

## ***Recent Military History of France***

- Barely had France gotten out of the Hundred Year's War (which ended in 1453 and decreased the population by 40%) then they got into...
- **The Italian Wars**
  - Lasted from 1494 to 1559, in six episodes
  - Francois I, King of France, attempted to seize control of Milan citing heredity due to marriage contracts
  - Eventually, Italy became a site of proxy war between the Holy Roman Empire and France, with the goal of limiting the Holy Roman Empire's power and getting Milan for France
  - Things got exciting in 1536, when the HRE's army invaded Provence but was forced to turn back before they reached Avignon due to the intervention of the French army
  - A truce was signed in 1538, granting France lands but not really changing Italy's map
  - Francois I again went to war with the HRE in 1542- this time the English got involved and invaded Northern France
    - Seized Boulogne and Soissons, at one point they were within 60 miles of Paris
    - However keeping control was difficult due to dissent in the ranks so Charles I retreated
  - Francois I died and his son Henri II again tried to seize control of Italian lands with the goal of breaking the HRE's power and instating France as the leading power in Europe
    - This time France really started to gain power- they took four French speaking cities, including Calais, but Henri II was forced to sign a peace treaty renouncing all claims to Italian lands
  - The peace in 1559 unwittingly led to a crisis of power in the French Monarchy
- Henri II died due to wounds sustained in a celebratory joust during the peace celebrations- his son Francis II took the throne but died in 1560
  - The crown had taken increasingly harsh measures against Protestants, at one point during Francis I's reign killing hundreds of Protestants and destroying 22-28 of France's own villages in an attempt to stop the spread of Protestantism
  - After Francis II died, Catherine De Medici (the Queen Regent) took over ruling for her second son, who was too young to rule
    - The Queen Regent tried to balance power between the warring factions of Bourbon (Protestant) and Guise (powerful and Catholic)-- she was worried Guise would get too much power and take over the throne
    - She called for a conference which resulted in the July Edict (1561), which said that Roman Catholicism was the official religion of France but that it was forbidden to persecute Protestants-- this didn't work very well

- To quell Protestant uprising, the Queen Regent issued the January Edict in 1562, which allowed Protestants to worship publicly outside of towns and privately inside them
      - The Duke of Guise massacred a group of Protestants worshipping outside a town, resulting in the outbreak of...
- **The French Wars of Religion**
  - Lasted from 1562-1570, in five episodes
  - The Prince of Conde (a Bourbon and Protestant) seized many Protestant towns, establishing a sort of Protestant Protectorate
  - The Duke of Guise mobilized to fight the Prince of Conde
  - Ended in a truce by edict of the Queen Regent after the assassination of the Duke of Guise (1563)
  - Charles IX declared his majority, and the Protestants led by the Prince of Conde attempted to capture and take control of him while he was on a Royal Progress (1567)
  - This caused another brief and bitter civil conflict where more towns declared for the Protestant cause; ended with a reiteration of "peace", which granted Protestants significant religious freedoms (1568)
  - Catholics didn't like this and started to murder Protestants again; this led to many costly battles
    - The Prince of Conde was killed
    - Hi followers were united by his death and proceeded to pillage their way up and down the Rhone valley
    - The crown under Charles IX, deeply in debt at this point, called another peace which again granted Protestants religious freedoms (1570)
  - An uneasy truce followed, but Catherine De Medici was wary of the power of the Protestant Duke of Coligny and Prince Henri of Navarre
    - Henri of Navarre was married to the Catholic Princess Marguerite of France (August 1572)
    - The new Duke of Guise became fearful of a Protestant coup and killed the Duke of Coligny
    - This assassination began the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, in which Catholics killed and looted the houses of over 10,000 people in Paris and in the provinces
    - This turned the tide in favor of Catholicism, as Protestants either emigrated to Protestant friendly countries or converted back to Catholicism for fear of their lives
  - The Catholics re-took many towns that had declared for Protestantism
  - But it wasn't over yet because eventually enough people died that Henri of Navarre was in line for the French throne (1584)
- **The War of the Three Henris**
  - Lasted from 1585-1598

- The short version is that Henri III seized control of the throne even though Henri of Navarre was the rightful ruler; Henri III assassinated the Duke of Guise and united forces with Henri of Navarre
- When Henri III died Henri of Navarre (protestant) was crowned King of France (1589)
- Henri of Navarre, now Henri IV, led a conquest to unite France, which was Protestant in the south and controlled by the Catholic League in the north
  - The Catholic League controlled Paris
  - The conquest lasted from 1589-1593, when Henri IV finally converted to Catholicism, saying “Paris is well worth a mass”
- Henri IV issued the Edict of Nantes to finally put France at peace once and for all (1598)
  - Separated the Church from the State
  - Reinstated Protestant’s civil rights
- In 1601 Louis XIII was born