

Anyone with information on the ship on this stamp?



The Battle of Trafalgar – a most decisive naval battle – part two.

by Lana Rodlie

Of the 27 battleships and four frigates, only eight captains had ever served under Admiral Horatio Nelson's command including: Cuthbert Collingwood, now on the 100-gun **ROYAL SOVEREIGN**, Thomas Fremantle on the 98-gun **NEPTUNE**, Edward Berry on **AGAMEMNON** and Henry Blackwood on the frigate **EURYALUS**.

And while all these officers and more were thrilled to death to be serving with Nelson, Napoleon's Admiral Pierre Villeneuve was not enjoying anywhere near the admiration of his subordinates, and his fear of Nelson was bringing him close to a nervous breakdown.

Napoleon sent orders to Villeneuve, who was about to head north toward England, to head east, back into the Mediterranean where he'd be met by his replacement. On Oct. 19, the combined French and Spanish fleet – 33 battleships, put out to sea, even though a council of admirals and captains had voted to stay in harbor rather than face Nelson.

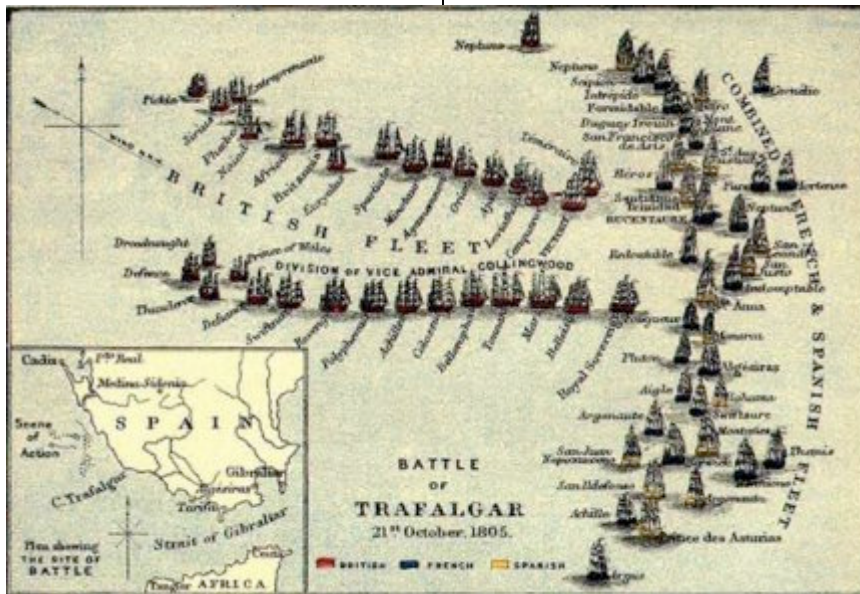
The frigate **SIRIUS** was the first to spot them, and sent news to Blackwood's **EURYALUS**. Using the new flag system, the **EURYALUS** relayed the message to the next frigate, the **PHOEBE**, and so on until it reached the **MARS**, 48 miles away. Lt. William Cumby on the **BELLEROPHON** caught the **MARS**' signal and passed on the message to Nelson. The French were coming.

Nelson immediately set 27 ships of the line and four frigates out to cut off Villeneuve's escape.

It was two days later before the British saw Villeneuve's fleet, some 21 miles northeast of Cape Trafalgar. During an early morning conference with his officers, word came that the French fleet was turning back.

Villeneuve had ordered his ships to turn back north, preferring to meet the British threat by going down fighting then he couldn't win.

While the crews of both fleets prepared for battle, the mood on the French ships was dread and doom, while the British were excited and eager for battle.



Nelson arranged his ships into two large groupings, each bearing head-on into Villeneuve's port beam.

The first group was led by Collingwood on the **ROYAL SOVEREIGN**, with **BELLEISLE** under Captain Richard Hargood, the **MARS**, **TONNANT**, **BELLEROPHON** and nine other ships strung out aft of him.

(Battle of Trafalgar, continued on page 82)