

A ROYAL MARINE ARTILLERY OFFICERS NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE 1793 MEDAL, CLASP ALGIERS, AWARDED TO CAPTAIN ROBERT HENRY WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE TAKING OF ANHOLT IN 1809, NUMEROUS BOAT ACTIONS AGAINST THE DANES, SIEGE OF THE FORTRESS OF DANZIG AND ON SPECIAL SERVICE DURING THE 1812 WAR WHERE HE SERVED AS SECOND IN COMMAND TO COLONEL NICHOLLS, ROYAL MARINES. DURING 1814, HE HELPED RAISE THE MARINE COLONIAL CORPS AND RAISING A FORCE OF CREEK INDIANS, OPERATING WITH THIS FORCE TO HARASS THE ENEMY AND DRAW AWAY HIS FORCES FROM NEW ORLEANS. AS WELL AS MANY SMALLER ACTIONS, HE TOOK PART IN THE DISASTEROUS BATTLE OF FORT BOWYER AND BATTLE OF PENSACOLA 1814. LATER SERVING AT THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS IN 1816 AND IRELAND RIOTS IN THE 1830'S TO NAME BUT A FEW!

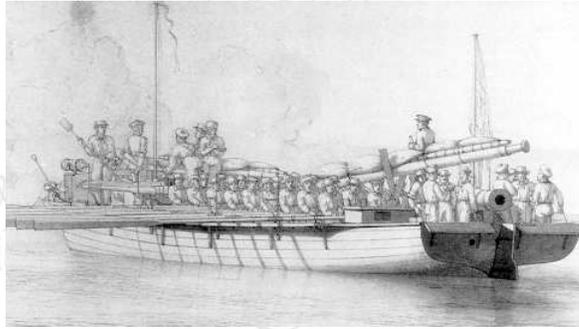


NAVAL GENERAL SERVICE 1793-1840, CLASP, ALGIERS 'ROBT. HENRY, 2ND LIEUT., R.M.'

Robert Henry was appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Marines on 1st Nov 1808. On 30th December he joined HMS Standard who's Marine detachment was commanded by the famous Captain Edward 'Fighting' Nicholls, a soldier Henry would get to know very well.

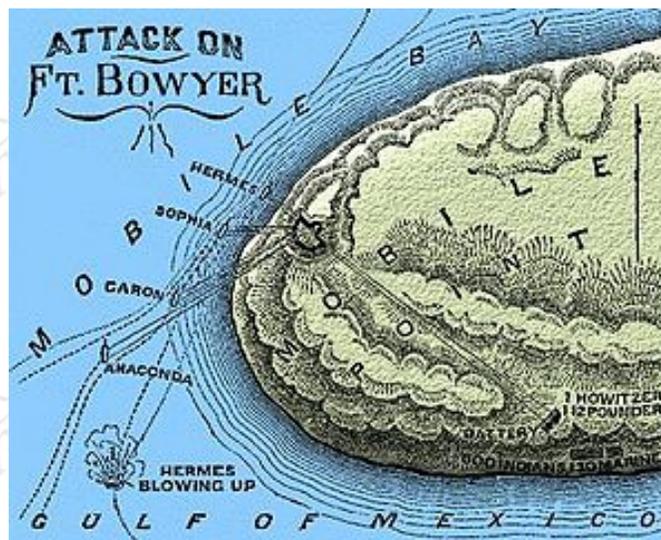
On 18th May 1809, 120 marines under Captain Nicolls, Lieut's Henry and Atkinson were landed on the island of Anholt. The marines powder had become wet and unusable during the landing from boats and were therefore forced to take the Danish guns and positions by force of bayonet, this they did although heavily outnumbered and effected the capture of the Island. Henry's record of service (which is quoted in Bold italics herein) states: ***'Landed and disposed the Danes of the Island of Anholt after a severe engagement'*** Nicholls was rewarded for this by being made Governor of the island and Lieutenant Henry would stay with him at Anholt before returning to England in November 1810. Lieutenant Henry joined the Royal Marine Artillery in January 1811 and ***'attended mathematical academy 12 months for instruction in gunnery'***

From Oct 1812, Henry commanded the R.M.A. detachment aboard the bomb-vessel Aetna where he was: ***'Employed protecting convoys – engaged with Danish gunboats and in the ships boats cutting out vessels from Nyburgh and frequently engaged with their boats'*** Also aiding the Prussians and Russians in the siege of the fortress of Danzig and with the R.M.A. forces in Holland, landing in South Beveland in December 1813 and participating in actions with the French garrison at Bathz.



In June 1814 Henry served as second in command to the now Major Nicolls on a special operation to Pensacola, in Spanish controlled Florida. Given the superior local rank of Captain, and along with two other Officers and 100 marines, they were tasked with forming a battalion from Creek Indians, Slaves and Spaniards with the aim was to draw off American strength from the New Orleans area. Large amounts of arms and ammunition were landed at Pensacola, along with ex Guards' tunics and bicorn caps to equip them. Henry states:

'Employed in arming the Indians and raising a regiment of Black's designated the Marine Colonial Corps in which I formed an artillery company and served as Captain by Commission from the Commander in Chief Sir Alexander Cochrane, these troops and Indians commanded by Colonel Nicholls in conjunction with a Naval Squadron commanded by Captain the Hon'ble Percy, attacked Fort Bowyer on the River Mobile where we suffered a severe loss of men and the destruction of HM ship Hermes. – Colonel Nicholls being wounded I became commanding Officer and had to conduct our retreat upon Pensacola without supplies which we reached on the fifth day pursued by and skirmishing with the enemy. For this service I received the appropriation and thanks of the Colonel and the Commanding Chief.'



In attacking Fort Bowyer on Mobile Bay, the Navy hoping to use the bay as a base of operations for the attack on New Orleans. Major Nicholls was actually sick and stayed aboard *Hermes*, leaving command of the land operations to Captain Henry. Landing on 15 September 1814, Lieutenant Henry commanded two howitzers together with about 60 Marines and 120 Indians. In the ensuing action one of the ships, the *Hermes*, ran aground, was severely damaged and had to be destroyed. As a result, the attempt upon the fort was abandoned and the Navy withdrew. Major Nicholls had been wounded on *Hermes* so Captain Henry had to make a fighting retreat back to Pensacola pursued by General Jackson's Forces, who were by now well aware British plans to arm the Indians.

With a view to drawing the American Army from New Orleans, at Pensacola and with Nicholls back in command, preparations were made for a defence against an attack by Jackson. The Spanish force at Pensacola was approximately 500 Spanish supported by the small force of Marines and Indians; these were to defend against 4,000 troops under Jackson. On November 7th Jackson attacked and after a sharp fight, that would be later known as the battle of Pensacola, the Spanish governor surrendered and Nicholls and his men retreated to the old and disused Spanish fort of Barancas. Nicholls held the fort as long as possible before blowing it up; then evading the Americans again, fell back to the River Apalachicola, where their 'Army' of Indians and freed Slaves increased to well over 1500.



Although *The History of the Royal Marines* states Henry (aboard *Volcano*) took part in actions at Fort St Philip post the battle of New Orleans. Henry's own makes no mention of this or being appointed to *Volcano*. In fact Henry would remain with his Indians at the base at Apalachicola, skirmishing with an harassing American forces well after the battle. Indeed even after peace was concluded, the force under Nicholls had grown so much that even the American troops sent against them could do no more than skirmish and attempt to prevent more Indians and slaves joining. However provisions (apart from arms) were extremely scarce and in mid January 1815, Nicholls had to turn away 1000 plus Indians that wished to join him. However by the end of January, Cochrane reinforced Nicholls with a marine and West Indian detachment and supplies with a view to attack the Georgia frontier.

'Being attacked by the American Army under General Jackson, we evacuated Pensacola after blowing up the magazine and proceeded to the River Apalachicola where I was employed in constructing works of defence. From this place we continued to harass the enemy until the conclusion of the War with America, suffering much from want of provisions and sickness in a marshy country where we had many deaths from dysentery, I had severe illness for two months.'

Towards the end of February 1815 it was learnt a peace treaty had been signed, British Forces prepared leave Mobile, however Nicholls was ordered by Cochrane to stay put with his Marines to protect the Indians until a final settlement had been made with the Americans for their protections as they were not covered by the treaty of Ghent. This was not effected and Nicholls and their force was ordered back to Bermuda in April. Henry's papers show he landed there in July 1815.

In 1816, Lieutenant Henry commanded the R.M.A. contingent aboard the bomb-vessel Beelzebub and was present at the bombardment of Algiers. Out of the nine R.M.A. officers present at the action, he was one of the three to receive the Algiers clasp to the Naval General Service Medal. Lord Exmouth, commanding at Algiers, in a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Richard Williams wrote of the officers and men of the R.M.A., *'I should be very ungrateful, My Dear Friend, if I neglected to thank you for the care you took in selecting for the service I was ordered upon the best Officers and Men I ever saw during my service. Indeed....'*

Between July 1832 to Feb 1834 Lieutenant Henry served HMS Tyne off and at Ireland where he; ***'Landed to support the civil authorities in collecting tithes, attacked by rioters at Dungarvon election. Fired on rioters, killed two and wounded four men- suppressed riot'***

He attained the rank of Captain in 1837 and died in 1850.



Condition NEF, Sold with copied service records on CD and research.

Captain Henry had an outstanding service, especially for little known but very important side of the War of 1812 and for which a large amount of research still needs to be done.