



# The Life of Horatio Lord Nelson

*Robert Southey*

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## **The Life of Horatio Lord Nelson** Robert Southey

"England expects that every man will do his duty" – Nelson before the Battle of Trafalgar Over the course of its history, England has engaged in an uncountable number of battles, but none of her military heroes has had a greater military legacy than Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, 1st Viscount Nelson, 1st Duke of Bronté. Whether traveling to Trafalgar Square or one of the hundreds of pubs named after him, seemingly it becomes easy to believe that no Briton has cast as long a shadow. Nelson is well known across the world for his decisive victory at Trafalgar, made all the more legendary by the fact that he was mortally wounded at the height of his greatest feat. And it is understandable that any man who could thwart Napoleon's ambitions as well as Nelson did would earn a place in the history books. But Nelson embodied every virtue of his homeland; a dashing, courageous military officer who was impeccably cultured, and, of course, the best at what he did. Indeed, as the personification of the supremacy of the Royal Navy, the man and his life had a powerful resonance well before his death. When Nelson's body was immersed in rum during the homeward voyage from Trafalgar, it is said that the sailors would steal a drink, thereby imbibing the spirit of their hero. Rum is still called "Nelson's Blood" in Britain's Royal Navy, and consumers can buy a spiced version at the pub in Burnham Thorpe. Nelson's strategy and tactics are taught at naval colleges around the world, and the current U.K. government is, more than 200 years after his death, considering establishing a public holiday on the anniversary of Trafalgar. It is tempting simply to ascribe Nelson's place in history to his decisive naval victories; but he was far more complex than that. In fact, the man described by Professor Lambert as "Brittania's God of War" took a very modern approach to his own public image, which he carefully cultivated. The enduring Nelson cult was therefore as much his creation as anyone else's, but that's not to say he didn't earn it. Good fortune, hard work, bravery and supreme talent across a range of fields enabled Nelson to go down as history's greatest admiral. .

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