

John Richard Alexander was born at Fareham in Hampshire, the only son of Admiral Thomas Alexander.

He entered the Navy in 1842 on board HMS ST VINCENT at Portsmouth. He then served on vessels including HMS ORESTES, HMS HIBERNIA, HMS RODNEY and HMS SUPERB.

He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in 1850 and served on HMS PENELOPE on the west coast of Africa station in 1851-1854. During this period HMS PENELOPE was active in suppressing the slave trade and was part of the squadron that captured Lagos.

Alexander was selected to be flag lieutenant to Commodore Henry William Bruce, Commander-in-Chief of the station, in 1852.

He married Jane Letitia Troubridge Bruce, only daughter of Commodore Bruce, at Sierra Leone in 1853.

After returning home he served on HMS IMPREGNABLE as flag lieutenant to Admiral Sir William Packer, Commander-in-Chief at Devonport.

He served as flag lieutenant to Rear-Admiral Bruce on HMS PRESIDENT and then HMS MONARCH in the Pacific, 1855-1858.

Alexander was in command of the screw sloop HMS ARIEL off the coast of Africa in 1860-1861. He then transferred to command the screw sloop HMS LYRA in 1861-1862.

He died at Dublin aged 39.

Private journals (7 volumes) kept by John Richard Alexander: HMS ORESTES from England to Bermuda, starting on 31 October 1842. HMS HIBERNIA, 20 July 1845 to 18 December 1846.

HMS HIBERNIA, starting on 18 December 1846.

HMS SUPERB and Malta (with mention of the cholera epidemic), 22 April 1850 to 15 January 1851.

HMS PENELOPE, 11 March 1851 to October 1853.

Voyage on the Cunard steamship AMERICA from Liverpool to Boston, travels in America and Europe, 1849-1850.

HMS PENELOPE and other appointments, 15 December 1853 to 1 February 1862.

Papers relating to John Richard Alexander including: Certificate of appointment as mate of HMS ROYAL WILLIAM, 1848. Certificate of examination in naval gunnery, HMS EXCELLENT at Portsmouth, 1849.

Letters of recommendation following service as acting mate and mate on HMS RODNEY and HMS SUPERB, 1849-1850.

Newspaper cuttings regarding the capture of Lagos by HMS PENELOPE and other vessels in the squadron under Commodore Henry William Bruce, 1851.

Certificate of appointment as commander of the sloop HMS HOPE, 1858.

Telegraph message sent from HMS LYRA to Admiral Sir Henry William Bruce, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, 1861.

Certificate of examination in steam, 1863.

The above details were taken from the Greenwich Museum website at <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/archive/objects/462921.html>