history know of the kings: the Lancastrian usurper, Henry IV; the great warrior-king, Henry V; and the monkish monarch, Henry VI. Some also know of the fair Yorkist king, Edward IV, and his fated son, Edward V - the Prince in the Tower. Many more know of the Yorkist usurper, Richard III, and his Tudor nemesis, the last Lancastrian claimant, Henry VII. But what about the other key individuals of fifteenth century England?

Most have heard of the "Kingmaker", even if they forget that he was Sir Richard de Neville, Earl of Warwick. But who was Little Fauconberg? Who was Hotspur, and how did he get his nickname? Who were the Beauforts, illegitimate descendents of Edward III (through his son, John of Gaunt), and how did they impact the history of England so significantly? Who was the "Butcher of England" and how did such an erudite and sophisticated man earn such an inglorious title? Why was Sir Richard de Beauchamp, also an Earl of Warwick, called the "Father of Courtesy" and the "Son of Chivalry"? What brought the educated and wealthy Owain Glyn Dwr, the last Welsh Prince of Wales, to the point of rebellion? Was Queen Margaret the "she-wolf of Anjou", or just a fiercely devoted wife and mother? Was Sir Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, the guardian of good government, or a self-serving, aristocratic snob bent on snatching the throne of England? Who was the "English Achilles", how did he earn such a sobriquet, and how did his end mark the ending of the Hundred Years War? Who were the Nevilles and the Percys, and how did a minor family feud start the Wars of the Roses? Who were the other squires, knights, barons, earls, and dukes that contributed so much to the history of fifteenth century England, but who seem mostly forgotten today?

Come, plumb the depths of the people of that far gone time. For the answers all lie within these pages. Within is a brief biography of many of the more important personages, regardless of aristocratic rank. Included are parents, spouses, children, and other familial relationships, plus titles and offices, family coats-of-arms, and where readily available, family badges, livery, and battle standards. To further enrich the background, some supplemental sections have been added. These include a glossary of titles and offices, definition of selected heraldic terms, and a brief timeline of fifteenth century England.

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