

= HMS Canopus (1798) =

HMS Canopus was an 84 @-@ gun third rate ship of the line of the British Royal Navy . She had previously served with the French Navy as the Tonnant @-@ class Franklin , but was captured after less than a year in service by the British fleet under Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson at the Battle of the Nile in 1798 . Having served for less than six months for the French from her completion in March 1798 to her capture in August that year , she would eventually serve for 89 years for the British .

Her career began as the flagship of Rear @-@ Admiral Armand Blanquet du Chayla , second in command at the Battle of the Nile , where she distinguished herself with her fierce resistance before being forced to surrender with over half her crew dead or wounded , and most of her guns disabled . Taken into British service she was refitted and served as the flagship of several admirals . Commanded by Francis Austen Canopus was Rear @-@ Admiral Thomas Louis 's flagship in the Mediterranean under Nelson , and narrowly missed the fighting at Trafalgar . She saw action with Duckworth 's fleet at the Battle of San Domingo , and remained with him during the attempt to force the Dardanelles , and the operations in support of the Alexandria expedition in 1807 . She remained active against the French in the Mediterranean for the rest of the Napoleonic Wars , helping to drive ashore two large French ships of the line in a notable incident in 1809 . Canopus remained in service after the end of the wars , serving as a flagship into the mid @-@ nineteenth century , but as sail gave way to steam , she was relegated to support duties in Devonport , becoming a receiving ship , tender and a mooring hulk . She was eventually sold for breaking up in 1887 , after nearly ninety years in British service .

= = Construction and French career = =

Franklin was built to a design by Jacques @-@ Noël Sané at the Toulon shipyard between November 1794 and March 1798 , having been launched on 25 June 1797 . She was named after the American scientist and politician Benjamin Franklin . Commanded by Captain Maurice Gillet and flying the flag of Rear @-@ Admiral Armand Blanquet du Chayla , Franklin was one of the ships that accompanied Vice Admiral François @-@ Paul Brueys 's fleet , carrying Napoleon Bonaparte and the French troops to invade Egypt. Franklin was anchored with Brueys 's fleet in Aboukir Bay on 1 August , when they were discovered in the evening by a British fleet under Rear @-@ Admiral Horatio Nelson . Nelson ordered his fleet to attack immediately , with the British forces moving on the French van , doubling their line . Brueys was taken by surprise , having expected the British to attack his rear and centre , where he had consequently placed his heaviest ships , including the Franklin . Franklin did not therefore enter the engagement until later that evening , as the French van surrendered and the British ships moved down the line to engage the remaining ships .

= = = Franklin 's fight = = =

Franklin , positioned just ahead of Brueys 's flagship , the 120 @-@ gun Orient , and astern of the 74 @-@ gun *Peuple Souverain* , came under fire from HMS Orion , HMS Majestic and HMS Defence . The British ships and the French centre exchanged a heavy fire , with the British being joined by the newly arrived HMS Swiftsure , HMS Alexander and HMS Leander . As Du Chayla later recalled ' The action in this part then became extremely warm . ' The two sides were intensely engaged for the next hour , during which the *Peuple Souverain* was forced out of the line , and the Orient caught fire . As the fire on Orient raged out of control , the nearby French and British ships scrambled to escape the anticipated explosion . Orient 's magazine blew up at 9 : 37 p.m. , obliterating her and sending burning debris raining down on the nearby ships . Large amounts fell upon the Franklin , starting fires which caused the arms locker to explode and set fire to the poop and quarterdeck .

For a while it seemed that Franklin would also be burnt , but her crew were able to put out the fires . With Brueys killed aboard Orient , Du Chayla now became commander . Both he and Captain Gillet had been seriously wounded and taken below , but he continued to order the attack . The brief quiet

that had resulted from the explosion of the Orient was broken by Franklin 's guns , and the battle resumed . She fought for another hour , but by then she had lost her main and mizzenmasts , nearly all of her cannons had been knocked out , and over half her crew were dead or wounded . She finally struck her colours .

= = British service = =

= = Mediterranean and San Domingo = =

The Franklin was one of nine ships captured by the British at the Nile , and she was taken into service with the Royal Navy , being registered under the name HMS Canopus on 9 December 1798 . She was sent back to Britain under the command of Captain Bartholomew James , and arrived at Plymouth on 17 July 1799 . She briefly became the flagship of Admiral Philip Affleck for service off Lisbon , but was paid off into ordinary in August that year . She began a refit at Plymouth in August 1801 , but the work was suspended incomplete in November that year , and was only completed in January 1803 . She recommissioned in April that year under the command of Captain John Conn , and became the flagship of Rear @-@ Admiral George Campbell .

Canopus was sent in August 1803 to join the Mediterranean Fleet , based off Toulon under Nelson . Conn was succeeded in February 1805 by Captain Francis Austen , and Canopus became the flagship of Rear @-@ Admiral Thomas Louis . Canopus narrowly missed being present at the Battle of Trafalgar , having been sent to Gibraltar with Louis 's squadron to resupply . She returned to Britain in mid @-@ 1806 , where she was taken in hand at Plymouth for repairs , which were completed in August at a cost of £ 31 @, @ 804 . In January 1806 she joined Vice @-@ Admiral Sir John Thomas Duckworth 's squadron in the pursuit of Corentin Urbain Leissègues , and took part in the Battle of San Domingo on 6 February , engaging the 74 @-@ gun Diomède among other ships . Canopus sustained casualties of eight dead and 22 wounded . Thomas Shortland became captain of Canopus in July 1806 , and sailed to the Mediterranean with Duckworth 's squadron , still flying Louis 's flag . She took part in the attempt to force the Dardanelles on 19 January , and in subsequent operations in support of the Alexandria expedition , during which nine Turkish vessels were captured or destroyed .

Shortland was succeeded by Captain Charles Inglis in 1808 , and became the flagship of Rear @-@ Admiral George Martin . Canopus was attached to the Mediterranean Fleet under Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood and in October 1809 was part of the fleet that gave chase to a French convoy and their escorts under Rear @-@ Admiral François Baudin in the Gulf of Lyons . The French were chased into the mouth of the Rhone , where the 80 @-@ gun Robuste and the 74 @-@ gun Lion were driven aground , and after attempts to salvage them had failed , the French were forced to burn them . Canopus became the flagship of Rear @-@ Admiral Charles Boyles between 1811 and 1812 , after which she was paid off into ordinary again .

= = Postwar = =

A large repair was carried out at Plymouth Dock (i.e. Devonport) for the sum of £ 78 @, @ 909 between March 1814 and March 1816 , but with the end of the Napoleonic Wars she was laid up for a number of years . Canopus was fitted for sea at Devonport in May 1834 , and underwent further repairs between December 1839 and May 1842 . She was prepared for sea again in early 1845 , spending time under the command of Fairfax Moresby , before being laid up at Devonport in 1848 . She was fitted out there as a receiving ship between June and October 1862 , and served as a tender to HMS Indus , the Devonport guardship . Canopus became a mooring hulk in 1869 , with her masts being removed in April 1878 . She was finally sold after 89 years service with the Royal Navy in October 1887 to J. Pethick , and was broken up .