

= James Walker (Royal Navy officer) =

James Walker CB , CavTe (1764 ? 13 July 1831) was an officer of the Royal Navy . He served during the American War of Independence , and the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars , rising to the rank of Rear @-@ Admiral .

Walker spent his early years in the navy at first in British waters during the invasion scares of 1779 , and then in North American waters where he saw action at most of the decisive naval battles of the war , particularly at the Chesapeake , St. Kitts and the Saintes . He reached the rank of lieutenant before the end of hostilities and spent the interwar years travelling on the continent . Returning to service with the outbreak of war with the French , he again participated in many of the key naval actions of the period , with his service at the Glorious First of June securing his promotion to his own commands . His career was almost ended with an accusation of disobeying orders , which led to his dismissal from the navy , but he was reinstated in time to develop a plan to subdue the mutinies at Spithead and the Nore . He commanded a ship at the Battle of Camperdown , and another at the Battle of Copenhagen , earning Nelson 's praise for his actions .

The early part of the Napoleonic Wars were spent in the Caribbean , where Walker played an important role in the Haitian Revolution , and took the surrender of a French garrison . After time spent escorting convoys , Walker joined the ships covering the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil , and struck up a friendship with the Prince Regent . His association with royalty continued with his services in transporting the Duke of Clarence , Tsar Alexander I of Russia and King Frederick William III of Prussia , and he was duly invested as a Companion of the Order of the Bath and a Knight of the Order of the Tower and Sword . His later years were spent managing a fleet off the American coast during the War of 1812 , and he commanded several ships after the end of the wars , retiring with the rank of rear @-@ admiral .

= = Family and early life = =

James Walker was born in 1764 , the son of James Walker of Innerdovot , Fife and his wife the novelist , Mary Leslie , the third daughter of Alexander Melville , 5th Earl of Leven . He entered the navy as a midshipman aboard the 32 @-@ gun HMS Southampton on 18 December 1776 , serving under Captain William Garnier . He went out to Jamaica in January 1777 , but returned to British waters for service in the North Sea and then the English Channel with Sir Charles Hardy 's fleet during the invasion crisis in 1779 . While serving in the Channel in 1780 , Southampton captured an 18 @-@ gun French privateer off Portland , with 80 men aboard her . Walker was sent to assist in removing the prisoners , and after doing so remained on board to help with the baling and pumping , as the privateer was in danger of sinking . Despite his efforts the privateer suddenly sank , nearly taking Walker down with her . He was in the water for ten minutes before being rescued .

William Garnier was succeeded by Philip Affleck in command of Southampton in August , and the ship returned to Jamaica . Walker continued to serve on her until June 1781 , when he was transferred to the 98 @-@ gun HMS Princess Royal , the flagship of Rear @-@ Admiral Joshua Rowley . Walker was appointed to act as lieutenant on 18 June 1781 and was assigned to HMS Torbay , part of Sir Samuel Hood 's squadron despatched to North America . Under Hood Walker saw action at the Battle of the Chesapeake on 5 September 1781 , the Battle of St. Kitts on 26 July 1782 , and the Battle of the Saintes on 12 April 1782 . During the Battle of the Saintes Torbay had ten men killed and 25 wounded . Walker was then on the verge of being promoted again , due to the intimate friendship between his father and Admiral Sir George Rodney , but before this could be carried out Rodney was superseded by Admiral Hugh Pigot , and Walker remained at his previous rank . He continued on aboard Torbay , and was present at the Action of 18 October 1782 , when Torbay and HMS London encountered the French 74 @-@ gun Scipion . The British ships chased her into Samana Bay , Haiti , where she ran aground and was wrecked . Walker received his lieutenant 's commission on 8 May 1783 .

= = Years of peace = =

After the end of the American War of Independence in 1783 Walker visited the continent , touring through France , Germany and Italy . While in Vienna in 1787 , news reached him of political troubles with the Dutch , and he began to journey back to England in hope of a commission . While travelling through the forest near Aschaffenburg , the diligence he was in was attacked by ten armed men , who fired into the coach and demanded the passengers ' money . Walker attempted to resist them , but was left unsupported by his fellow passengers , and was knocked down , robbed , and thrown into a ditch . The robbers took 800l of money and rode off , believing Walker to be dead . He came to , suffering from a sabre cut to the head , and was carried into Aschaffenburg . There his wounds were treated free of charge by the local surgeons and authorities , and on recovering sufficiently he was brought to Frankfurt . There the local lodge of freemasons offered him financial assistance , and on his arrival at Mainz he was presented to the Prince @-@ Bishop , Friedrich Karl Joseph von Erthal . The Archbishop gave him a letter detailing his adventure in the forest near Aschaffenburg , and commending his bravery . Despite this assistance Walker was unable to reach England until after the Dutch crisis had abated , and so returned to his travels in Germany .

The outbreak of the Russo @-@ Turkish War created a new opportunity for Walker , when in 1788 the Russians offered him command of a ship . The Admiralty refused to grant him permission to accept however , and Walker was obliged to turn it down . Despite this , Walker returned to service in the Royal Navy in 1789 , with an appointment on 11 September to the 24 @-@ gun HMS Champion , based at Leith under Captain Sampson Edwards . He transferred to the 32 @-@ gun HMS Winchelsea on 24 January 1790 , serving in the English Channel under Captain Richard Fisher . He left the ship in February 1792 and spent nearly a year at home . He was back on active service from 2 December with an appointment to the 98 @-@ gun HMS Boyne , intended as the flagship of Walker 's old commander , now Rear @-@ Admiral Philip Affleck . Boyne escorted a convoy of ships of the East India Company to the Tropic of Capricorn , and Walker remained with her until shortly after the outbreak of war with Revolutionary France . On 24 June 1793 he transferred to the 32 @-@ gun HMS Niger , which was then under Captain the Honourable Arthur Kaye Legge , as first @-@ lieutenant .

= = French Revolutionary Wars = =

= = = Promotion and temporary commands = = =

Niger was attached to the Channel Fleet , and took part of the Atlantic campaign of May 1794 with Lord Howe . She was one of the repeating ships at the Glorious First of June , though she did not take part in the fighting herself . Walker 's role as signal lieutenant secured him promotion to commander on 6 July 1794 . He went as a volunteer with Legge to HMS Latona , had a stint as acting commander of HMS Gibraltar and in April 1795 he was in temporary command of the bomb vessel HMS Terror . He received an appointment on 15 July 1795 to the temporary command of the 50 @-@ gun HMS Trusty , and was ordered to escort five East Indiamen to a safe latitude , and then to return to Spithead . Having escorted the merchants to the designated point he received news that a fleet of 36 English merchants were assembled at Cadiz , in need of an escort .

= = = Dismissal and reinstatement = = =

Disobeying his orders to return to Spithead , Walker made for Cadiz , gathered the convoy , and escorted them to Britain . It was a controversial action . The merchants claimed the cargoes were worth £ 1 million , and would have been at considerable risk from enemy vessels were it not for Walker 's escort . However the Spanish authorities were greatly incensed , arresting five of Trusty 's officers while she was at Cadiz on charges of having smuggled the merchant 's money out of the port , and demanding Walker be court @-@ martialled . Walker justified himself by pointing to the imminent alliance between France and Spain , but despite the Lords of the Admiralty being

sympathetic to his cause , he was found guilty of disobeying orders , and was dismissed from the navy . The Lords advised him to join the fleet despatched to the West Indies under Sir Hugh Cloberry Christian , but it was dispersed by gales and the ship Walker was travelling on returned to port . There it was suggested that he wait in Britain , and with the Spanish declaration of war , Walker was reinstated on the navy list in March 1797 by an order in council .

= = = Mutiny and Camperdown = = =

Shortly afterwards mutiny broke out at Spithead and at the Nore . Walker proposed an attack on the mutinous ships at the Nore using heavily armed gunboats , fitted with carronades , and was commissioned by the Admiralty on 10 June to carry this out . Walker set out down the Thames but only got as far as Gravesend before news reached him that the mutineers had submitted and his operation was no longer necessary . He was appointed acting @-@ captain of HMS Garland on 16 July 1797 and conveyed a Baltic @-@ bound convoy of merchants as far as Elsinore .

On his return he was appointed captain of the 64 @-@ gun HMS Monmouth on 20 August , still in an acting capacity . Monmouth had been one of the most mutinous ships of the whole fleet , and was heavily involved in the Nore mutiny . Walker took her to join Admiral Adam Duncan 's fleet in the North Sea . Within a short time he was able to restore good order aboard her , and was able to play a significant role in the Battle of Camperdown on 11 October . As she approached the Dutch fleet Walker gathered the crew and addressed them saying ' My lads , you see your enemy ; I shall lay you close aboard and give you an opportunity of washing the stain off your characters in the blood of your foes . Now , go to your quarters and do your duty . ' During the battle Monmouth engaged the Dutch ships Delft and Alkmaar for an hour and a half , forcing both of them to surrender . Monmouth , which had lost five men killed and 22 wounded , took Alkmaar in tow , and despite sailing through a strong gale , reached the shelter of Yarmouth roads five days later . The battle was a decisive victory for the British over the Dutch , and Walker was among those captains rewarded , having his post rank confirmed on 17 October , and receiving the Naval Gold Medal and the thanks of parliament . He attended the service of thanksgiving at St Paul 's Cathedral on 19 December , and assisted in depositing the captured enemy colours .

= = = Later commands and Copenhagen = = =

Walker took command of the 64 @-@ gun HMS Veteran on 8 February 1798 , before transferring in quick succession to the 56 @-@ gun HMS Brakel , the 98 @-@ gun HMS Prince George , the 90 @-@ gun HMS Prince and lastly the 50 @-@ gun HMS Isis on 7 October 1800 . He commanded Isis in the North Sea , the Skagerrak and in the Baltic Sea , as well as with the Channel Fleet . Isis was assigned to the Baltic expedition under Admiral Sir Hyde Parker , and joined Rear @-@ Admiral Horatio Nelson 's squadron for the Battle of Copenhagen on 2 April 1801 . The plan of attack had to be improvised at the last minute , after several ships ran aground while trying to enter the harbour , including Nelson 's flagship , HMS Elephant . Walker took Isis in to engage both his own target as well as Elephant 's , and ended up fighting two Danish blockships and a 14 @-@ gun battery . When eventually Nelson was able to work his way down the line he left Walker at his task and took another position . As he passed , Nelson took off his hat , waved it , and cried , ' Well done , brave Walker ! Go on as you have begun ; nothing can be better ' . After four and a half hours of intense fighting Isis silenced her opponents , at the heavy cost of nine officers and 103 men killed or wounded . Nelson came aboard Isis the following morning and thanked Walker and his men for their brave efforts .

= = Peace , and Napoleonic Wars = =

= = = Caribbean and Haiti = = =

Walker received an appointment to command the new 32 @-@ gun HMS Tartar on 1 July 1801 and took a convoy of merchants to Jamaica . He continued to be employed , despite the drawdown of the navy following the Peace of Amiens , and received command of the 74 @-@ gun HMS Vanguard on 27 January 1802 . With the resumption of hostilities in 1803 he was assigned to the Blockade of Saint @-@ Domingue , and captured the 44 @-@ gun French frigate Créole , bound for Port au Prince with 530 troops under General Morgan . On 25 July he captured the French 74 @-@ gun Duquesne . After taking his prize to Jamaica Walker returned to his station and on 1 October demanded the surrender of the French garrison at Saint @-@ Marc . The garrison of 1100 men was besieged by the forces of generals Jean @-@ Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe , and were short of food . They agreed to surrender to Walker and were taken off in order to save them from the vengeance of the besieging forces . In doing so he saved their lives , but as his provisions were rapidly exhausted he was forced to return to port to resupply at the point at which Cape François was about to fall , and so missed out on a considerable sum of prize money .

= = = Convoys = = =

Walker was then given command of his prize , the Duquesne , on 2 March 1804 , and sailed her from Jamaica to Chatham with only 160 men . Also embarked on the Duquesne were an almost equal number of French prisoners , which had to be closely watched during the passage , in case they made an attempt to take the ship . Duquesne arrived in England without incident , and Walker paid her off for repairs . He then received command of the 36 @-@ gun HMS Thalia on 1 March 1805 and escorted convoys to the East Indies and Quebec . The voyage to the East Indies was made with two ships laden with treasure was made safely and quickly , with Walker arriving back at Spithead ten months to the day of his departure . The voyage to Quebec was made in company with two frigates , which delivered the convoy , but were delayed in port by gales until 1 December 1806 . After setting sail Thalia became caught in a gale off the Newfoundland Banks and ran for 1250 miles for five days under bare poles . After returning to Spithead Walker was assigned to the Guernsey station under Sir Edmund Nagle , where he was given command of a squadron of three frigates and a brig to watch the enemy at St Malo .

= = = Portuguese service = = =

In October 1807 Walker was transferred to the 74 @-@ gun HMS Bedford and was sent to Lisbon with Sir Sidney Smith . While there the decision was made to evacuate the Portuguese Royal Family to Brazil , just prior to the capture of the Portuguese capital , Lisbon , by Napoleonic forces . HMS Bedford joined HMS Monarch , HMS London and HMS Marlborough as an escort for the Portuguese ships , with the British squadron being commanded by Commodore Graham Moore . The fleet was dispersed by heavy gales off Madeira , though Bedford was able to rejoin the ships carrying the royals two days later , and was the only British ship to escort them for the rest of the thirteen week voyage . Walker struck up a friendship with the Prince Regent , who wanted to create him a member of the Order of Aviz , but owing to Walker 's religion , he instead recreated the military Order of the Tower and Sword . The Prince Regent invested himself with the honour , and then immediately created Walker a Knight Commander of the order on 30 April 1816 , making him the senior Knight Commander of the order . Walker spent two years with the court at Rio de Janeiro , and in addition to the honour , received the Prince Regent 's portrait set in brilliants , a valuable diamond ring , and several letters testifying to Walker 's good service .

= = = Royalty , and the Americas = = =

On Walker 's return to Britain he asked for , and received , orders to join the fleet in the North Sea . Still in command of Bedford , he took part in the blockade of Flushing under Admiral John Ferrier , narrowly avoiding being wrecked in a gale on 14 January 1814 . After being repaired she joined Admiral William Young , and then Admiral Scott to go into Flushing . In the summer of 1814 Walker

was selected to accompany the Duke of Clarence on his journey to Boulogne to collect Tsar Alexander I of Russia and King Frederick William III of Prussia . Bedford then formed part of the fleet assembled for a Royal review . He then made two trips to bring army units back from the continent . In September 1814 he took command of a squadron carrying the advance guard of an invasion force to occupy New Orleans under Major @-@ General John Keane . During the campaign the senior naval officers , Sir Alexander Cochrane and Rear @-@ Admirals Pulteney Malcolm and Edward Codrington , went ashore , leaving Walker to manage the fleet , which owing to the shoal water , had to be kept a hundred miles offshore .

= = Later years = =

Walker continued to receive employment despite the end of the wars with France and America , commanding in turn the 74 @-@ gun ships HMS Albion , HMS Queen and HMS Northumberland , paying off Northumberland on 10 September 1818 . He was nominated a Companion of the Bath on 4 June 1815 , and was promoted to rear @-@ admiral on 19 July 1821 . Walker was reportedly a cheerful and friendly officer , who won respect through his leniency and good nature . His commanding officer , William Young , once complimented him for keeping Bedford in a state of high discipline without once resorting to a flogging over a period of five months and three weeks . While in command of the Northumberland he was praised for his actions when he and his crew fought a fire that had broken out in Sheerness Dockyard , and which had threatened to destroy the entire yard . James Walker was twice married , at first to a daughter of General Sir John Irwin , Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief , Ireland . The marriage did not produce any children and after her death Walker married Priscilla Sarah , the fourth daughter of the MP Arnoldus Jones @-@ Skelton . The couple had three sons ; the eldest , Melville , entered the army , while the two younger sons , Leven Charles Frederick and Thomas , followed their father into the navy . Rear @-@ Admiral James Walker died at Blatchington , near Seaford , Sussex on 13 July 1831 at the age of 67 , after a short illness .