

Sea and Learn: All About Nelson - Who is Horatio Nelson?

Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) is the **most famous** of Britain's naval heroes! The celebrated Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square, London, commemorates him.

Nelson's Early Life

Nelson entered the navy at the age of **12** and became a captain at the age of 20. He saw service in the West Indies, in the Baltic, and in Canada. During these years he became friendly with the Duke of Clarence (later William IV) and married (1787) a widow, Frances Nisbet, in the West Indies. That same year he returned to England and remained inactive and somewhat in disfavour at the admiralty.

The French Revolutionary Wars

In 1793 Great Britain entered the French Revolutionary Wars, and Nelson was given command of the British ship *Agamemnon*. He served in the Mediterranean, fighting at Toulon and helping to capture Corsica. At Calvi he lost the sight in one eye. In the unsuccessful British attempt (1797) to capture Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Nelson lost his right arm and was returned to England.

Upon his return to service, he was sent to find the French fleet. After a long pursuit the French fleet was destroyed in 1798. This stranded Napoleon and the entire French army in Egypt. Nelson was showered with rewards, but received **ONLY** the title of Baron Nelson of the Nile. He was placed in command of a squadron assisting the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Here he fell in love with Emma, Lady Hamilton, the wife of the British ambassador, who became his mistress.

In 1800 Nelson returned to England with the Hamiltons and soon separated (1801) from his wife. The same year, Lady Hamilton gave birth to his daughter, Horatia.

In the Napoleonic War

Upon the renewal of war (1803), Nelson was given command of the fleet in the Mediterranean and blockaded the French fleet at Toulon for 22 months.

When the French finally escaped, he chased the fleet across the Atlantic to the West Indies and back to Spain, where it took refuge with the Spanish fleet in Cadiz. On Oct. 21, 1805, the combined fleets ventured out of port, and found Nelson waiting for them off Cape Trafalgar.

Before the battle he gave the famous signal, "**England expects that every man will do his duty.**"

He won his most spectacular victory but died in action.