

= John MacBride (Royal Navy officer) =

John MacBride (c . 1735 ? 17 February 1800) was an officer of the Royal Navy and a politician who saw service during the Seven Years ' War , the American War of Independence and the French Revolutionary Wars , eventually rising to the rank of Admiral of the Blue .

MacBride entered the navy after serving on merchant vessels and distinguished himself in a number of actions during the Seven Years ' War , including cutting out a privateer , which secured him the rank of post @-@ captain by the end of the conflict . He was instrumental in establishing and securing a British settlement on the Falkland Islands in the years of peace which followed , and also performed service to the Royal Family by transporting the King 's sister , Caroline Matilda . Still in active service by the outbreak of war with the American colonies , MacBride took command of a ship of the line and saw action in engagements under Keppel and Rodney . He was also active against privateers , capturing the Comte d 'Artois in a heated battle off the Irish coast . Further service followed with Parker 's fleet against the Dutch and with Barrington in the Channel .

MacBride ended the war serving ashore in Ireland , and in 1784 embarked on a political career , becoming MP for Plymouth . Promoted to flag rank with the outbreak of war with Revolutionary France , he commanded squadrons off the enemy coasts , and transported troops to support land operations on the continent . His last active service was in 1795 , though he was promoted to Admiral of the Blue shortly before his death in 1800 .

= = Family and early life = =

John MacBride was born in Scotland around 1735 , the second son of the Presbyterian minister Robert MacBride . The MacBrides moved to Ireland shortly after John 's birth , when Robert became minister of Ballymoney , in County Antrim . John 's brother , David MacBride , became a noted medical writer . John MacBride initially went to sea with the merchant service in 1751 , and joined the navy as an able seaman three years later , in 1754 . He served first aboard the 24 @-@ gun HMS Garland in the West Indies for a number of years , before returning to British wars and serving aboard HMS Norfolk , the flagship in the Downs for a few months .

MacBride passed his lieutenant 's examination on 6 October 1758 , and received his commission on 27 October . He was moved into the hired cutter Grace , and in August 1761 came across a French privateer anchored in the Dunkirk roadstead . MacBride made contact with the frigate HMS Maidstone and asked her captain for four armed and manned boats . Maidstone 's captain readily agreed , and at 10 o 'clock that night the boats left the British ships and approached the privateer with muffled oars . They came within pistol shot and hailed the French vessel , and on receiving no reply , boarded her . The British boarded on both sides of the vessel , and carried the ship with two men wounded . MacBride himself shot and killed the French lieutenant as he aimed a gun at the British boat . The total French losses were two dead and five wounded . Having secured the vessel , the British took her out to sea under the guns of a French battery .

MacBride 's good service brought him a promotion to master and commander on 7 April 1762 , and an appointment to command the fireship HMS Grampus . From there he moved to command the sloop HMS Cruizer on 27 May 1763 , still at the rank of commander . After some time spent on the Home station , MacBride received a promotion to post @-@ captain on 20 June 1765 , and took command of the 30 @-@ gun HMS Renown . This was followed in August 1765 with command of the 32 @-@ gun HMS Jason , and a mission to establish a colony on the Falkland Islands .

= = Falkland Islands = =

MacBride arrived with Jason , HMS Carcass and the storeship HMS Experiment , in January 1766 , with orders to secure a settlement and to inform any existing inhabitants that the islands were a British possession . The British consolidated Port Egmont , made several cruises in the surrounding waters , and in December came across the French settlement . In a cordial meeting MacBride informed the French governor M. de Neville of the British claim , which the French politely rejected .

Unbeknownst to both de Neville and MacBride , Louis Antoine de Bougainville , who had established the French settlement , had agreed to sell the colony to Spain . The resulting tensions between the Spanish and British claims would nearly lead to war in 1770 , but in the meantime MacBride returned home , reporting the situation to the government . He later published a 13 @-@ page monograph , probably in 1770 , entitled A Journal of the Winds and Weather ... at Falkland Islands from 1 February 1766 to 19 January 1767 .

= = Interwar years = =

After his return to Britain MacBride was given command of the 22 @-@ gun HMS Seaford in August 1767 and employed to cruise in the English Channel . He spent several years aboard Seaford , before transferring to take command of the 32 @-@ gun HMS Arethusa in March 1771 , followed by the 32 @-@ gun HMS Southampton in August that year . He was in command of Southampton in May 1772 when he received orders to command a small squadron tasked with transporting Caroline Matilda , former Queen of Denmark and Norway and sister of King George III , from Elsinore to Stadt . The squadron consisted of Southampton , and two of MacBride 's former commands , Seaford , and Cruizer . In April 1773 he took command of HMS Orpheus .

= = American War of Independence = =

With the outbreak of war with the American colonies , MacBride was appointed to take command of the 64 @-@ gun HMS Bienfaisant on 6 November 1776 . He was present at the Battle of Ushant on 28 July 1778 , but did not become heavily engaged in the confused action . In the ensuing argument over the outcome of the battle , MacBride gave evidence in favour of Admiral Keppel that was an important factor in Keppel 's acquittal at his court @-@ martial . MacBride was less supportive of Sir Hugh Palliser . He remained in command of Bienfaisant , and in December joined Sir George Rodney 's fleet to relieve Gibraltar . During the voyage the British fleet came across a Spanish convoy transporting naval stores from San Sebastián to Cádiz , and engaged it . The British succeeded in capturing the convoy , while MacBride distinguished himself in engaging the Spanish flagship Guipuscoana , which surrendered to him .

On 16 January the fleet again encountered Spanish ships , this time off Cape St. Vincent . The Spanish fleet , under Admiral Juan de Lángara , were engaged in the Battle of Cape St. Vincent , and again MacBride was in the thick of the action . He took his ship in to engage the San Domingo , with the Bienfaisant narrowly escaping significant damage after her opponent blew up . He then went on to chase down and capture Lángara 's flagship , the 80 @-@ gun Fenix . MacBride sent Lieutenant Thomas Louis aboard to take possession , but as a smallpox outbreak was raging on the Bienfaisant , MacBride did not take the usual step of transferring some of the captured officers and men aboard his own ship . Instead he reached an agreement with de Lángara , that should the ships encounter a French or Spanish force , he would allow the Fenix to be defended against them . If the Bienfaisant escaped but the Fenix was retaken , de Lángara and his men would consider themselves to still be prisoners of war , but if Fenix escaped and Bienfaisant was taken , then de Lángara and his men would be freed . In any event both ships made it to Gibraltar without incident , after which MacBride was given the honour of taking Rodney 's despatches back to Britain . MacBride set off at once , but was delayed by adverse winds . Consequently , his despatches arrived several days after an identical set had reached London , delivered by Captain Edward Thomson , who had left Rodney later than MacBride , but who had had a faster voyage .

= = MacBride and the Artois connection = =

Rodney 's fleet returned to Britain in March , and MacBride rejoined the Bienfaisant . In early August a large French privateer , the 64 @-@ gun Comte d 'Artois , was reported to have sailed from Brest to cruise off the Irish south coast . MacBride was ordered to sail in company with the 44 @-@ gun HMS Charon and to capture the dangerous vessel . After several days in search of the

vessel , a mysterious sail was finally sighted early on 13 August , chasing after some of the ships of a convoy departing from Cork . MacBride ranged up and fell in with the unidentified ship , which hoisted English colours . Both ships came within pistol shot , and it was not until there was some communication between the two ships , that MacBride could be satisfied of her identity . By now the two ships were so close , with Bienfaisant off the Comte de 'Artois 's bow , that neither ship could bring their main guns to bear . Instead both ships opened fire with muskets until MacBride could manoeuvre away and a general action ensued . After an hour and ten minutes the French vessel surrendered , having had 21 killed and 35 wounded , while Bienfaisant had three killed and 20 wounded . The Charon had only joined the action towards the end of the engagement and had a single man wounded . The capture had an unusual sequel , for just over a year later , and under a different captain , Bienfaisant captured another privateer , this time named Comtesse d 'Artois .

In a further coincidence MacBride was appointed in January 1781 to command the 40 @-@ gun HMS Artois , a former French ship captured in 1780 by HMS Romney . MacBride served in the North Sea with Sir Hyde Parker 's fleet , and fought against the Dutch at the Battle of Dogger Bank on 5 August 1781 . After the battle Parker temporarily moved MacBride into the 80 @-@ gun HMS Princess Amelia , whose captain , John MacCartney , had been killed during the battle . MacBride resumed command of Artois after the fleet 's return to port , and continued to cruise in the North Sea . On 3 December he engaged and captured two large 24 @-@ gun Dutch privateers , the Hercules and Mars . Nine men were killed and fifteen wounded on Mars , while 13 were killed and 20 wounded on Hercules . Artois had one man killed and six wounded .

By 1782 MacBride was operating in the Channel , and in April was sent out as a scout ahead of the main force under Admiral Samuel Barrington , which aimed to intercept a French squadron that had left Brest bound for the East Indies . He sighted the force on 20 April and alerted Barrington . The British moved in and that day and the following captured over half of the French force . After this success MacBride was appointed to the Irish station in June , where he worked in the impress service while Artois cruised under her first lieutenant .

= = Years of peace = =

At the end of the war with America , MacBride left the Artois , but in June was able to obtain command of the 32 @-@ gun HMS Druid . He commanded her until the end of the year , after which he was temporarily unemployed at sea . MacBride took this opportunity to enter politics , and in 1784 he was elected as MP for Plymouth , holding the seat until 1790 . He gave several speeches on naval matters , and sat on the Duke of Richmond 's commission into the defences of Portsmouth and Plymouth between 1785 and 1786 . He opposed a plan for fortifying the naval dockyards , both on the commission and in parliament . In 1788 he returned to an active , though not a seagoing command , when he took over the Plymouth guardship , the 74 @-@ gun HMS Cumberland . By 1790 , with the threat of the Spanish Armament looming , MacBride took Cumberland to Torbay to join the fleet assembling there under Lord Howe .

= = French Revolutionary Wars = =

MacBride was promoted to rear @-@ admiral on 1 February 1793 , as part of the general promotion following the outbreak of war . He became commander @-@ in @-@ chief on the Downs station , commanding a frigate squadron with his flag in Cumberland , later transferring his flag to the 32 @-@ gun HMS Quebec . He took possession of Ostend after the French retreat in early 1793 , and in October transported reinforcements under General Sir Charles Grey to assist in the defence of Dunkirk . He took command of the 36 @-@ gun HMS Flora at the end of the year and sailed from Portsmouth on 1 December carrying an army under the Earl of Moira to support French royalists in Brittany and Normandy .

Following this service he took command of a small squadron in the Western Approaches , flying his flag in a number of different vessels , including the sloop HMS Echo , the 74 @-@ gun HMS Minotaur and the 64 @-@ gun HMS Sceptre . The squadron did not achieve any significant

successes , and MacBride had the misfortune to break his leg while mounting his horse , forcing him to temporarily relinquish his duties . He was promoted to rear @-@ admiral of the red on 11 April , and on 4 July to vice @-@ admiral of the blue . Promoted to vice @-@ admiral of the white on 1 June 1795 , MacBride became commander of the squadron in the North Sea assigned to watch the Dutch fleet in the Texel , flying his flag in the 74 @-@ gun HMS Russell . He stepped down from the post in late 1795 , and was not actively employed at sea again . He was promoted to admiral of the blue on 14 February 1799 . Admiral John MacBride died of a paralytic seizure at the Spring Garden Coffee House , London on 17 February 1800 .

= = Family and issue = =

MacBride married early in his career , but no details are known , other than that his wife was the daughter of a naval officer . She is presumed to have died , for MacBride married Ursula Folkes , eldest daughter of William Folkes of Hillington Hall , Norfolk on 14 July 1774 . Their son , John David MacBride , became principal of Magdalen Hall , Oxford . MacBride 's daughter , Charlotte , married Admiral Willoughby Lake in 1795 .