

# Henry Remy DE SAINT OUEN D'ERNEMONT

1769 - ?

*Sous-lieutenant au régiment de Médoc,  
Officer in the Garde constitutionnelle de Louis XVI,  
Officier in the Garde Nationale de Paris,  
Officer in the Garde de la porte de Louis XVIII,  
Volontaire royaux at Vincennes,  
Adjudant de la ville de Paris,  
Chevalier de L'ordre royal de la Legion d'Honneur.*

*Second-cousin (seven times removed) to G D Audcent*

## Early Life and Origins

Henry Remy DE SAINT OUEN D'ERNEMONT was born on the 23 August 1769 in rue de la Bûcherie, Paris - a narrow city street running between the river Seine and boulevard Saint-Germain. He was the son of Jean “Barthélemy” Alexandre Marie DE SAINT OUEN D'ERNEMONT (Ecuyer, seigneur, patron et haut justicier d'Ernemont, ancien Mousquetaire de la Garde du Roy) and Marie DE LA MARRE.<sup>1</sup> His family originated from Normandy but Henry Remy seems never to have had any strong connection with the province.

He was baptised on the same day as his birth in the eglise de Saint-Étienne-du-Mont (located on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève, near the Panthéon), having for godparents Rene Remy BIGOT (avocat au Parlement, Councillor in the Chancellerie du Palais de Paris) and Catherine Henriette LEMAIRE (his godfather's wife).

Henry-Remy was born into the most ancient and prestigious class of French nobility, the so-called the *noblesse d'épée* (nobility of the sword), and the family's noble status originated from time immemorial. As a young man he saw his noble status and privileges swept away by the French Revolution, but he remained steadfastly loyal in his devotion to the French monarchy throughout a military career spanning forty years. He was several times appointed as a royal body guard, first to Louis XVI and later to Louis XVIII, and almost sacrificed his own life defending Louis XVI at a pivotal point in the French Revolution.

## Service in the régiment de Médoc

Henry Remy was commissioned into the army in 1790, at the age of 21. He was a *sous-lieutenant* in the régiment de Médoc. However, France was already in revolutionary tumult

---

<sup>1</sup> A copy of his baptism record, and information on his military career, comes from his dossier nominatif in relation to his appointment Chevalier de L'ordre royal de la Legion d'Honneur, Archives Nationales, reference LH/2439/42 (the Leonore database).

and his service in this infantry regiment would be cut short. Under the military reforms of 1791 the regiment was renamed the *70e régiment d'infanterie de ligne*, and like the majority of aristocratic officers he left soon afterwards. However, whilst most of his fellow officers deserted and fled aboard as émigrés, Henry-Remy was personally selected for service in a new military unit that was formed in Paris to guard the King.

### **Service in the Constitutional Guard of Louis XVI**

According to the *Etat des services* (service record) contained in his *dossier for the Legion d'Honneur*, Henri Remy served “*dans la garde de Sa majesté Louis 16*” in 1792. It seems therefore that at the age of 22 he must have joined the King's Constitutional Guard (*Garde constitutionnelle du roi*). The Constitutional Guard was created by the National Assembly from scratch in 1791. Replacing the old and aristocratic *Gardes du Corps*, its role was to provide personal protection for Louis XVI, both at the Tuileries palace and when travelling. The gardes controlled the interior of the palace whilst the National Guard performed sentry duties outside the palace.

The National Assembly stipulated that the guards had to be recruited from men of all classes who were on active service in either the army or the National Guard, and who had taken the civic oath to uphold the new French constitution. However, despite these safeguards the National Assembly soon became alarmed at the Constitutional Guard's devotion to the King, amidst rumours of counter-revolutionary sentiments within its ranks and reports that the officers had conducted an unofficial purge of guardsmen lacking royalist sentiments. Just eight months after its creation the National Assembly voted to dissolve the Constitutional Guard in May 1792, and its commanding officer was arrested. This was just another sign of the King's rapidly diminishing authority.

Henry-Remy remained in Paris after May 1792 and his loyalty to the King was clearly undiminished because just three months later he was wounded and almost killed in the slaughter at the Tuileries palace, whilst he defending the King from the baying mob on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792.

### **The insurrection of 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792**

The insurrection of 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792 was one of the defining moments of the French Revolution and represented the last stand of the French monarchy. On that day revolutionary militias who had travelled to Paris from Marseilles and Brittany laid siege to the Tuileries palace with the King holed up inside. The National Guards whose role was to provide the external defence of the palace were soon persuaded to change sides and when they turned their guns on the palace, only the Swiss Guards and the few hundred gentlemen volunteers were left to hold off the attack.

The Swiss Guards (*Régiment des Gardes Suisses du Roi de France*) were a disciplined professional regiment of the old royal army, made up of Swiss mercenaries in the service of the King of France. It is recorded (in the dossier prepared when Henry-Remy was awarded the Legion d'Honneur) that he served with the Swiss Guards up to 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792, and that he was wounded in the fighting that day. However, rather than having been officially assigned to the regiment of Swiss Guards it is more likely that he fought alongside them in an unofficial capacity, and that he was one of around 200 gentlemen volunteers who responded

to an emergency appeal that went out when the royal palace was imminent threat of attack, calling for all ex-guards and loyal nobles to go to the Tuileries to reinforce the Swiss Guards.

The Swiss Guards and gentlemen volunteers were heavily outnumbered. The King had no option but to flee and take shelter in the Legislative Assembly near by, from where he sent orders for a cease fire. However, the fighting had become too heavy and the situation too confused. With casualties mounting and ammunition running low the Swiss Guards and volunteers were forced to retreat through the palace corridors and gardens, where most of them were hunted down and killed. Around 600 of the 950 Swiss Guards were massacred. Henry-Remy was wounded in the fighting but like most of the volunteers he escaped with his life, owing to the fact that the gentlemen volunteers in civilian clothes (unlike the Swiss Guards) were able to melt into the crowd.

What happened to Henry-Remy over the next twenty years is unclear as his name disappears from the written record. He probably fled France and after recovering from his injuries joined the émigré royalist armies (with his brothers). Two years later in 1794 his father and mother were both guillotined in Paris, and one of the charges against them was that they had been in correspondence with external enemies of the Republic, which suggests they had been caught writing to Henry-Remy (and/or his brothers).

Henry-Remy reappears in France in early 1814. His brothers returned to live in Paris during the late 1790s, but is not known exactly when Henry-Remy returned.

### **Service in the Garde Nationale de Paris**

By 1814 Henry-Remy was living in Paris and may have been resident there for some years. On 8 January 1814, by now aged 44, he joined the *Garde Nationale de Paris* (“*depuis l'organisation décrétée le 8 janvier*”) following Emperor Napoleon’s reorganisation to create a defence militia composed of the local citizenry. As the Coalition armies advanced on Paris the National Guard were called out to defend the capital and to maintain public order. Despite the desertion of their senior commanders they fought with great bravery and enthusiasm on the night of 30 March 1814.

Napoleon abdicated five days later and many of the men in the *Garde Nationale de Paris* starting to wear a royalist white feather in their hats, whilst playing a key role in maintaining public order across the capital. In the early weeks of the Restoration the new King relied heavily on the National Guard to establish royal authority in Paris, because the Imperial armies were viewed as too unreliable.

### **Service as a sous-lieutenant in the ‘Garde de la Porte’ to Louis XVIII**

In December 1814, after a gap of 22 years, Henry-Remy at last returned to Tuileries Palace to resume his former duties as a royal guard. He was awarded a commission by Louis XVIII as a sous-lieutenant in the *Garde de la Porte* on 14 December 1814. The functions of the *compagnie des Gardes de la Porte* (which was re-established by an Ordonnance du Roi signed in July 1814) were similar to those of the old Constitutional Guard, and involved guarding the interior doors of the Tuileries palace day and night. It was a small unit composed of just 18 officers and 114 men, but formed part of the larger *maison militaire du Roy*. He served in the *Garde de la Porte* for only three months until March 1815.

On 9 February 1815 Henry-Remy was awarded the *décoration du Lys*. This decoration was awarded to men who had served in the National Guard of Paris the previous year, as “a perpetual sign of the services rendered in fighting for their homes or, when charged alone on the night of 30<sup>th</sup> March with ensuring Paris's protection and safety, preserving the King's capital for the King, and the property, lives and honour of so many families; or - when serving beside the troops of the line - setting an example of devotion and sacrifice; or when - despite this painful service - acting as the royal guard to the King and giving the royal family the satisfaction of having Frenchmen around them for their security.”

### Service as a royalist volunteer at Vincennes

Just two weeks later the Tuileries palace was rocked by news that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and had landed in the south of France.

Over the next three weeks Napoleon marched north towards Paris, rallying most of the French army to his cause and leaving Louis XVIII without the troops needed to defend the capital. The call went out for royalist volunteers to assemble at Vincennes near Paris in order to resist Napoleon's advance. The volunteers were enrolled into militia companies led mainly by officers from the King's household guards. Henry-Remy was one of these *volontaires royaux* who assembled at Vincennes.

On 15 March 1815, whilst the King still controlled the capital, Napoleon had the audacity to issue a decree suppressing the *Gardes de la Porte* and other military units of the King's household. On 19 March the King carried out one final inspection of his remaining troops, and later that night fled Paris for Belgium. He had been King for 347 days. This left the way open for the triumphant Napoleon to enter Paris the following day, which was achieved without bloodshed because many of the *volontaires royaux* had deserted. Although some of the *volontaires royaux* accompanied the King into exile, Henry-Remy stayed in Paris, although he loyally remained at his post until the King's departure.

Henry-Remy must have been one of the most loyal yet unluckiest bodyguards ever to serve the French royal family, because he twice joined the royal guards, in 1792 and again in 1814, only to be dismissed within months on both occasions through no fault of his own when his units were disbanded.

### The Second Restoration

Napoleon's return to France did not last long. Louis XVIII was again restored to the French throne by the Allied armies on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1815, 110 days after he had fled to Belgium. Under the Second Restoration Henry-Remy returned to the service of the King.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after the

---

<sup>2</sup> Revue historique, 1925 (A50, T149), page 57. Article by Paul Robiquet, Un suveur de Louis XVI dans la journée du 20 juin 1792: le chevalier Jean de Canolle (a former officer in the Garde de Louis XVI) ....“Pendant les Cent jours, celui-ci se cacha dans une maison sise allée des Veuves, aux Champs-Élysées, n° 37, qui appartenait à un sieur Belhomme et était habitée par M. Amant et sa fille, Mme Bardout, dont il connaissait les opinions royalistes. Il resta là jusqu'au 8 juillet 1815. Quand il apprit le retour de Louis XVIII, il monta à cheval et voulut aller au-devant du roi : il partit même un peu trop tôt et fut arrêté à la barrière Saint-Denis, courut de grands dangers et fut conduit à l'état-major de la place ; mais le comte d'Arumont, le comte de La Roche-Courbon-Blenac et **Saint-Ouen d'Einemont** [sic], **ancien garde du roi Louis XVI et garde de la porte de Louis XVIII**, vinrent le voir et réussirent à le faire mettre en liberté. Il fut autorisé à loger à la caserne de gendarmerie du Luxembourg, qui était occupée par la compagnie des chasses et voyages du roi, et reprit son service, jusqu'au moment où la fatigue et les infirmités l'obligèrent à se faire mettre en demi-solde, en attendant

King's entry into Paris it is recorded that he had to ride out to the barrière Saint-Denis, in his capacity as a royal aide, to rescue an old friend (the chevalier de Canolle) who, in his excitement at hailing the King's return, had been arrested after getting in the way of the royal carriage.

Just one week later, on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1815 Henri-Remy was made a *Chevalier de L'ordre royal de la Legion d'Honneur*. This must have been an award made personally by the grateful King, as the formalities and paperwork were only completed by the *Grande Chancellerie de L'ordre royal de la Legion d'Honneur* the following year.<sup>3</sup>

### **Service as an Adjutant de la ville de Paris**

Under the Second Restoration the decision was taken not to reinstitute the *Gardes de la Porte* so Henry-Remy was unable to return to his previous position in the King's military household. Instead he was compensated with a commission on 16 August 1816 into a new military unit – the *corps de Adjutants de la ville de Paris*, with the rank of sous-lieutenant. Eleven years later he was promoted to Lieutenant on 28 October 1827.

Henry-Remy held an important position involved with the inspection of the Paris police - the *gendarmerie royale de la ville de Paris*. The gendarmerie was significantly reformed in 1816 with a purge of any republicans or Bonapartists. At the same time a military corps of 24 “*adjutants de ville*” was formed to carry out inspections of the gendarmerie, less with the intention of improving efficiency and more to suppress any republican and Bonapartist sympathies within police ranks. With his impeccable royalist credentials Henry-Remy was ideally suited to the task of policing the police and ensuring their total loyalty to the restored Bourbon monarchy.

Henry-Remy served as an *Adjutant de la ville de Paris* until 1830, by which date he was 61 years old.<sup>4</sup> However, yet another revolution and change of regime would - for a third and final time – lead to the suppression of his post. Following the revolution of 1830 and adoption of more liberal policies, the *corps of Adjutants de la ville de Paris* was suppressed by an ordinance of the new ‘citizen king’, made on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1830.

It is likely that Henry-Remy then retired but no further information has been found on him. The most likely scenario is that he remained in Paris, and died there sometime during the mid-nineteenth century. However, establishing his fate is complicated by the fact that records of deaths in Paris up to December 1859 were all destroyed during the uprising of May 1871, when both the Hotel de Ville (which housed the registers) and the nearby Palais de Justice (which housed the duplicates) were burnt to the ground. Although a third of the records were subsequently reconstituted from various sources, there is nothing for Henry-Remy.

---

la liquidation de sa retraite. C'est même à l'occasion des démarches qu'entraîna cette mise à la retraite qu'il fut l'objet de certaines tracasseries mesquines dont il se plaint amèrement. On lui marchandait un permis de séjour à Paris, comme s'il était partisan du régime impérial. Il tint absolument à rester à Paris, qui a été « de tous les temps son domicile, celui de sa femme et de ses enfants... En ordonner autrement », dit-il, « serait une persécution digne de celles que j'ai éprouvées en 1793, de la part de Robespierre, et l'intention du Roi n'est pas que ce temps revienne pour personne, encore moins pour celles qui sont déjà trop malheureuses du côté de la fortune pour sa cause (sic). Ce serait pour moi un exil ou une déportation dont l'idée m'accable horriblement.. ».

<sup>3</sup> Archives Nationales, reference LH/2439/42 (Leonore database on line).

<sup>4</sup> Annuaire de l'état militaire de France pour l'année 1825, page 793 and Annuaire de l'état militaire de France pour l'année 1830, page 238.

No evidence has been found to show that he ever married or had children.



The eglise de Saint-Étienne-du-Mont in Paris,  
where Henry Remy was baptised in 1769



The arms of the Saint  
Ouen d'Ernemont family  
from an engraving by  
Stephano de Merval,  
author of the Armorial du  
Parlement de Normandie



Rue de la Bûcherie in Paris,  
which was home to the  
Saint Ouen d'Ernemont  
family in the 1760s








Uniform of a soldier in the  
the régiment de Médoc,  
1790.

Henry Remy's signature in  
1816 (above)  
and 1822 (below)



Services	Campagnes et Blessures
Sous Lieutenant dans le régiment de Médéc pendant . . . . . 2 ans	 Blessé le 10. août 1792. au Château de Guillebert.
Dans la garde de Samajesté Louis 16. 1792	
Dans la garde d'honneur jusqu'au 10. août . 1792	Décoré du Lycée de g. d'honneur 1814
Dans la garde nationale depuis l'organisation	
Décoré de S. Louis . . . . . 1814	Chevalier de l'ordre royal de la Légion d'honneur le 15 juillet 1815. par le roi.
Garde de la poste avec le rang de sous	
Lieutenant le 14 Décembre . . . . . 1814	
jusqu'au licenciement	
Scrie dans les volontaires loyaux à	
l'incorporation en vertu de son poste jusqu'au	
20 mars . . . . . 1815	
nommé adjudant de la ville de	
Paris le 16 août . . . . . 1816	

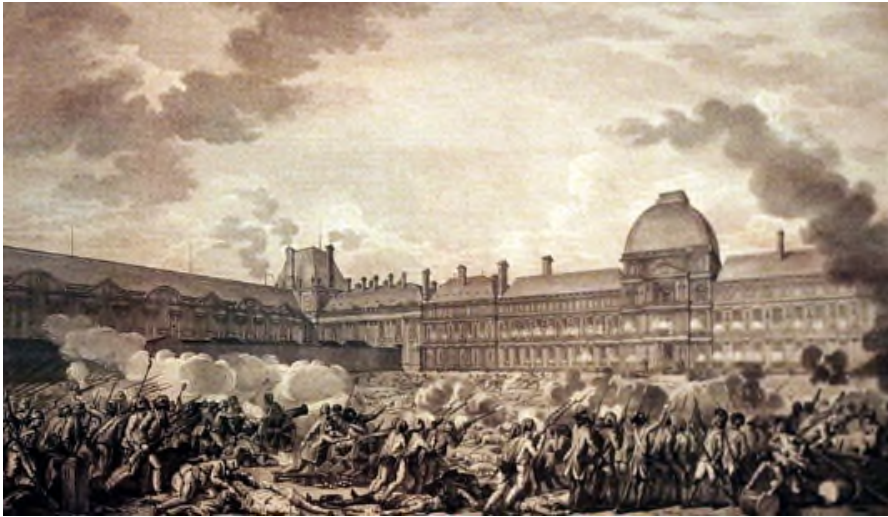
The Etat des services (service record) drawn up in 1816 from his dossier nominatif in connection with his appointment Chevalier de L'ordre royal de la Legion d'Honneur, Archives Nationales, reference LH/2439/42 (the Leonore database).

Uniform of a  
Garde Constituionelle du  
Roy in 1792



Uniform of a  
Garde de la porte, Maison  
du Ro, in 1814





Depictions of  
the storming of  
the Tuileries  
Palace on 10  
August 1792,  
during which  
Henry Remy  
was wounded

