

= HMS Neptune (1797) =

HMS Neptune was a 98 @-@ gun second rate ship of the line of the Royal Navy . She served on a number of stations during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and was present at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 .

Neptune was built during the early years of the war with Revolutionary France and was launched in 1797 . She almost immediately became caught up in the events of the mutiny at the Nore , and was one of a few loyal ships tasked with attacking mutinous vessels if they could not be brought to order . The mutiny died out before this became necessary and Neptune joined the Channel Fleet . She moved to the Mediterranean in 1799 , spending the rest of the French Revolutionary Wars in operations with Vice @-@ Admiral Lord Keith 's fleet . After refitting , and spending time on blockades , she formed part of Lord Nelson 's fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar , and was heavily involved in the fighting , sustaining casualties of 10 killed and 34 wounded .

She was not fully repaired and returned to service until 1807 , when she went out to the Caribbean . In 1809 she participated in the successful invasion of Martinique , and the subsequent battle with Troude 's squadron . Returning to Britain towards the end of the wars , she was laid up in ordinary , and in 1813 became a temporary prison ship . She was finally broken up in 1818 .

= = Construction and commissioning = =

Neptune was ordered from Deptford Dockyard on 15 February 1790 , to a design developed by Surveyor of the Navy Sir John Henslow . She was one of three ships of the Neptune class , alongside her sisters HMS Temeraire and HMS Dreadnought . Neptune was laid down at Deptford in April 1791 , receiving her name on 24 July 1790 . The initial stages of her construction were overseen by Master Shipwright Martin Ware , though he was succeeded by Thomas Pollard in June 1795 , and Pollard oversaw her completion . Neptune was launched on 28 January 1797 and sailed to Woolwich to be fitted for sea . Arriving at Woolwich on 12 February , she was immediately docked to have her copper sheathing fitted , a process that was completed by 1 March . Launched again , she finished fitting out , and received her masts and yards . Her final costs came to £ 77 @, @ 053 , and included £ 61 @, @ 172 spent on the hull , masts and yards , and a further £ 15 @, @ 881 on rigging and stores .

She was commissioned on 25 March 1797 under Captain Henry Stanhope , becoming the third ship of the Royal Navy to bear the name Neptune . Her predecessors had been two 90 @-@ gun ships , the first launched in 1683 , renamed HMS Torbay in 1750 and sold in 1784 . The second had been launched in 1757 , was used as a sheer hulk from 1784 , and was broken up in 1816 . Stanhope sailed from Woolwich on 11 June 1797 , flying the broad pendant of Commodore Sir Erasmus Gower , and made for the Nore .

= = Mutiny at the Nore = =

Shortly after her arrival at the Nore , Neptune became caught up in the mutiny that had broken out there . While lying at Gravesend , Neptune and the 64 @-@ gun ships HMS Agincourt and HMS Lancaster , together with a fleet of gunboats , were ordered to intercept and attack the mutinous ships at the Nore . Before they could proceed word came that the mutineers had entered negotiations with the Earl of Northesk , captain of the 64 @-@ gun HMS Monmouth , and by 9 June the mutiny was on the verge of collapse . The attack was called off , and on 21 September Stanhope was superseded by Gower as captain of Neptune . The crisis over , Neptune joined the Channel Fleet .

= = Mediterranean = =

Gower remained in command of Neptune until his promotion to rear @-@ admiral of the white , at which point Herbert Sawyer became her acting @-@ captain . Sawyer was in command until 22

January 1799 , and Gower left her on 28 February 1799 . Command of the ship formally passed to Captain James Vashon on 5 March 1799 . The first half of 1799 was spent with the Channel Fleet , and in June Neptune was one of 15 ships of the line assigned to join Vice @-@ Admiral Lord Keith 's fleet in the Mediterranean . The squadron , commanded by Rear @-@ Admiral Sir Charles Cotton , rendezvoused with Keith 's force at Minorca on 7 July , bringing the British fleet in the Mediterranean up to 31 ships . Keith intended to intercept a large Franco @-@ Spanish force of 42 ships under Admirals Étienne Eustache Bruix and Jose Mazarredo , and set out to sea on 10 July . Bruix ' expedition evaded Keith , and reached the safety of Brest on 9 August . Neptune went on to spend the rest of the French Revolutionary Wars in the Mediterranean .

Vashon was superseded on 26 March 1801 , and the following day Captain Edward Brace arrived to take command . Neptune became the flagship of Vice @-@ Admiral James Gambier during this period . Brace 's period of command was brief , he was superseded by Captain Francis Austen on 12 September . With the draw down in hostilities prior to the signing of the Treaty of Amiens in March 1802 , Neptune was one of the many ships of the Mediterranean fleet to be ordered home , arriving at Portsmouth on 24 February . Austen paid her off on 29 April , but recommissioned her the next day . Neptune then underwent a brief refit , during which £ 5 @,@ 728 was expended , £ 2 @,@ 895 of which was spent on her hull , masts and yards . Austen was superseded on 30 September 1802 and the following day Captain William O 'Bryen Drury took command . With Neptune fully refitted and stored , she sailed from the dockyard and joined the Channel Fleet at Spithead on 29 October .

= = Blockade , and approach to Trafalgar = =

Drury commanded Neptune for the next two years , until his promotion to rear @-@ admiral in 1804 . He departed the ship on 13 May 1804 , and the following day Captain Sir Thomas Williams took over . Neptune spent the rest of 1804 deployed with the Channel Fleet , blockading the French Atlantic ports . During this time Captain Williams ' health progressively worsened , and he was invalided back to Britain on 7 May 1805 . He was replaced by Captain Thomas Fremantle on 8 May , and was sent to join Robert Calder 's force blockading Ferrol , after the Franco @-@ Spanish fleet had arrived there after the Battle of Cape Finisterre . Calder decided that his eight ships were not sufficient to resist Villeneuve 's fleet were it to come out of harbour , and instead went north to join Admiral William Cornwallis 's fleet off Brest . Shortly afterwards Nelson 's fleet returned from the West Indies , bringing 12 more ships , and Calder was given 18 ships , including Neptune , and sent back to Ferrol to search for Villeneuve . By now Villeneuve had put into Cadiz and Calder 's force was ordered to join the hastily assembled British fleet under Vice @-@ Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood , that was blockading the Franco @-@ Spanish fleet at Cadiz . As the British fleet settled in for a long blockade Fremantle commented on Neptune 's sailing qualities . She had the reputation of being slow , and Fremantle complained that he did not like being in ' a large ship that don 't sail and must continually be late in action . ' During the battle however , Midshipman William Baddock commented that ' The old Neptune , which never was a good sailer , took it into her head that morning to sail better than I ever remember to have seen her do before . ' Neptune went into the battle 18 men short of her complement .

= = Trafalgar = =

Neptune formed part of the weather column in the Battle of Trafalgar on 21 October , and was the third ship from the lead , situated between her sister HMS Temeraire , and the 74 @-@ gun HMS Leviathan . Fremantle had been promised a position second to Nelson aboard HMS Victory , and by 10 o 'clock was sailing fast enough to threaten to overtake her . Fremantle hoped to pass her , and lead the line into battle , but Nelson ordered ' Neptune , take in your studding @-@ sails and drop astern . I shall break the line myself . ' Neptune went into action with her band playing , and everyone except the officers and the band lying down on the deck to protect them from enemy fire . Ahead of her Fremantle saw Eliab Harvey 's Temeraire turn to pass astern of the French

Redoubtable , but resolved to follow Nelson and HMS Victory to pass astern of the French flagship Bucentaure . As she passed under Bucentaure 's stern , Neptune discharged a double @-@ shot broadside from her larboard (port) guns , with devastating consequences on Villeneuve 's already disabled flagship . Fremantle then had the helm swung hard to starboard , bringing his ship abeam of the Bucentaure . He fired two more triple @-@ shot broadsides from nearly 50 guns at a range of less than 100 yards into the beleaguered French ship .

Fremantle then spotted the towering mass of the Spanish four @-@ decker Santísima Trinidad sailing away from him , and steered towards her starboard quarter in the hope of raking her stern . Opening fire with his larboard battery , he positioned Neptune off the Spanish vessel 's starboard beam and the two exchanged heavy fire for the next hour as more British ships poured through the gap astern of Neptune . Neptune took fire from other ships of the combined fleet as they sailed past . Santísima Trinidad , heavily battered by Neptune 's guns , as well as those from the 74 @-@ gun ships HMS Leviathan and HMS Conqueror , became completely dismasted and covered in debris . She fought on until 5 @. @ 30 pm , when she struck her colours , having sustained casualties of 205 dead and 103 wounded . Neptune left the 98 @-@ gun HMS Prince to take possession and headed north to cut off the remains of the enemy fleet , briefly becoming engaged with the French 74 @-@ gun Intrépide . During the battle Neptune suffered considerable damage to her masts , although they did not fall . Most of her rigging was cut to pieces and she sustained nine shot holes in her hull . She sustained casualties of ten killed and 34 wounded . A remarkably small proportion of her officers became casualties , with only the captain 's clerk , Richard Hurrell , being wounded .

After the battle Collingwood transferred his flag from the damaged HMS Royal Sovereign to the frigate HMS Euryalus , and on 22 October Neptune took the Royal Sovereign in tow . On 23 October , as the Franco @-@ Spanish forces that had escaped into Cadiz sortied under Commodore Julien Cosmao , Neptune cast off the tow , surrendering the duty to HMS Mars , and took on board Villeneuve and several captured flag captains , who had originally been aboard Mars . As the weather continued to deteriorate Neptune sent her boats to assist in the evacuation of the Santísima Trinidad before she foundered . After riding out the storm she took the battered Victory , carrying Lord Nelson 's body , in tow on 26 October and brought her into Gibraltar on 28 October .

= = West Indies = =

After undergoing some repairs at Gibraltar Neptune sailed to Britain , arriving at Portsmouth on 6 December 1805 , where she was paid off . She was moved to Spithead in 1806 , but was back in Portsmouth on 23 November , and was moved into a dock on 24 March 1807 to undergo a refit . The refit lasted until November 1807 and involved having her copper sheathing removed and her hull refitted . She was then recoppered , having had a sum of £ 29 @, @ 053 expended on her . She was recommissioned on 18 August 1807 under her old commander , Captain Sir Thomas Williams , and was relaunched three days later on 21 August to complete her refit . She was initially assigned to serve in the English Channel , but was moved to the West Indies in 1808 . On 9 November Williams was superseded by Captain Thomas Pinto , who only spent six weeks in command before being succeeded by Captain Charles Dilkes on 20 December .

In January 1809 an attack on the French colony of Martinique , governed by Admiral Louis Thomas Villaret de Joyeuse , was planned . Neptune became the flagship of the expedition 's commander , Rear @-@ Admiral Alexander Cochrane , and the invasion force , consisting of 44 vessels and transports for 10 @, @ 000 troops under Lieutenant @-@ General George Beckwith , sailed on 28 January . The force arrived at Martinique on 30 January , and 3 @, @ 000 troops were landed under Major @-@ General Frederick Maitland without resistance . 600 troops were put ashore at Cape Solomon under Major Henderson , both landings supervised by Captain William Charles Fahie aboard the 74 @-@ gun HMS Belleisle . An additional force of 6 @, @ 500 men were landed in the north of the island under Major @-@ General Sir George Prévost , and the French were driven into several fortified positions , the last of which surrendered on 24 February 1809 .

= = Battle with Troude = =

Cochrane 's squadron remained in the area blockading the island , and in March a French squadron consisting of three 74 @-@ gun ships , Hautpoult , Courageux and Polonais , and two frigates , Félicité and Furieuse , under the overall command of Commodore Amable Troude , arrived in the Caribbean . Finding Martinique in British hands , Troude anchored near Îles des Saintes .

There they were blockaded until 14 April , when Cochrane removed this threat . A British force under Major @-@ General Frederick Maitland and Captain Philip Beaver in Acasta , landed troops on the islands capturing them . The British then installed heavy guns on vantage points .

Threatened , Troude put to sea , chased by Cochrane 's squadron . After a running battle over several days the Hautpoult was brought to action and captured . Neptune 's captain , Charles Dilkes , was given command of her , while Captain James Athol Wood succeeded him in command of Neptune on 2 August .

Neptune was among the naval vessels that shared in the proceeds of the capture of the islands .

= = Final years = =

Dilkes resumed command of Neptune on 2 March 1810 , while Wood was exchanged into HMS Pompee . Dilkes had apparently been suffering poor health , and Captain N Ballard took command in an acting capacity on 22 July . Neptune returned to Plymouth on 26 October and entered the dock on 9 November to be fitted for the ordinary . The process cost £ 713 , and after undocking on 8 December she was laid up in the Hamoaze until late autumn 1813 . Her hull appears to have quickly deteriorated , and after a survey she was deemed unfit for further service at sea . The Navy Board proposed that she be converted into a prison ship , a recommendation the Admiralty accepted , and she was taken in hand for fitting out on 22 November . On the completion of the work in December she was commissioned under Lieutenant George Lawrence . Neptune spent three years in this role , and was finally taken to pieces in October 1818 .