

MEMOIRS  
 OF THE  
 ROYAL NAVY.

HENRY VII.

UPON the accession of Henry the Seventh to the throne, in August HEN. VII.  
 1485, historians tell us, that “he caused his marine, which had been neglected 1485.  
 “in the preceding reign, to be put into a condition to protect the coasts against all  
 “foreign invasions, and that in the midst of profound peace he always kept up a  
 “fleet ready to act.—During his reign, therefore, the marine was in a better state  
 “than at any former period.—His Majesty’s long residence in Bretagne, had given  
 “him an opportunity of acquiring a greater skill in maritime affairs than most of  
 “his predecessors.”

Henry built a Ship called the *Great Harry*,\* which cost him about £14,000.—  
 She was burnt by accident at Woolwich, in 1553.—This Ship, properly speaking,

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was

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\* This is the Ship that Camden alludes to, as having been built in the third year of this reign, but he miscals her the Henry Grace de Dieu.

HEN. VII. was the first Ship of the Royal Navy; for though Henry, as well as other princes, hired many Ships, exclusive of those furnished by the Ports, when he had occasion to transport forces abroad, yet he seems to have been the first king who thought of avoiding this inconvenience by raising such a Naval force as might be at all times sufficient for the services of the state; a design which was in some degree perfected in the reign of his son.\*

1509. Henry died in April, 1509.

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## HENRY VIII.

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HEN. VIII. THE English were considerable for power in the preceding reign, yet they had  
 1509. no considerable occasion to assert their sovereignty at sea till the reign of Henry the Eighth.—By his prerogative, and at his own expence, he laid the foundation, and settled the constitution of the present Royal Navy.—An Admiralty, and Navy Office, were constituted, and Commissioners appointed by him: regular salaries were settled; not only for the Admirals and Vice-Admirals, but for his Captains and Seamen; and the Sea-service, at this time, became a distinct and regular profession.

1512. Henry having entered into a league against France, fitted out a fleet under the command of Sir Edward Howard, Lord High Admiral; and, by an Indenture dated 8th April, 1512, granted him the following allowance, viz:—

“ For

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\* Navigation prospered exceedingly in this age, principally under the Portuguese. They had discovered, or rather were discovering, a new route to the East-Indies, by going quite round the great continent of Africa.

“ For his own maintenance, diet, wages, and rewards, Ten Shillings a day: HEN. VIII.

“ For each of the Captains, for their diet, wages, and rewards, Eighteen-pence a day:

“ For every soldier, mariner and gunner, Five Shillings a month for his wages, and Five Shillings for his victuals, reckoning twenty-eight days in the month.”—But the Admiral, Captains, Officers and Men, had also further allowances, under the denomination of *dead shares*.

The state of the marine at this time appears to have been very respectable; for to the above-mentioned fleet, Twenty-five large men of war were added, a few months after, and then it consisted of Forty-five Ships.\* Sir Charles Knevet commanded the *Regent*, of 1000 Tons, the largest Ship in the Navy † having the Lord High Admiral's flag.—The *Mary Rose*, of 500 Tons, appears by the aforesaid Indenture to have been the next largest Ship. ‡

The French fleet consisted of thirty-nine men of war; and the *Cordelier*, the Admiral's ship, was so large as to be able to carry 1200 fighting men, exclusive of mariners: at this time there were 900 on board.—In the engagement which took place between the two fleets, in August, 1512, the *Regent* was burnt; in the room of which the king, in 1515, built a ship at Erith, and named her the *Henry Grace de Dieu*. § 1512.

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\* See page 7, respecting hired Ships.

† She carried 700 Men, on this occasion, at least.

‡ This Fleet, according to the before-mentioned Indenture, was to resort to Southampton, to re-victual, at the end of three Months.—The Ships of 200 Tons, and upwards, were called Ships Royal.

§ See Charnock's History of Marine Architecture. According to most accounts she was of 1000 tons burthen, manned with 349 soldiers, 301 mariners, and 50 gunners. See the Print of this Ship in this Volume.

HEN. VIII. The following List of all the King's Ships in the 9th year of his reign, is taken  
 1517. from Mr. Pepys's Miscellanies.\*

	Men in Harbour.
The Henry Grace de Dieu . . . . .	12
Katherine Fortune . . . . .	4
Gabriel Royal . . . . .	4
Great Barbara . . . . .	4
John Baptist . . . . .	4
Mary Rose . . . . .	4
Great Bark . . . . .	4
Peter Pomegranate . . . . .	3
Mary George . . . . .	4
Mary John . . . . .	3
Less Bark . . . . .	3
Mary James . . . . .	1
Henry Hampton . . . . .	3
Lizard . . . . .	2
Two Row Barges—(one man each) . . . . .	2
The Rose Galley . . . . .	1
Katherine Galley . . . . .	1
Sovereign . . . . .	1
Great Nicholas . . . . .	1
Great Galley . . . . .	10

In all 21 Ships and Vessels.

1521. From the same source from which the foregoing List was obtained, the following is also taken, being an Account of the Names and tonnage of all the King's Ships, according to a general survey, dated 1st June, in the 13th Year of his reign :

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	Tons.	
The Henry Grace de Dieu .....	1500*	HEN. VIII.
Sovereign .....	800	
Gabriel Royal .....	650	
Katherine Forteless † .....	550	
Mary Rose .....	600	
John Baptist .....	400	
Barbara .....	400	
Great Nicholas .....	400	
Mary George .....	250	
Mary James .....	240	
Henry Hampton .....	120	
Great Bark .....	250	
Less Bark .....	180	
Two Row Barges (60 tons each) .....	120	
The Great Galley .....	800	
In all 16 Ships and Vessels.	7260	

In the Year 1523, Sir William Fitzwilliams had under his command a fleet of Thirty-six large Ships, to cruize on the coasts of France; and Anthony Points had at the same time the command of a considerable fleet to guard the western seas.—but it is not known how many of the Ships were the King's own. ‡

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\* She is in almost every other account said to have been 1000 tons only, which is certainly the most correct.

N. B.—The Sovereign was in dock at Woolwich, at this time, and was recommended, by the Officers who surveyed the Ships, to be rebuilt, “as she is a goodly ship.”—It also appears that there was a great Storehouse of the King's at Erith, at this time.

† So spelt in the original; but *Fortileza*, according to Charnock.

‡ The Cinque Ports, with their Members, were bound by their tenure to supply the King with 57 Ships, containing 21 men and a boy in each ship, for 15 days once in the year at their own expence, if their service was required: and they were frequently obliged to furnish a greater number. (See *Archæologia*, Vol. 6, page 195.) After the 15 days they were paid by the King.

HEN. VIII. In 1545, being at war with France, the enemy's fleet arrived at St. Helens: ours  
 1545. consisted of about 100 sail.—The *Mary Rose*,\* one of our largest Ships, with 5 or  
 600 men on board, was sunk at Spithead by some awkward manœuvre;† and the  
 Admiral's ship, the *Great Harry*,‡ had nearly undergone the same fate.

Father Daniell says, that, “neither the French nor the English Ships which were  
 “in this fight, had any great number of cannon, as it was remarked as something  
 “very extraordinary, that during an engagement, in which the two fleets cannonaded  
 “one another for two hours, there were not less than 300 cannon-shot fired on both  
 “sides.”—

At this time, the same author remarks, that “the ships of war were built with  
 “port-holes for their ordnance; a custom which was not then of very long standing. ||  
 “This is certain, that it was in use in the time of Lewis the Twelfth, (about the be-  
 “ginning of the sixteenth century): but I believe this manner of building was not in  
 “use before his reign, or that of his predecessor, Charles the Eighth.—Before that  
 “time, they used only to place a few cannon upon the deck (for probably they had but  
 “one) of such ships as carried any, and upon the prow or poop.” §—Another author  
 says there could not have been less than 300 pieces of cannon fired on both sides.—  
 Some of the great Ships of War at this time had four Masts.\*\*

Henry

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\* Commanded by Sir George Carew.

† Sir Walter Raleigh says, in his Essay on the Invention of Shipping, that it was occasioned by a  
 little sway in casting the ship about, her ports being within 16 inches of the water.—The Royal George  
 was lost at Spithead on 29th August, 1782, by being too much heeled, with her lower-deck ports open.

‡ This Ship was burnt eight years after. She is said to have been the first two-decked ship built in  
 England; and the only ship with three masts in the whole squadron. (See Archæol. Vol. 3d. pa. 266.)

|| The *Henry Grace de Dieu*, built in 1515, appears to have had port-holes on both Decks, and in  
 other parts: and carried upwards of 80 pieces of ordnance.—(See List, further on—and the Print of her.)

§ Port-holes and some other improvements are said to have been invented by Decharges, a  
 French builder at Brest.

\*\* The *Henry Grace de Dieu* was one that had: see the Print of her.

Henry very thoroughly understood, and much affected to promote the commerce and Naval power of the country.—He made laws for the planting and preservation of Timber; and founded Deptford, Woolwich, and Portsmouth Dock-yards, and also the Trinity-house. HEN. VIII.

Henry had not at any time so powerful a Navy as to enable him to do without the assistance of foreigners; as it appears that he was obliged to hire Ships from Hamburgh, Lubec, Dantzic, Genoa and Venice: \*—but he had it in his power to do more towards raising a Navy than any of his predecessors; for “ By the alienation or “ sale of the Church lands, which were dissipated with a profusion not inferior to the “ rapaciousness with which they had been seized, as well as by the privilege granted “ to the ancient land-holders of selling their estates, or disposing of them by will, an “ immense property formerly locked up, was brought into circulation.—This put the “ spirit of industry and commerce in motion, and gave it some considerable degree of “ vigour.—The road to power and to opulence became open to persons of every con- “ dition.—A sudden and excessive flow of wealth from the West Indies proved fatal “ to industry in Spain—a moderate accession in England to the sum in circulation “ gave life to commerce, awakened the ingenuity of the nation, and excited it to “ useful enterprize.—As soon as Henry disclaimed the supremacy of the Papal See, “ and broke off all connexion with the Papal Court, considerable sums were saved to “ the nation, of which it had been annually drained by remittances to Rome for dis- “ pensations and indulgences, by the expence of pilgrimages into foreign countries, “ or by payments of Annates, first-fruits, and a thousand other taxes which that artful “ and rapacious court levied on the credulity of mankind.” †

Henry died on 28th January, 1547;—and accounts vary with regard to the tonnage of the Navy at that time; some stating it at 10550, others at 11005—11748—

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\* There is reason to believe that foreign Ships were not hired after this reign. The Merchants soon began to build Ships large enough to be converted into men of war.

† See Robertson's Charles Vth. vol. 4. p. 315.

HEN. VIII. or 12455 Tons :\* but the survey mentioned at the foot of the List of the Navy, on the following page, furnishes very satisfactory evidence on this point, as the Ships and Vessels specified in the said List, were most probably the whole left by Henry the Eighth : and according to that List, the Tonnage of the whole amounted to 11268 Tons.

The following account, although it seems to be incorrect, as to the number of the Vessels, will not be uninteresting :—“ In former times our kings have enlarged “ their dominions rather by land than sea forces, whereat even strangers have “ marvelled, considering the many advantages of our seat for the seas ; but since “ the change of *weapons* and *fight*, Henry the Eighth, making use of *Italian* “ *Shipwrights*, and encouraging his own people to build strong ships of war to carry “ great ordnance, by that means established a puissant Navy, which in the end of “ his reign consisted of 71 Vessels, whereof 30 were Ships of burthen ; and con- “ tained in all 10550 tons, and two were galleys ; and the rest were small barks “ and row-barges, from 80 tons downwards to 15 tons, which served in rivers, and “ for landing of men.”

The foregoing is an extract of a report made in the year 1618, by the Commissioners who were appointed to enquire into the state of the Navy, &c. &c. †

I have seen a *MS.* wherein it is mentioned that an Act was passed in this reign to encourage Merchants to build Ships for their service, fit for men of war, enacting, that such Ships should be exempted from certain duties, and that the owners should receive from the King, when his service called for them, twelve shillings per ton a month.

EDWARD

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\* The tonnage of the Navy in 1546, amounted to 12455 tons precisely.—See Appendix, N°. 40.

† See *Archæologia*, vol. xi. p. 158, and Charnock's *Marine Architecture*, vol. ii. p. 246.



## EDWARD VI.

EDWARD the Sixth succeeded his father at nine years of age, and reigned EDW. VI.  
 only six years and a half. 1547.

The following List of the Navy on the 5th January, 1548, is taken from the 1548.  
 6th vol. of the Archæologia, p. 218.\*

Names.	Where at.	Tons.	Soldiers, Mariners, &c.	Pieces of Ordnance.	
				Brass.	Iron.
The Henry Grace de Dieu . . .	Woolwich.	1000	700	19	103
Peter . . . . .	} Ports- mouth.	600	400	12	78
Matthew . . . . .		600	300	10	121
Jesus . . . . .		700	300	8	66
Pauncy . . . . .		450	300	13	69
Great Bark . . . . .		500	300	12	85
Less Bark . . . . .		400	250	11	98
Murryan . . . . .		500	300	10	53
Shruce of Dawske . . . . .		450	250	—	39
Christopher . . . . .		400	246	2	51
Trinity Henry . . . . .		250	220	1	63
Sweepstake . . . . .		300	230	6	78
Mary Willoughby . . . . .	140	160	—	23	

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\* Mr. Topham stated to the Antiquarian Society that soon after the death of Henry the Eighth, a Commission issued for an inventory to be taken of all his effects of every kind: and that a List of the Names of the King's Ships then in being, together with an Account of the Tonnage, the Stores, and Ammunition of every particular Ship, and the Number of Men carried by each of them, is preserved in Mr. Brander's valuable MSS. from which he took this account.

EDW. VI.

Names.	Where at.	Tons.	Soldiers, Mariners, &c.	Pieces of Ordnance.	
				Brass.	Iron.
The Anne Gallant .....	Galleys at Ports- mouth.	450	250	16	46
Salamander .....		300	220	9	40
Hart .....		300	200	4	52
Antelope .....		300	200	4	40
Swallow .....		240	100	8	45
Unicorn .....		240	140	6	30
Jeannet .....		180	120	6	35
New Bark .....		200	140	5	48
Greyhound .....		200	140	8	37
Tiger .....		200	120	4	39
Bull .....		200	120	5	42
Lion .....		140	140	2	48
George .....		60	40	2	26
Dragon .....		140	120	3	42
Falcon .....	Pinnaces at Ports- mouth.	83	55	4	22
Black Pinnace .....		80	44	2	15
Hind .....		80	55	2	26
Spanish Shallop .....		20	26	—	7
Hare .....		15	30	—	10
Sun .....	Row- Barges at Ports- mouth.	20	40	2	6
Cloud in the Sun .....		20	40	2	7
Harp .....		20	40	1	6
Maidenhead .....		20	37	1	6
Gilly-flower .....		20	38	—	—

Ostridge-