

**VER-NON. SEMPER. VIRET.  
MEMORIAL OF  
ADMIRAL VERNON FROM  
CONTEMPORARY AUTHORITIES**

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Ver-Non. Semper. Viret. Memorial of Admiral Vernon from Contemporary Authorities by  
William Frederick Vernon

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**WILLIAM FREDERICK VERNON**

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Memorial

OF

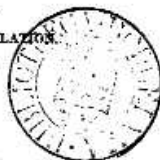
ADMIRAL VERNON,

FROM CONTEMPORARY AUTHORITIES,

BY

WILLIAM FREDERICK VERNON.

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## MEMORIAL.

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EDWARD VERNON, the second son of James Vernon, (Secretary of State to King William III.) by Mary, daughter of Sir John Buck, of Hamby Grange, Co. Lincoln, Bart., was born in Westminster, on the 12th of November, 1684.

At the age of seven he was sent to Westminster school, then under the direction of the famous Dr. Busby, a gentleman of very imperious temper.

Young Vernon studied the Latin and Greek tongues assiduously, and by a seven years application, had made a considerable progress in both, as also in Hebrew, yet from the time he could walk, he betrayed an inclination towards the Naval Service. His allowance in pocket-money was frequently spent among seamen; and as the battle of La Hogue, wherein the French lost twenty-one ships of the line, had happened a few years before, and many of the sailors who had fought in that memorable action, had come to reside near the place where Mr. Vernon was, so he talked with them upon the several

scenes they had gone through. These he would often rehearse among his school-fellows, who soon began to call him the *Admiral*; an appellation which in his riper years he so honourably bore.

His father was very desirous of his studying the Law, but young Vernon would not hear of it, and at last his father consented to his following his inclination, and entering the Navy.

Young Vernon had now made such progress in Latin, that he was able (at the age of sixteen) to hold a dialogue upon any ordinary subject in that language. He now, at his own desire, began to study Mathematics, Navigation, and Geography, and for this purpose he was sent to Oxford, where he attended the lectures of Dr. John Keil, Savilian professor of Astronomy. Under him he attained a general knowledge of Geometry. Upon his return from the University, he studied the theory of Navigation under a private tutor; and afterwards applied himself to fortification and gunnery—in all which he made very considerable progress.

At this time Mr. Vernon became personally acquainted with Sir Isaac Newton, who treated him with the tenderness and affection of a father. He first shewed him the method of taking the latitude by an observation of the

Pole-star—telling him that he wished an instrument could be found for discovering the longitude, but this he despaired of.

In 1701, Vernon entered the Navy. The first expedition in which he was concerned, is famous in the annals of England. He was with Admiral Hopson in the *Torbay*, at the destroying of the French fleet of thirty sail of the line, and twenty-two Spanish galleons, in the harbour of Vigo, on the 12th October, 1702. This expedition was conducted by Sir George Rook, in the *Somerset*, and executed by Admiral Hopson.

Vernon's behaviour was particularly remarked by Admiral Hopson, who recommended him to the Admiralty.

We next find Mr. Vernon as second Lieutenant on board the *Resolution*, in the expedition under Captain Walker, whose armament consisted of five third-rates and ten transports, having four regiments on board, they blocked up the harbours of Hispaniola, sunk several privateers, took the town of La Bayliffe, and Basseterre in Guadeloupe. Here Vernon made himself thoroughly acquainted with the Leeward Islands, drew plans of the harbours, and sounded the bays with such exactness that hardly a sand-



bank escaped his observation. After destroying the shipping of the enemy, the squadron returned to England.

The year 1704, Sir George Rook conveyed the King of Spain, (since known by the name of Charles VI. Emperor of Germany), to Lisbon, where they arrived on the 25th February. His Catholic Majesty, in token of his satisfaction, complimented Sir George Rook with a sword, the hilt of which was set with diamonds, a buckle for an hatband, and a hook to cock up the hat, set with diamonds also. To Captain Wishart he gave his picture set with diamonds, and two hundred guineas. To Captain Fletcher, the like picture, and one hundred guineas. To each of the Captains who carried over his retinue, one hundred guineas and a gold medal; and to the other Captains, fifty pistoles each, and fifty for their respective companies. To Lord Archibald Hamilton and Captain Bertie, each the like picture as to Captain Fletcher, and one hundred guineas. To Colonel Griffith of the Board of Green Cloth, his Majesty's picture. He likewise ordered a thousand pistoles to be distributed among the other officers of the Queen's family who had attended upon him. Mr. Vernon, who

was in the Admiral's own ship, had an hundred guineas, and a ring from his Majesty's own hand.

Sir George Rook sailed on the 9th, leaving Vice-Admiral Leake at Lisbon, and on the 12th, he fell in with and took three Spanish ships of force and a dogger, and returned to Lisbon with his prizes. On the 29th of April, Sir George Rook again left Lisbon with thirty-seven sail of the line, and four fire-ships, and joined Sir Cloudesley Shovel at sea, they then agreed to make a sudden attack upon Gibraltar.

On the 21st the marines, both English and Dutch to the number of 1800, headed by the Prince of Hesse, were landed on the isthmus to the north of the Rock. This done, his Highness sent a summons to the Governor, demanding the town should be surrendered to King Charles III., which being refused, soon after break of day, on the 23rd, a furious cannonade began. Above 10,000 shot were fired into the town in five hours. The enemy were driven from their guns in every quarter. The south mole head was taken by Captains Whitaker, Hicks and Jumper. They then advanced and took a redoubt half way between the mole and the town, (since called *Jumper's* battery), and possessed

themselves of many of the enemy's cannon. The Admiral on this sent a letter to the Governor, and another to the Prince of Hesse, desiring his Highness to summon the garrison peremptorily to surrender the town.

Accordingly, the next day, a capitulation was proposed by them and agreed upon. Everything in the place was given up, except three brass cannon, with twelve charges of powder and ball. The Prince of Hesse marched into the town in the evening and took possession of the gates and works. The garrison only consisted of one hundred and fifty men!

The reduction of Gibraltar was followed by a sea-fight off Barcelona, between the French fleet, and those of England and Holland: the former consisted of fifty ships of the line, and eight frigates; the latter of three and fifty, twelve of which were Dutch.

The engagement began on the morning of the 13th August, and continued for two hours, when the van and rear of the French began to give way, the former fled from Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and the latter from the Dutch Admiral. However, the main body of the French was very strong, and the ammunition of the English ships being spent before Gibraltar, several ships of