

= Hugh Cloberry Christian =

Sir Hugh Cloberry Christian KB (1747 ? 23 November 1798) was an officer of the Royal Navy who saw service during the American War of Independence , and the French Revolutionary Wars .

Details of his early life are obscure , but he appears to have served initially in the English Channel and the Mediterranean , before obtaining the rank of captain and going out to North America with Commodore Joshua Rowley . Christian was Rowley 's flag @-@ captain on HMS Suffolk for several years , and saw action in several of the naval engagements of the American War of Independence .

Returning to Britain at the end of the war , he spent a period without active employment , before receiving a post as second captain aboard Lord Howe 's flagship , the 100 @-@ gun HMS Queen Charlotte , during the Spanish Armament . He temporarily left her when the crisis abated , but the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars led to his return to Queen Charlotte . Christian stepped down from her in 1794 to join the Transport Board , and in 1795 was promoted to rear @-@ admiral .

He was made commander @-@ in @-@ chief in the West Indies and given the task of transporting a large troop convoy . Twice he attempted the crossing of the Atlantic , and twice he was forced back by severe gales which ravaged his fleet and wrecked a number of the merchant ships in the convoy . He made a third attempt in 1796 , and succeeded in shepherding the fleet to its destination . He was then active in using the troops and his naval forces to capture the islands of Saint Lucia , Saint Vincent and Grenada , before returning to England . He was made second in command at the Cape of Good Hope in 1797 , succeeding to commander @-@ in @-@ chief the following year , and he died while in command there in November 1798 .

= = Family and early life = =

Christian , descended from residents of the Isle of Man , was born at Hook Norton , Oxfordshire in 1747 . His father , Thomas Christian , was a captain with his own privateer , whilst his mother , Anne Penny was a poet . He followed his father into the navy in 1761 , spending time in the English Channel and the Mediterranean , but few details of his early service survive , other than that he took his lieutenant 's examination in 1767 , and received his commission on 21 January 1771 . He married Ann Leigh , resident of the Isle of Wight on 6 March 1775 , and was promoted to master and commander in 1778 .

= = American War of Independence = =

Christian received a further promotion to flag @-@ captain on 8 December 1778 and took command of the 74 @-@ gun HMS Suffolk , flying the broad pennant of Commodore Joshua Rowley . Rowley sailed from Spithead on 25 December in command of a squadron of seven ships of the line , which was part of the fleet under the overall command of Lord Shuldham escorting the trade convoys to the colonies . Rowley and the Suffolk were assigned to the West Indies @-@ bound convoy . The Suffolk arrived in the Leeward Islands on 12 February 1779 , and Christian remained with Rowley in the West Indies , serving with Vice @-@ Admiral John Byron at the Battle of Grenada on 6 July 1779 . Christian led the van of the British attack , and the Suffolk lost seven killed and 25 wounded . Byron returned to England after this , being replaced by Rear @-@ Admiral Hyde Parker , with Rowley retaining Suffolk as his flagship . Towards the end of 1779 intelligence reached Parker that three French ships had been sighted from Morne Fortune , sailing northward . Parker sent Rowley to intercept them , and after chasing them for several hours , all three were captured . They were revealed to be the 42 @-@ gun *Fortunée* , the 36 @-@ gun *Blanche* and the 28 @-@ gun *Ellis* , with all three being added to the Royal Navy .

Christian was again in action on 18 December , helping to capture and destroy a large French convoy off Martinique , and took part in the engagements off Martinique under Admiral George Rodney in April 1780 . Over the three engagements that took place , Suffolk lost one man killed , and 33 wounded . Rowley shifted his flag to the 74 @-@ gun HMS *Conqueror* after these clashes ,

and Christian was transferred to command the 38 @-@ gun HMS Fortunee , the frigate he had helped to capture in 1779 . He was present at the Battle of the Chesapeake on 5 September 1781 , after which he returned to the West Indies . He and Fortunee formed part of Sir Samuel Hood 's fleet , with Christian being present at the Battle of St. Kitts on 25 and 26 January 1782 , attached to the centre division . He was still with Rodney 's fleet when the Battle of the Saintes was fought against the Comte de Grasse on 9 to 12 April 1782 .

= = End of the war = =

Christian sailed north from Jamaica on 21 July 1782 with Admiral Hugh Pigot 's fleet , arriving at New York on 5 September . Returning to Port Royal with Hood 's fleet in February the following year , he spent several months cruising in the area . He returned to England with Hood in April 1783 , and left active service following the end of the war with the signing of the Treaty of Paris . He presumably did not receive any further employment until the Spanish Armament in 1790 , when he is recorded as being appointed as second captain aboard Lord Howe 's flagship , the 100 @-@ gun HMS Queen Charlotte . The easing of tensions meant that Queen Charlotte was paid off at the end of the year , and Christian again found himself without a ship .

= = French Revolutionary Wars = =

The outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars in early 1793 provided Christian with further employment . Queen Charlotte was recommissioned , and he again became her second captain , still under Lord Howe . He stepped down from his post in August the following year , becoming a commissioner of the Transport Board , and on 1 June 1795 he was advanced to rear @-@ admiral of the blue . He was then appointed commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the West Indies station , and was instructed to take a fleet out with a convoy of transports , carrying soldiers for operations against the French and Dutch colonies there . He duly hoisted his flag aboard the 98 @-@ gun HMS Prince George and assembled his squadron and the transports , numbering over two hundred merchants carrying 16 @,@ 000 men , and making up the largest troop convoy to leave England to that date .

= = = Attempts to cross the Atlantic = = =

The fleet did not leave Spithead until 16 November , the departure having been delayed until late in the season . The delay proved disastrous : two days after departing , a westerly gale blew up , dispersing the fleet and driving the ships back to port . Several of the merchants were wrecked with heavy loss of life ; over 200 bodies were washed up on the coastline between Portland and Bridport .

Christian shifted his flag to the 90 @-@ gun HMS Glory , after deeming the Prince George to be too badly damaged to take to sea , and after gathering his fleet again , set sail on another attempt to cross the Atlantic on 9 December . Again the ships encountered severe gales that caused considerable damage , forcing nine of the warships and fifty of the merchants to struggle back to port on 29 January . Some of the convoy successfully made the crossing , while others were wrecked , or captured by enemy ships . The storms were afterwards alluded to as ' Christian 's Gales ' . Christian again shifted his flag , this time to the 74 @-@ gun HMS Thunderer while he waited for repairs to his ships to be completed , and the merchants gathered to make a third attempt to reach the West Indies . While ashore he was invested as a Knight Companion of the Order of the Bath on 17 February 1796 , and on 20 March he left Spithead again , bound for the West Indies . The third voyage was successful , and he arrived at Carlisle Bay , Barbados on 21 April . He joined with the forces of the station 's current commander , Sir John Laforey several days later , and took over the command from him . Christian assembled his forces , and on 26 April sailed to invade St Lucia , with a detachment of troops under Lieutenant @-@ General Sir Ralph Abercromby . The invasion was successful and the island was surrendered to the British on 25 May . Christian went on

to use his naval forces to support the reduction and capture of the islands of Saint Vincent and Grenada .

= = Later years = =

Christian was succeeded as commander in the West Indies by Rear @-@ Admiral Henry Harvey , who had arrived in late June , and Christian returned to England in October aboard HMS Beaulieu . He was advanced to rear @-@ admiral of the white on 20 February 1797 , and was appointed as second in command of the Cape of Good Hope station later in the year and duly sailed to take up the post on the 44 @-@ gun HMS Virginie . He succeeded Admiral Thomas Pringle as the station commander in 1798 , but died on 23 November that year at the age of 51 . His wife , who had been seriously ill for sometime , died two months later , without having heard of her husband 's death . Hugh Cloberry Christian had been created a peer , and chose the title of Lord Ronaldsway to honour his ancestor , Manx politician Illiam Dhone , but died before the patent reached him . He was buried at the Cape . Of the two sons and three daughters he had had with his wife , one became a rear @-@ admiral , Hood Hanway Christian .