AWESOME stories

BRITISH SHIPS

0. BRITISH SHIPS - Story Preface

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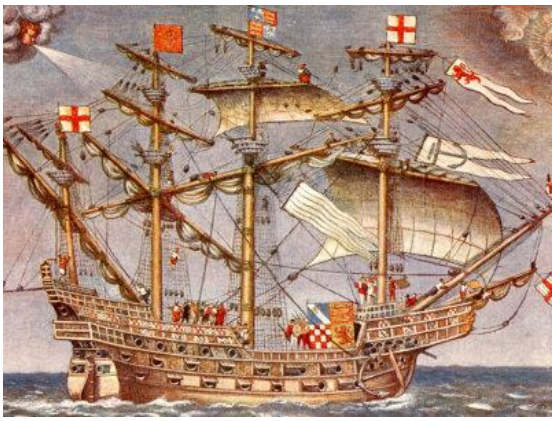
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Queen Elizabeth purchased Sir Walter Raleigh's ship, the *Ark Royal*, to serve as England's flagship during the Spanish-Armada battles. This image depicts a view of the famous ship bearing the insignia of the Lord High Admiral (Charles Howard). The vessel was equipped with 38 guns. Image, circa 1880, from the historical archives of LIFE magazine (which was published between 1883-1972). Online via *Mundo Historia*, a Spanish-language website.

Sir Walter Raleigh sold his ship, the Ark Royal, to Elizabeth. It soon became the flagship of the British fleet.

Charles Howard (Lord Effingham) was Admiral of the Queen's naval defense and commander of the *Ark Royal*. Sir Francis Drake was his vice-admiral.

Elizabeth's fleet initially had fewer ships than the Armada. Each flew the flag of St. George which was white with a red cross. By the time it reached the English Channel, the Armada had about 130 ships. Each flew the Spanish flag which was red with a yellow cross.

Triumph, a one-thousand-ton ship with five hundred men commanded by Martin Frobisher, was England's largest vessel. Sir John Hawkins, Her Majesty's Admiral of the Fleet (and the man most credited with creating Britain's fast galleons), was aboard *Victory*.

Other famous British ships involved in resisting the Armada were the *Revenge* (commanded by Sir Francis Drake), *Dreadnought*, Vanguard (commanded by Admiral Sir William Winter), the *Swallow* and the *Mary Rose*.

The entire fleet was not at sea. Some of the ships were positioned in (and near) key harbors - like Plymouth - to prevent the Spaniards from landing any troops. Elizabeth and her advisors desperately wanted to prevent the Spanish naval fleet from becoming an invasion force.

As the mighty Armada sailed through the English Channel, unseasonably bad weather and contrary winds

continued, slowing its progress and damaging some ships. These unexpected and disruptive events reportedly caused King Philip to exclaim:

> *I sent my ships to fight against the English, not against the elements!*

But the elements played a major role in the Armada's eventual defeat.

Some of the battle scenes (including the direction of the wind) were depicted in tapestries which Hendrick Vroom (who died in 1640) designed for Lord Admiral Howard (commander of the British fleet). Concerned that the priceless tapestry art could be damaged, John Pine made engravings of them and published his work (*The Tapestry Hangings of the House of Lords*) in 1739.

Pine was right to be worried about the tapestries. They were destroyed when the Houses of Parliament (at Westminster Palace) burned in 1834. Because of Pine's engravings, however, we can take a trip back in time to view scenes of battle between the Spanish and British fleets.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BRITISH-SHIPS-Elizabeth-I-The-Golden-Age

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
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Media Stream



Sir Walter Raleigh - The Ark Royal
Image online, courtesy the British Library website.
View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Sir-Walter-Raleigh-The-Ark-Royal-



Charles Howard - Admiral of the Queen's Naval Force
Image online, courtesy the tudorplace.com website.
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http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Charles-Howard-Admiral-of-the-Queen-s-Naval-Force



Elizabeth I - Naval Instructions to Defend against the Spanish Armada
Image online via UK National Archives.
View this asset at:
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Sir Francis Drake - Vice-Admiral of the Ark Royal
Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.
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Painting of the Armada

Image online, courtesy the Royal Museums Greenwich website.
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Martin Frobisher - Commander of the Triumph

Image online, courtesy the National Portrait Gallery website.
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Sir John Hawkins - The Queen's Admiral of the Fleet

Image online, courtesy the National Portrait Gallery website.
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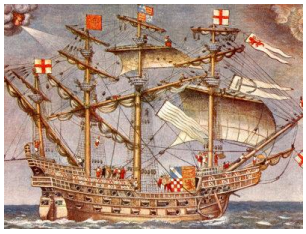
The Vanguard - Commanded by Admiral Sir William Winter

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King Philip

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