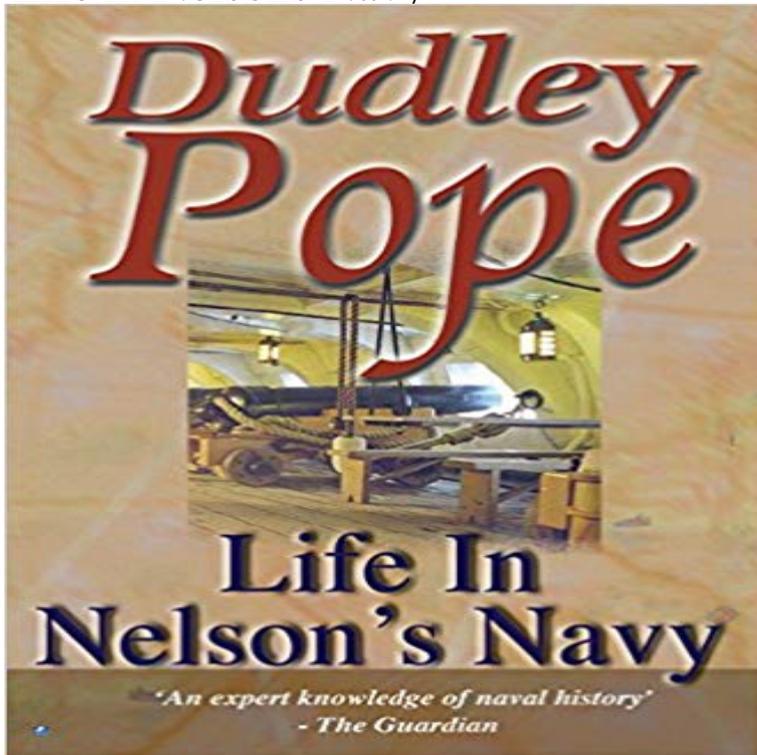


## Life in Nelsons Navy



This is a well-researched and highly readable account of naval life, both ashore and at sea, from a respected and admired historian and writer of whom it was once written. An author who really knows Nelsons navy (Ramage Prize - The Observer) and An expert knowledge of naval history (Ramage at Trafalgar - The Guardian). The author gives an account of the Admiralty and its workings, promotion systems, naval politics, press gangs and how fifty acres of oak trees had to be cleared to build one ship of the line. He stresses the harsh conditions of ordinary seamen, the almost totalitarian powers and responsibilities of commanding officers, punishments and the day to day tasks that had to be performed. Many pre-suppositions may be exposed by Dudley Popes researches and the reader will find the book both highly informative, but not in a dry way, and certainly pleasurable to read. The Author: Dudley Bernard Egerton Pope was born in Ashford, Kent on 29 December 1925. When at the tender age of fourteen World War II broke out and Dudley attempted to join the Home Guard by concealing his age. At sixteen, once again using a ruse, he joined the merchant navy a year early, signing papers as a cadet with the Silver Line. In World War II, his ship was torpedoed in the Atlantic and a few survivors, including Dudley, spent two weeks in a lifeboat prior to being rescued. His injuries were severe and because of them he was invalided out of the merchant service and refused entry into the Royal Navy when officially called up for active service aged eighteen. Turning to journalism, he set about getting on with the rest of his life, as the Naval Review Board had advised him. He graduated to being Naval and Defence correspondent with the London Evening News in 1944. In 1953 he met Kay, whom he married in 1954, and together they formed a lifelong partnership

in pursuit of scholarly adventure on the sea. From 1970 the couple spent nine years cruising between the British Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, before going to Antigua in 1977 and finally St.Martin in 1979. In later life, Dudley Pope was forced to move ashore because of vertigo and other difficulties caused by injuries sustained during the war. He died in St.Martin in 1997, where Kay now lives. As an experienced seaman, talented journalist and historian, it was a natural progression for Pope to write authoritative accounts of naval battles and his first book, *Flag 4: The Battle of Coastal Forces in the Mediterranean*, was published in 1954. This was followed in 1956 by the *Battle of the River Plate*, which remains the most accurate and meticulously researched account of this first turning point for Britain in World War II. Many more followed, including the biography of Sir Henry Morgan, (*Harry Morgans Way*) which has one won wide acclaim as being both scholarly and thoroughly readable. It portrays the history of Britains early Caribbean settlement and describes the Buccaneers bases and refuges, the way they lived, their ships and the raids they made on the coast of central America and the Spain Main, including the sack of Panama. Recognising Popes talent, C.S. Forrester encouraged him to try his hand at fiction. The result, in 1965, was the appearance of the first of the Ramage novels, followed by a further seventeen culminating with *Ramage and the Dido* which was published in 1989. He also published the Ned Yorke series of novels, which commences as would be expected in the Caribbean, in the seventeenth century, but culminates in *Convoy and Decoy* with a Ned Yorke of the same family many generations on fighting the Battle of the Atlantic. All of Dudley Popes works are renowned for their level of detail and accuracy, as well as managing to bring to the modern reader an authentic feeling of the atmosphere of the times in which they are set.

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