

Volume 3

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Sir Francis Drake - III

Lead: His voyage around the world behind him, Sir Francis Drake, Queen Elizabeth's Golden Admiral, intensified his campaign to make miserable the life of the King of Spain.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Returning from the East in 1581, Drake made Plymouth his home and was elected mayor of the town. He served with distinction, revamping the municipal water system with such care that his improvements lasted for decades. Ever restless, he returned to the sea which was both the

love of his life and source of his fortune. In 1585 Elizabeth sent Drake back to the Caribbean where, over a period of months, he renewed his reputation as the scourge of Spain. His occasionally brutal capture and sacking of Cartagena in Columbia, St. Augustine in Florida, and Santo Domingo, combined with attacks on the Cape Verde Islands, were not as successful or lucrative as previous forays, but caused enormous financial distress to the Spanish and confirmed their hatred for *el draque* or the dragon, as he was coming to be known. This campaign and other conflicts with England so incensed Spanish King Philip II that he made the fateful decision to assemble a huge naval Armada to invade the island kingdom.

In 1587 Drake, at the head of 30 ships, attacked the port of Cadiz on the Spanish mainland and inflicted such heavy damage that the sailing of the Armada had to be postponed until the summer of 1588 when his brilliant tactics as vice-admiral helped secure one of England's greatest sea victories. The Spanish fleet was dispersed and virtually destroyed. Drake was criticized by some for leaving his station temporarily to capture a wounded Spanish vessel which he then turned to profit, but such carping was drowned out in the enthusiasm surrounding the overwhelming English victory. His final voyages were anticlimactic and disappointing. The 1596 expedition to the West Indies was

a failure because most of the fleet, including Drake himself, succumbed to dysentery. He was buried in the sea he loved off Portobelo, Panama - for generations of his countrymen, the embodiment of English military greatness.

At University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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