

Volume 1

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The Battle of Trafalgar I

Lead: Napoleon's great dream came to an end off the coast of Spain.

Intro. : *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Napoleon Bonaparte, the French Emperor, wanted to invade England. To do that he needed to clear the English Channel and he had a plan. His scheme was for the French navy to escape the British blockade, lose them mid-Atlantic and rush back to the English Channel. There they would protect the invasion flotilla staging at the port city of Boulogne on

the French coast opposite Dover.

The man who put the stopper to Napoleon's ambitions was Admiral Horatio Nelson. Nelson had earned his flag rank and reputation fighting the Spanish at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent and the French at the Battle of the Nile where he put an end to Napoleon's earlier dreams of conquering Egypt.

The fleet at Brest was kept bottled up but squadron at Toulon in the Mediterranean under Admiral Pierre De Villeneuve might just save Napoleon's invasion plans if it could get away. In the summer of 1805 the French admiral evaded Nelson and set off for the Atlantic. Realizing his

mistake Nelson was soon fast on the chase. Villeneuve's ran into the coast of Spain to join with the Spanish Navy, allied with the French, and waiting for him in the Port of Cadiz.

For weeks Nelson kept Villeneuve bottled up while French morale fell apart. When word reached him that Bonaparte was about to relieve him the French admiral tried one last time to break out. On October 19, 1805, 33 French and Spanish ships put to sea and headed south. Two days later Nelson caught them. He sent up the famous order of the day, "England expects that every man will do his duty." The first shots were fired about noon. Four hours later it was over. Nelson had won but was himself fatally

injured, dying at the very moment of triumph. Half of the French fleet was destroyed or captured and Napoleon's dream was dead.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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Warner, Oliver. *Nelson's Battles*. London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1965.

<http://www.nelsonsnavy.co.uk/battle-of-traffic.html>

