

# FIRST "STORY" OF BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

Following is the first "story" of the Battle of Trafalgar, as communicated to the Lords of the Admiralty, by Vice-Admiral Collingwood. It appeared in the London Times of November 6, 1805, a copy of which paper was kindly loaned the Colonist by Mr. Wm. Christie, of Victoria.

Admiralty Office, Nov. 6.  
 Dispatches, of which the following are copied were received by the Admiralty this day at 1 o'clock a. m., from Vice-admiral Collingwood, Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's ships and vessels of Cadiz:

Euryalus, off Cape Trafalgar  
 Oct. 22, 1805

Sir:—The ever-to-be-lamented death of Vice-Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, who in the late conflict with the enemy fell in the hour of victory, leaves to me the duty of informing my Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty that on the nineteenth instant it was communicated to the Commander-in-Chief from the ships watching the motions of the enemy in Cadiz that the combined fleet had put to sea as they sailed with light winds westerly. His Lordships concluded their destination was the Mediterranean, and immediately made all sail for the Straights' entrance with British squadron, consisting of 27 ships, three of them sixty-fours, where His Lordship was informed by Captain Blackwood (whose vigilance in watching and giving notice of the enemy's movements has been highly meritorious) that they had not yet passed the Straights.

On Monday, the 21st instant, at daylight, when Cape Trafalgar bore E. by S. about seven leagues, the enemy was discovered six or seven miles eastward, the wind about west, and very light. The Commander-in-Chief immediately made the signal for the fleet to bear up in two columns as they are formed in order of sailing; a mode of attack His Lordship had previously directed to avoid the inconveniences and delay in forming a line of battle in the usual manner. The enemy's line consisted of 33 ships (of which 18 were French and 15 Spanish), commanded in chief by Admiral Villeneuve: the Spaniards under the direction of Gravina, were with their heads northward, and formed their line of battle with great closeness and correctness; but as the mode of attack was unusual, so the struc-

ture of their line was new; if formed a crescent, convexing the leeward, so that in leading down to the centre I had both their van and rear abast the beam; before the fire opened, every alternate ship was about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern, forming a kind of double line, and appeared when on their beam to leave a very little interval between them, and this without crowding their ships. Admiral Villeneuve was in the Bucentaure in the centre, and the Prince of Asturias bore Gravina's flag in the rear; but the French and the Spanish ships were mixed without any apparent regard to order of National Squadron.

As the mode of our attack had been previously determined on and communicated to the Flag officers and the Captains, a few signals were necessary, and none were made except to direct close order as the lines bore down.

The Commander-in-Chief, in the victory led the weather column, and the Royal Sovereign, which bore my flag, the lee.

The action began at twelve o'clock by the leading ships of the column breaking through the enemy's lines, the Commander-in-Chief,



The Victory

with a gallantry highly honorable to their officers; but the attack on them was irresistible, and it pleased the Almighty Disposer of all events to grant His Majesty's arms a complete and glorious victory. About 3 p. m., many of the enemy's ships having struck their colors, their line gave way; Admiral Gravina with to ships joining their frigate to leeward, stood towards Cadiz. The five headmost ships in their van tacked, and standing to the southward, to windward of the British line, were engaged, and the sternmost of them taken; and the others went off, leaving His Majesty's squadron, 19 ships of the line (of which three are first-rates—the Santissima, Trinidad and the Santa Anna) with three Flag Officers, viz., Admiral Villeneuve, the Commander-in-Chief, Don Ignatius Maria D'Aliva, Vice-Admiral; and the Spanish Rear-Admiral, Don Bathagar Hidalgo Cisneros.

After such a victory it may appear unnecessary to enter into encomiums on the particular part taken by the several commanders; the conclusion says more on the subject than I have language to express. When all exert themselves zealously in their country's service, all deserve their high merits should stand recorded, and never was high merit more conspicuous than in the battle I have described.

The Achilles (a French 74), after having surrendered, by some mismanagement of the Frenchmen took fire and blew up; two hundred of her men were saved by the tenders.

A circumstance occurred during the action which so strongly marked the invincible spirit of British seamen, when engaging the enemies of their country, that I cannot resist the pleasure I have in making it known to their Lordships. The Temeraire was boarded, by accident or design, by a French ship on one side and a Spaniard on the other; the contest was vigorous, but in the end the Combined Ensigns were torn from the poop and the British hoisted in their places. Such a battle could not be fought without sustaining a great loss of men. I have not only to lament in common with the British Navy and the British nation in the fall of the Commander-in-Chief,

the loss of a hero whose name will be immortal and his memory ever dear to his country; but my heart rent with the most poignant for the death of a friend to whom by many years intimacy and a perfect knowledge of the virtues of his mind, which inspired ideals superior to the common race of men, I was bound by the strongest ties of affection; grief to which the glorious occasion in which he fell does not bring the consolation which perhaps it ought. His Lordship received a musket ball in his left breast about the middle of the action, and sent an officer to me immediately with his last farewell, and soon after expired.

I have also to lament the loss of those excellent officers, Captains Duff of the Mars, and Cooke, of the Bellerophon. I have yet heard of none other. I fear the number that have fallen will be found very great; when the returns come to me; but it having blown a gale of wind ever since the action, I have not yet had in my power to collect any reports from the ships.

The Royal Sovereign having lost her masts, except the tottering foremast, I called the Euryalus to me while the action continued, which ship lying within hail made my sig-

nals—a service Captain Blackwood performed with great attention; after the action I shifted my flag to her, that I might more easily communicate any orders to, and collect the ships, and towed the Royal Sovereign out to seaward. The whole fleet were now in a very perilous position, many dismasted, all shattered, in thirteen fathoms water off the shoals of Trafalgar; and when I made the signals to prepare to anchor, few of the ships had an anchor to let go, their cables being shot; but the same good Providence which aided through the day preserved us through the night, by the wind shifting a few points and drifting the ships off the land, except four of the captured dismasted ships, which are now at anchor off Trafalgar, and I hope will ride safe until these gales are over.

Having thus detailed the proceedings of the fleet on this occasion, I beg to congratulate their Lordships on a victory which I hope will add array to the glory of His Majesty's crown and be attended with public benefit to our country.

I am, etc.,  
 (Sd.) C. COLLINGWOOD.  
 William Marsden, Esq.

The order in which the ships of the British squadron attacked the combined fleets on the 21st of October, 1805:

Van.—Victory, Temeraire, Neptune, Conqueror, Leviathan, Ajax, Orion, Agamemnon, Min-

taur, Spartiate, Britannia, Africa, Euryalus, Sirius, Phoebe, Naiad, Pickle (schooner), Entreprenante (cutter).

Rear.—Royal Sovereign, Mars, Belleisle, Tonnant, Bellerophon, Corossus, Achilles, Polythemus, Revenge, Swiftsure, Defence, Thunderer, Defiance, Prince, Dreadnought.  
 (Signed) COLLINGWOOD.

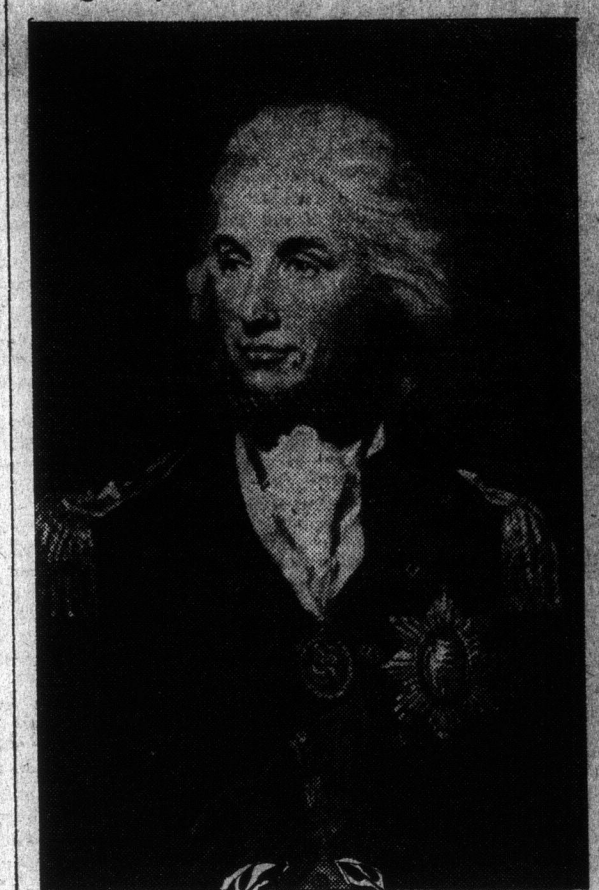
## NELSON'S SIGNAL AT TRAFALGAR

It is due to the researches of Mr. W. G. Parrin, librarian at the Admiralty, that Englishmen are now able to hoist, with the correct flags, Nelson's famous signal, "England expects that every man will do his duty." As is well known, some uncertainty surrounds the origin of this signal. It has been said—and Admiral Mahan repeats the anecdote—that the great Admiral discussed the matter with the officers who stood about him on board the Victory. He is supposed to have said something like this: "How would it be if I signalled 'Nelson confides that every man will do his duty'?" Someone then suggested that it might be better to say "England" than "Nelson," and the Admiral agreed. The truth of this will never be known, but it is worth while to record again how the great signal was actually made, in the words of Admiral Pasco, who was Nelson's flag-lieutenant on board the Victory.

"His Lordship came to me on the poop, and after ordering certain signals to be made, about a quarter to noon, he said, 'Mr. Pasco, I wish to say to the fleet, 'England confides that every man will do his duty,' and he added, 'You must be quick, for I have one more to make, which is for "Close action." I replied, "If your Lordship will permit me to substitute "expects" for "confides," the signal will soon be completed, because the word "expects" is

in the vocabulary, and "confides" must be spelt.' His Lordship replied in haste, and with seeming satisfaction, 'That will do, Pasco, make it directly'; when it had been answered by a few ships in the van, he ordered me to make the signal for 'Close action' and to keep it up; accordingly I hoisted No. 16 at the top-gallant masthead and there it remained until shot away."

The living words of Nelson were signalled by Home Popham's vocabulary code, and the other signal by the Admiralty code, which conveyed specific orders for evolutions or other purposes, No. 16 being, "Engage the enemy more closely." When it was intended to signal by the more flexible system of Pop-



Nelson

ham, a "preparative" or "telegraph" flag was hoisted, divided diagonally into white and red, to show what was about to be done.

In Popham's code ten flags were employed, numbered 1 to 9 and 0, with one or two supplementary flags for special purposes. Certain combinations of numbers implied particular words, e.g., 253 "England," and 269 "expects." The only word in the signal not represented by such a combination was the word "Duty," which had to be spelled, and in relation to this it is worth while to note that in the alphabet V preceded U, as also that I and J were treated as one letter.

On this page the great signal is shown with its correct numeral flags. Until 1908 the flags used to fly the signal on Trafalgar Day were those employed from 1799 to 1803. It was not known that the numeration of the flags had been changed by Admiralty order, dated January 16, 1804. The schooner Redbridge had been captured off Toulon, and her commander, Lieut. Lempriere, had omitted to throw the signal books overboard according to order. Accordingly the French had secured the code, and Nelson therefore immediately changed the numeration in the Mediterranean and communicated the facts to the Admiralty.

The longer messages signalled at Trafalgar were probably made in several hoists at a time, and in such case the wording expressed by the hoists would begin with the mainmast, then continue on the foremast, continue again on the mizzenmast, and conclude on the gaff and ensign staff. Nelson made another signal at Trafalgar by the Popham code, at about 11.40 a.m., telling the Fleet, or a part of it, that he intended to go through the end of the enemy's line to prevent them from getting into Cadiz, but the log of the Euryalus is the only one containing this message. Possibly, it was sent only to Collingwood and Northesk, and it may have been the signal to which the former referred when he said, "I wish Nelson would make no more signals; we all understand what we have to do."

The interest in the Trafalgar signal is perennial, and it will be seen that Nelson could scarcely have intimated his famous message but for the possession of the Popham code, which he had been exceedingly anxious, before he left London, to have despatched to the ships under his command. There was no change in the code, owing to the capture by the French of the Redbridge, but only in the numerical order of the flags used to signal it.

## A COSTLY CARPET

During the forthcoming visit of King George to India there will be placed on exhibition a carpet owned by the Maharajah of Baroda. The size of the carpet is four square metres, and it contains rubies, diamonds, and pearls, interwoven to form a beautiful, scintillating pattern. It is estimated that these gems are worth about \$4,000,000. The manufacture of the carpet gave employment to numbers of weavers and jewelers, and it took four years longer than had been estimated to complete the task.

The Maharajah of Baroda also owns the most famous diamond collar in existence. It contains two hundred diamonds, and is valued at more than a million dollars.

No. 1. The principal ornament of the head is a correct copy of the emblematical print, published at Ackerman's repository of Arts, to perpetuate the memory of Lord Admiral Nelson; it represents a monument supported by eagles, the emblem of victory, with the portraits of the departed hero in basso-relievo, surmounted by an urn containing his ashes, over which reclines the figure of grief.

No. 2. Is a Viscount's coronet, a reward of his services to his King and Country. (Here follows the Depositum or inscription marked "A.")

No. 3. Is the first crest granted to

horses.

No. 8. Is the order of St. Ferdinand, which he received from the King of Naples with this motto—"Fede at Merito."

No. 9. Is a crocodile, an attribute in consequence of the glorious victory of the Nile.

No. 10. At the foot of the coffin a Naval Trophy.

No. 11. On the right hand side, towards the feet is a dolphin, the noblest fish of the sea and was formerly claimed by the heir of France.

No. 12. The order of St. Joachim, transmitted to him by the Emperor Paul, as grand master of the



Knights of Malta—"Junxit amcos Amor."

No. 13. In the centre of the left hand, are Britannia and Neptune riding triumphant on the ocean drawn by sea-horses, and etc., as on the opposite side.

No. 14. Is the order of the great crescent, which was transmitted to the Noble Admiral by the Imperial Sultan after the glorious battle of the Nile.

No. 15. Is the Sphinx, the emblem of Egypt.

No. 16. At the head end of the coffin are other naval and military trophies with His Lordship's arms on a shield.

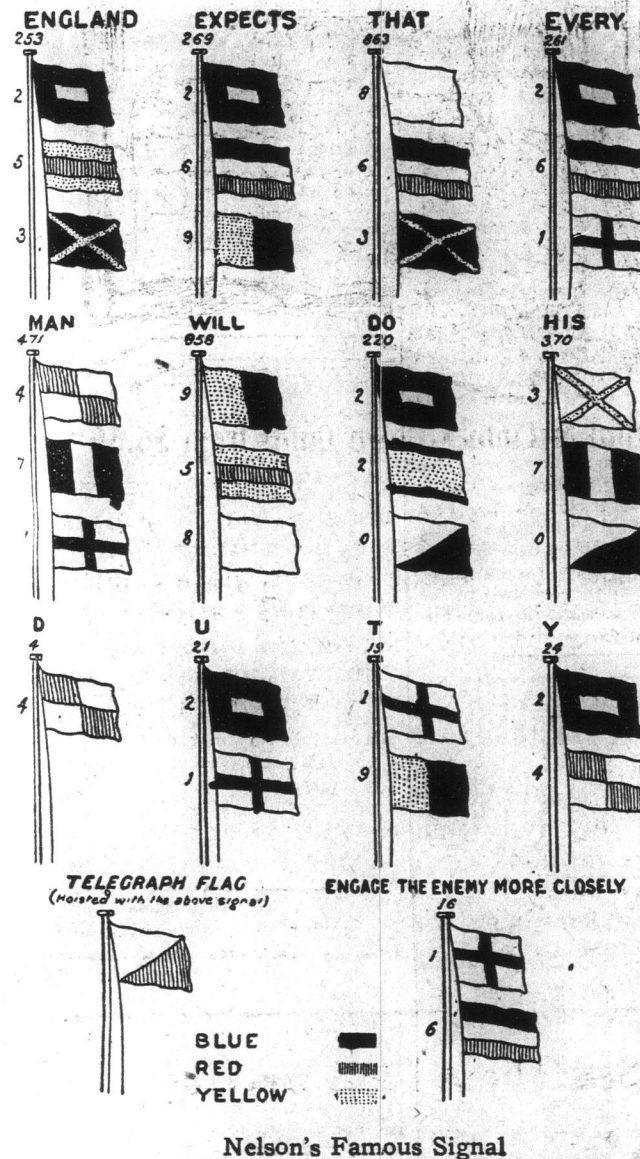
him by His Majesty after the battle of Cape St. Vincent when His Lordship boarded and took the "San Josef"—the motto is "Faith and Works."

No. 4. Is a weeping figure (a cast from the antique), wrapt up in drapery, etc., chaste and expressive symbols of grief.

No. 5. On the left hand side of the coffin, next to the head, is the British Lion, with the Union Flag, the supporter of England as also that of Lord Nelson's Arms X.

No. 6. The Most Honorable military Order of the Bath.

No. 7. Represents Britannia and Neptune riding triumphant on the ocean drawn by sea-



Nelson's Famous Signal

ture of their line was new; if formed a crescent, convexing the leeward, so that in leading down to the centre I had both their van and rear abast the beam; before the fire opened, every alternate ship was about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern, forming a kind of double line, and appeared when on their beam to leave a very little interval between them, and this without crowding their ships. Admiral Villeneuve was in the Bucentaure in the centre, and the Prince of Asturias bore Gravina's flag in the rear; but the French and the Spanish ships were mixed without any apparent regard to order of National Squadron.

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