

= England expects that every man will do his duty =

" England expects that every man will do his duty " was a signal sent by Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson , 1st Viscount Nelson , from his flagship HMS Victory as the Battle of Trafalgar was about to commence on 21 October 1805 . Trafalgar was a decisive naval engagement of the Napoleonic Wars . It gave the United Kingdom control of the seas , removing all possibility of a French invasion and conquest of Britain . Although there was much confusion surrounding the wording of the signal in the aftermath of the battle , the significance of the victory and Nelson 's death during the battle led to the phrase becoming embedded in the English psyche , and it has been regularly quoted , paraphrased and referenced up to the modern day .

= = Signals during the battle = =

As the British fleet closed with the opposing combined fleets of France and Spain , Lord Nelson signalled all the necessary battle instructions to his ships . Aware of the momentousness of events to come , Lord Nelson felt that something extra was required . He instructed his signal officer , Lieutenant John Pasco , to signal to the fleet , as quickly as possible , the message " England confides [i.e. is confident] that every man will do his duty . " Pasco suggested to Nelson that expects be substituted for confides , since the former word was in the signal book , whereas confides would have to be spelt out letter @-@ by @-@ letter . Nelson agreed to the change (even though it produced a less trusting impression) :

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 the confides for expects 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.'

Thus , at around 11 : 45 a.m. on 21 October 1805 , the most famous naval signal in British history was sent . The exact time the signal was sent is not known (one account puts it as early as 10 : 30) , as the message was repeated throughout the fleet , but Pasco puts it at " about a quarter to noon " and logs from other ships of the line also put it close to this time .

The signal was relayed using the numeric flag code known as the " Telegraphic Signals of Marine Vocabulary " , devised in 1800 by Rear Admiral Sir Home Popham , and based on the signal books created earlier by Admiral Lord Howe . This code assigned the digits 0 to 9 to ten signal flags , which were used in combination . Code numbers 1 ? 25 represented letters of the alphabet (omitting J and with V = 20 before U = 21) ; higher numbers were assigned meanings by a code book . The code numbers are believed to have been hoisted on the mizzenmast , one after another , with the " telegraphic flag " also being flown to show that the signals employed Popham 's code . As well as digit flags , the code used " repeat " flags so that only one set of digits was needed ; thus the word " do " , coded as " 220 " , used a " 2 " flag , a " first repeat " flag here serving as a second 2 , and a " 0 " flag . The word " duty " was not in the codebook (and was not replaced as " confides " had been) , so had to be spelt out , and the whole message required twelve " lifts " . It is believed that it would have taken about four minutes . A team of four to six men , led by Lt. Pasco , would have prepared and hoisted the flags onboard Lord Nelson 's flagship HMS Victory . The message shows one of the shortcomings of Popham 's code ? even the two @-@ letter " do " required three flags hoisted for the signal . It is reported that a great cheer went up as the signal was hoisted and repeated throughout the fleet .

The message " engage the enemy more closely " was Nelson 's final signal to the fleet , sent at 12 : 15 p.m. , before a single British cannon had been fired at the enemy . This message was signalled using the telegraphic flag and flags 1 and 6 . Nelson ordered this signal hauled up and kept aloft . It remained up until shot away during the battle .

= = After the battle = =

Almost immediately , the signal began to be misquoted . A number of ships in the fleet recorded the signal as " England expects every man to do his duty " (omitting that and replacing will with to) . This version became so prevalent that it is recorded on Nelson 's tomb in St. Paul 's Cathedral . The word that is also omitted on the version around the base of Nelson 's Column , as seen in the photo above . However , the Victory 's log and the accounts of signal officer John Pasco and Henry Blackwood (captain of the frigate Euryalus) , both present at the preparation of the signal , agree on the form given here . On 26 December 1805 , The Times newspaper in London reported the signal as ; " England expects every officer and man to do his duty this day " . In 1811 , the tenor John Braham composed a song , " The Death of Nelson " , including the words of the signal . The song became popular almost immediately and was performed throughout the British Empire during the 19th century . To make the words fit the metre , they were altered to " England expects that every man this day will do his duty " . This version of the wording is also persistent .

Between 1885 and 1908 it was believed that the signal had been sent using the 1799 code book , as in 1885 it was pointed out that this had not been replaced until 1808 . In 1908 it was discovered , the Admiralty had , in fact , changed the signal code in November 1803 , after the 1799 version had been captured by the French , and new code books had been issued to Nelson 's fleet at Cadiz in September , 1805 . As a result , books published between these two dates show the signal using the wrong flags .

The signal is still hoisted on the Victory at her dry dock in Portsmouth on Trafalgar Day (21 October) every year , although the signal flags are displayed all at once , running from fore to aft , rather than hoisted sequentially from the mizzenmast .

= = = Similar signals = = =

Nelson 's famous signal has been imitated in other navies of the world . Napoleon ordered the French equivalent , " La France compte que chacun fera son devoir " , to be displayed on French vessels . At the opening of the Battle of Plattsburgh in September 1814 , Commodore Thomas MacDonough of the U.S. Navy flew the signal " Impressed seamen call on every man to do his duty " , referring to the fact that impressment of U.S. mariners had been a popular cause of the War of 1812 . Before the Battle of Tsushima , Japanese Admiral Togo (who had studied naval science in England from 1871 to 1878) signalled to his fleet : " The fate of the Empire depends upon today 's battle : let every man do his utmost " .

= = Later uses = =

Charles Dickens quotes it in Chapter 43 of Martin Chuzzlewit :

" ... as the poet informs us , England expects Every man to do his duty , England is the most sanguine country on the face of the earth , and will find itself continually disappointed . "

In Lewis Carroll 's The Hunting of the Snark , the Bellman says :

" For England Expects ? I forbear to proceed . Tis a maxim tremendous , but trite . "

In Ogden Nash 's collection of poems I 'm a Stranger Here Myself (1938) there is a short poem " England Expects " .

During the Second World War , an Admiralty propaganda poster intended to increase industrial production on the home front , carried the slogan ; " Britain expects that you too , this day , will do your duty " . Nelson 's flag signal was hoisted by the Royal Navy monitor , HMS Erebus at the start of the bombardment for the Normandy landings on 6 June 1944 .

It was also referenced by Margaret Thatcher during her crucial speech to the cabinet which finally persuaded them to rally behind her over the divisive issue of the poll tax . Further afield , it has been adapted by James Joyce in his novel , Ulysses , such as " Ireland expects that every man this day will do his duty " .

In the United States , former Secretary of the Navy of the United States of America Gordon R.

England wore a tie with the flags representing the famous quote when he visited naval vessels .

Today " England expects ... " is often adapted for use in the media , especially in relation to the expectations for the victory of English sporting teams . Such is the sentence 's connotation with sport that a recent book on the history of the England national football team by James Corbett was entitled England Expects . A BBC Scotland television drama also bears its name .