



November-December 2010

In this issue...

Exhibition in Stockholm	1
Member Profile: David Markham	5
Not Much Happened in 1810	10
Book Review	13
Upcoming events	14
Stamp News	14



Emperor Napoleon I's uniform hat, by an unknown French manufacturer.

STAGING POWER AN EXHIBITION AT THE SWEDISH NATIONAL MUSEUM

by Alfonso A. Alejo

On September 30, 2010 the National Museum in Stockholm will host a "blockbuster" exhibit examining the lives of Napoleon, Karl XIV Johan (French Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, who the Swedes translate into English as Charles John), and Czar Alexander I. Featuring a wealth of historical artifacts and fine artisan wares, the exhibition is all about the art of governing through art. The exhibit was assembled by the National Museum in Stockholm and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia. Many other both public and private collections have contributed. There are over 400 items featured.

This is one of the largest exhibits the National Museum in Stockholm has ever mounted, so they are very proud of it and have pulled out all the stops!

I had the good fortune to get a private tour of the entire exhibit the weekend before the opening and can testify to its "blockbuster" status. It is a magnificent exhibit featuring items in all areas of interest including sumptuous decora-

tive items, uniforms, weapons, documents, court costumes, royal items (crowns, scepters, etc.), stunning jewelry, medals, recreated living spaces, etc. Something for everyone with an interest in the period!

Napoleon, Karl Johan and Alexander were all skilful propagandists who knew how to use art to reflect their self-image and demonstrate the legitimacy of their claim to power. The exhibition focuses on how these three rulers influenced art and were, in turn, influenced by art.

Napoleon, by simple virtue of being by far the most famous of the three, gets top billing (Napoleon sells tickets!), but naturally, since the exhibit is led by the National Museum in Stockholm (the House of Bernadotte still rules there!) and the Hermitage in St Petersburg, he is cast as the bad guy. One gets some warning of this in the splendid official exhibit catalog in the opening chapter which is titled, "In the Age of the Beast" with a full page pic-

continued on p. 2



Miniature from
David Markham's Collection.
See page 5.

continued from p. 1

ture of David's Bonaparte Crossing the St. Bernard Pass right next to that not-so-subtle lead-in.

But there-in lies one of the strengths of the exhibit. It draws in large part on the private and state collections of the Royal Family of Sweden and the Russian State collections. Many of these items have never been on display before or have not been available for viewing in the West for generations. For this reason alone you should make the effort to visit the exhibit!

Part of the reason for the exhibit is because 2010 marks the bicentennial of the Bernadotte ascent to the throne of Sweden. As most of you know, the present King of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustaf, descends directly from Marshal of France, Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte. No favorite of Napoleon, his service to France ended in 1810, when he was elected the heir to the Swedish throne because the old Swedish royal family was dying out with King Charles XIII. He was elected partly because a large part of the Swedish Army, in view of future complications with Russia, were in favor of electing a soldier, and partly because Bernadotte was also very popular in Sweden, owing to the kindness he had shown to the Swedish prisoners



Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, attributed to Jean Urbain Guérin. Black chalk, heightened with white.



Désirée Bernadotte, Princess of Ponte Corvo, before 1810, by Jean-Baptiste Isabey. Miniature, gouache on ivory.

during the recent war with Denmark.

In a perverse twist of history, you may also know that the present Swedish King and his family descend directly from Empress Josephine. King Karl XIV Johan's (Bernadotte) first and only son Oscar I, married Princess Josephine of Leuchtenberg, who happened to be the daughter of Eugene de Beauharnais and his wife Princess Augusta of Bavaria. Empress Josephine was the Great-Grandmother of the future King of Sweden!

But the link to Napoleon doesn't stop there. Bernadotte was married to Désirée Clary (who can forget Brando as Napoleon in the film *Desirée!*) who was one of the young Bonaparte's first girlfriends, and her sister Julie Clary was married to Joseph Bonaparte, the King of Spain and Napoleon's older brother!

Among the Bernadotte items featured are his Marshal of France uniform, Marshal's baton, the sword worn by him as Marshal, Eugene de Beauharnais' dress coat, the so-called Small Coronation dress, and his daughter Jose-

phine's magnificent Jacob-Desmalter made cradle. There is Queen Desirée's court train worn at Napoleon's Coronation. There are many items that once belonged to Empress Josephine including many of her jewels.

One of the most impressive sections of the exhibit are those contributions which come from the Hermitage in Russia. There are many. One gets a close inside look into the life of Czar Alexander and into the 1812 French invasion of Russia. Among them are several of Alexander's uniforms (I was struck at how tiny he was and how narrow his waist was, men wore corsets then!), his medals, swords, hats, etc.

There are items that were left behind by the invading French armies and captured by the Russians. These include French Eagles, Marshal Davout's baton and Ney's Marshal's uniform.

Of particular interest are several items which belonged to Joseph Fouché, all of which are in a private collection (so



A leaf from the golden laurel wreath used at Napoleon's coronation in 1804, mounted in a box, by Martin-Guillaume Biennais. From the Chateau of Fontainebleau.

this may be your only opportunity to view them). These include his official uniform as Duc de Otranto with medals, his rapier and a $\frac{3}{4}$ length portrait.

I haven't said enough about the decorative and art works in the exhibit. These crowd the exhibit including stunning full length oils of the Bernadottes, Clarys, Bonapartes, Murat, and others, and many candelabras, tableware, dinner services, vases, etc. (Notably, nearly all of these were made by the French decorative arts industry which was revived at Napoleon's direction after their collapse during the Revolution).

The exhibit is next scheduled to travel in the Spring 2011 to the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia. There is also some chance that it will then follow to one of the French Paris-area properties (maybe Fontainebleau or Versailles).

One last note, as already mentioned, the exhibit comes with a massive official exhibition catalog which includes history, commentary, photos and descriptions of all the displayed items. It can be ordered at the National Museum, Stockholm's online shop's website www.nationalmuseum.se. It's a relative bargain at just about US\$45. I strongly recommend it!

For more information, please visit the Museum website at www.nationalmuseum.se



Above, a table clock with Alexander I crowning a bust of Louis XVIII, attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire. Ormolu bronze. A boast of Russian power transformed into art.



Right, a Déjeuner Set with cabaret of Minerva guiding the King of Rome. From the Sèvres porcelain manufactory of hard-paste (true) porcelain. A signature on the tray says: "Composé et Exécuté par Philippine Et Béranger 1813."



Sword worn by Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte as marshal, made by Nicolas Noël Boutet et fils. Triangular blade in blued, etched and gilded steel, hilt of ormolu bronze, mother of pearl.

Below, a display cup, made by the firm of Dartes Frères, Paris, from soft porcelain. This decorative cup features a motif in which a genie is shown carrying the Swedish crown towards a bust of Karl Johan. The inscription reads: "Le mérite récompensé" or Merit is duly rewarded, reflecting Karl Johan's own view of his legitimacy. He had ascended to the throne not by birth but on his own merits. Another example of the exhibition's theme, that Napoleon, Karl Johan and Alexander were all skilful propagandists who knew how to use art to reflect their self-image and demonstrate the legitimacy of their claim to power.



Above, a Swedish field marshal's uniform with bicorne worn by Karl XIV Johan, together with the insignia of different orders. Field marshal's greatcoat: broadcloth, gilt brass. Bicorne: silk felt.

MEMBER PROFILE: DAVID MARKHAM

In this issue we profile President Emeritus J. David Markham.

David joined the Napoleonic Society of America in the mid-1980s and soon became very active. 'By then I was a significant collector of Napoleonic artifacts, and when I was looking at one the owner said something about the NSA. I said 'the what?' and he provided the address. From then on, it was off to the races!'

David was born in Austin, Texas, but has lived all over the county, residing now in Olympia, Washington. At an early age his father, a professor of journalism, told him stories of great people in history, and Napoleon stuck. 'You've got a rise from relative obscurity to the peak of success, a fall from grace, another fall, and an exile steeped in pathos. Fame, power, glory, sex, adventure, great victories—what's not for a young man to like?!

David learned something about warfare up close and personal with a stint in Viet Nam in 1968-69, where he received the Bronze Star. 'I was the R&R NCO. That meant I was important in keeping the morale of the troops high, and I worked very hard. I got my battalion's men (9th Sig, 9th Inf) more R&R slots by far than my predecessor, and I am very proud of that.' Later, David picked up BS, MA and MEd degrees. It took a few years for his interest in Napoleon to gel. 'It all kind of came together over a very short period of time. In the mid '80s my wife, Barbara, and I started to go to Europe. I discovered Napoleonic snuffboxes and went on from there. Then I wrote a paper for a graduate class that was published by Military History Magazine, which led to two chapters in a biography of Napoleon, which led to *Napoleon's Road to Glory*. I was VP of the Arizona Committee for the Bicentennial of the French Revolution. Then Don Horward from Florida State contacted me and we became friends. He encouraged me to write papers for the

Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, as it was known then. He also connected me to Ben Weider and the International Napoleonic Society. By then, I was hooked for life!'

Hooked for life indeed. David (www.NapoleonicHistory.com) has put together a major Napoleonic collection of hundreds of snuffboxes, period engravings, miniatures and other art and artifacts that has been featured at the Phoenix Art Museum, the Dahesh Art Museum in Manhattan, and the Frye Art Museum in Seattle. His library contains over 1100 volumes on Napoleonic history. He's been on the NSA/Alliance/NHS board since the 1980s, much of that time as Executive VP, and served three years as President of the Alliance. He is especially proud of his work to encourage the reconciliation and consolidation of the Alliance and NSA, and of the conference in Seattle that he and his friend John Welsh organized. In 1996, Ben Weider made him Executive VP and Editor-in-Chief of the International Napoleonic Society, and upon Ben's death in 2008, David

became INS President. 'There is no question, I owe so much of my Napoleonic success to two dear friends, Don Horward and Ben Weider.' The INS is a scholarly organization with an academic journal and international congresses, as well as a bilingual website. David's name is on the cover of some 10 books, including *Napoleon for Dummies*, translated into French, Russian and Dutch. He has written for several encyclopedias and academic journals. Along with his Australian friend Cameron Reilly, David has done the *Napoleon 101* podcast, so far including 55 episodes of over an hour each, with about 30,000 loyal listeners. David has also appeared in documentaries on Napoleon and Caesar on the History, History International, Learning and Discovery channels.

David and Barbara have followed Napoleon's footsteps across Europe, as well as Georgia and Israel, often to attend congresses that he has organized (Canada, Georgia, France (2), Israel, Italy, Malta and Poland). 'One of the highlights was in 1999 when I was the



David Markham in a corner of his living room with two very unusual engravings of Napoleon as First Consul. The one on the left is in a period frame.

THE NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

first American scholar to speak at the All Russia Conference in Borodino. They treated me like a Tsar, but I also discovered just how poor the country was.'

David has received many awards for his teaching (he taught high school world history, as well as university and college classes) and his Napoleonic work. That work has gained him awards from the INS, the Alliance, Mexico, Italy and France. In 2009 he was awarded the *Médaille d'or du Rayonnement Culturel* (Gold Medal for Cultural Radiance), by La Renaissance Française (an international French cultural organization with the high patronage of the French President and the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Defense and National Education).



David holds a favored piece, a heavy bronze inkwell of an Egyptian female pharaoh. The crown tips back to reveal the inkwell.



The 'Great Hall' of the Markham Museum, otherwise known as the living room.

THE NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



A wood snuffbox with a gold medallion showing the Battle of the Pyramids. The uniforms show that the box was made during the Empire rather than at the time of the Egyptian campaign.

A horn snuffbox with a gold medallion showing Napoleon, Marie Louise, and the King of Rome. It is dated 20 March 1815, when Napoleon was back for the 100 Days. Of course, his wife and son never joined him in Paris.



David is committed to helping the NHS achieve its full potential. 'Bringing people together to learn more, giving them opportunities to gain better understanding through papers, unique presentations, music and other activities are at the core of our existence. The key thing about our group is the people. Most of my best and very special friends have come through Napoleonic activities. Napoleon has reached out through time and space to bring us all together, and that is what makes this all so very special.'



A portion of the Markham Museum showing a variety of Napoleonic items, protected by his guard cat, Teardrop, resting on an Empire chair.



Scholars from around the world pose in front of Napoleon's home on Elba, part of the program of the INS Congress in Corsica in 2008.



Two period miniatures, above of Ferdinand IV, King of Naples, and below, of Maximilien I, King of Bavaria.



A 19th century porcelain of Napoleon and Josephine playing chess, surrounded by period snuffboxes and ivory miniatures of the couple, as well as of Marie Louise. The two ivory miniatures by Noël are especially notable.



Not Much Happened in 1810

Some historians who focus on Napoleon consider 1810 to be a dull year. We thought we would summarize what happened that year.

In France

Public attention was focused on the marital affairs of the Emperor. On 10 January 1810, his marriage to Josephine was annulled. On 11 February, Napoleon married Marie-Louise of Austria. The couple soon went on an Imperial progress culminating in a state festival in Antwerp.

Meanwhile the Empire was growing. On 17 February, Rome was annexed, the Pope being a prisoner in Savona. On 4 July 1810, the French occupied Amsterdam, Napoleon's brother Louis having abdicated the day before. On July 9 Holland was annexed. On December 19, Napoleon annexed the Hanseatic States.



More lasting was the Vendôme Column, inaugurated on August 15 and a landmark in Paris to this day (above).

In German Lands

Two anti-French stalwarts depart. On 20 February, Andreas Hofer, Tyrolean leader of rebellion against Napoleon's forces, was executed. On 19 July,

Queen Louise of Prussia died.

Happier events were in progress however. In Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm III began the construction of the Museum Island, to become a Berlin highlight. To accompany it, Wilhelm von Humboldt founded Humboldt University in Berlin to give students a broad humanist education.

In Bavaria on 12 October 1810, they celebrated the first Oktoberfest: The Bavarian royalty invited the citizens of Munich to join the celebration of the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria to Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen.

Beethoven composed *Für Elise* (For Elise). We don't know who Beethoven's Elise was; one of his contemporaries may have incorrectly written its title for him. Its solo piano is a favorite for many people. Despite the date which is on the manuscript, April 27th, 1810, it was not published until about fifty years later.

In Sweden

On 26 September, a new Act of Succession is adopted by the Riksdag of the Estates and Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte becomes heir to the Swedish throne. See Alfonso Alejo's report on Stockholm exhibition celebrating that on page 1.

In Britain

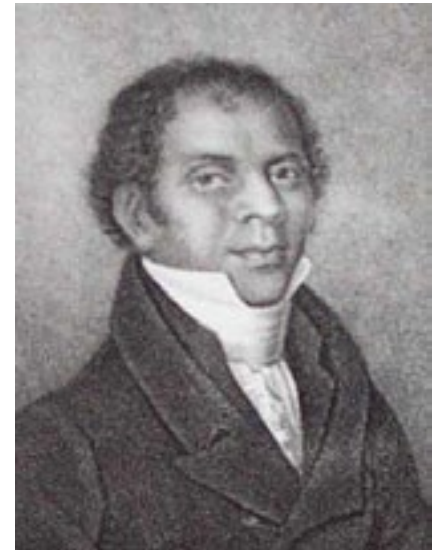
English inventor Peter Durand patented the Tin Can as a means to create an air-tight container for the distribution or storage of food. Strangely no one invented a can opener for another 60 years, so a hammer and chisel were used to open the cans.

Britain was saved from its cooking when Sake Dean Mahomed founded the Hindoostane Coffee House, London's first known curry establishment. Born in Patna, India in 1759, Mahomed was also the first known Indian to write a book in English. Published in 1786, it described his adventures as a soldier with the East India Company's army,

his journey to Europe, his marriage to an Irish woman and their move to London.

In literary affairs, that show-off Lord Byron swam the Hellespont on 3 May 1810. The literary sensation of the year was Walter Scott's poem "Lady of the Lake." An obscure lady author (who would have thought it!), Jane Austen, had her manuscript *Sense and Sensibility* accepted for publication by Thomas Egerton, London publisher.

In October, popular favorite King



*Saviour of Britain,
Sake Dean Mahomed*

George III, distraught at the death of his daughter Amelia, became insane again; this time he did not recover.

In Italy

On September 17, Murat was repelled when he attempted an amphibious invasion of Sicily.

In Spain

The French tried to complete their conquest. Joseph and Soult invaded the most important Spanish territory left, Andalusia. It began as a walkover, but they stumbled at the last and most important step, and Cadiz was saved.

Massena led the army intended to conquer Portugal and force the British army out of the Peninsula again.

First he took the fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, and then Almeida when its magazine exploded, Craufurd's Light Division was almost trapped at the battle of the Coa. Wellington was much criticized for supinely letting this happen without trying to intervene. Instead he retreated. He redeemed his reputation when he gave his pursuers a bloody nose on 27 September at the Battle of Bussaco. Massena still chased him to the Lines of Torres Vedras outside Lisbon, but there he could no further. By the end of the year, frustrated and hungry, his army fell back to Santarem.

On May 13, Suchet stormed Lerida, capping his conquest of Aragon. Fur-

ther advance is thwarted by elusive Catalan armies. This failure resulted in the disgrace of his colleague in Catalonia, Augereau, who is replaced by Macdonald.

In Russia

Though waging wars on its southern borders, the real event of the year did not occur until 31 December, when Alexander issued a decree breaking with Continental Blockade. This meant an inevitable break with Napoleon and eventually war.

Mediterranean and Near East

Crete still remembers the great earthquake of 16 February.

Kamensky succeeded Bagration in charge of the Danube Army, which was fighting the Turks in Rumania and Bulgaria. On June 3, the Russians stormed Bazardjik, but the Turks had their revenge at Schumla on June 23-24. The Russians regained the initiative with a victory at Tachlimechle on August 2. A series of Russian victories in Bulgaria followed, including Batin on September 7 and the taking of Rustchuk on September 26, but the last is a costly success.

Further up the Danube, the Serbs were well into their uprising against Turkish rule, which had begun in 1804. In 1810 the Tsar sent them another 2,500



On 22 December, a famous maritime disaster occurred when HMS Minotaur was wrecked on the Haak Sand near the Texel. The 2nd lieutenant and eight midshipmen with 100 men were saved and made prisoner; the rest, numbering about 500 and including the captain, lost their lives. The lieutenant, the master, and the few surviving crew were tried by court martial on 30 May 1814. It was decided that she was lost due to an error in reckoning her position, the pilots believing her to be over Smith's Knoll when she was actually 60 miles away. It appeared in evidence that the Dutch might have saved more people if they had attended to the urgent requests of those who were fortunate enough to land first. It inspired Turner to paint the *Shipwreck of the Minotaur*, above.

troops, and the combined Russo-Serbian force defeated the Turks at the battles of Vavarin and Loznica.

Near East

Russia was also fighting another war, this one against the Persians, who declared a holy war in 1810. This was to little avail as the Persians were too disorganized and the Russians simply superior, so there was little more than sporadic fighting.

In Afghanistan, Mahmud Shah overthrew Shah Shuja, who had overthrown him in 1803. Shah Shuja had to wait until 1839 to have his turn again with British help, which led to perhaps Britain's finest colonial disaster.

North America

On 23 June, John Jacob Astor formed the Pacific Fur Company. Its first voyage begins 8 September from New York Harbor with 33 employees on board. After a six-month journey around the tip of South America, the ship arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River and Astor's men established the fur-trading town of Astoria, Oregon.

The Americans were already present on the Pacific Coast. It is estimated that between 1810 and 1813 Boston-based whalers slaughtered 150,000 fur seals on the Farallon Islands, 28 miles west of San Francisco.

Fighting was continuous on the western frontier, with massacre and counter-massacre. On 11 August, Tecumseh told off Governor William Harrison in a speech at Vincennes. War was coming.

Further south a war has already begun. The Walton War was an 1810 boundary dispute between North Carolina and Georgia over a 12 mile strip of land in present day Transylvania County, North Carolina. There were two major clashes between the two state's militias, the Battle of McGaha Branch and the Battle of Selica Hill. Both of these battles resulted in victory for the North Carolina militia. A year later Georgia authorized a survey of the strip and found it to be out of its jurisdiction, and ceded it to North Carolina.

On May 1 Congress passed Macon's Bill Number 2, Like its predecessor, the Embargo Act, it was mostly ineffective, and contributed to the coming of the War of 1812.

On 27 October, the United States annexed the former Spanish colony of West Florida.

South America

South America erupted in revolution following Spain's collapse after Napoleon's invasion.

19 April, Venezuela achieved home rule. Emparan, Governor of the Captaincy General is removed by the people of Caracas and a Junta installed.

25 May, in Argentina, the May Revolution, where armed citizens of Buenos Aires expelled the Viceroy during the Semana de Mayo. The insurgents proclaimed loyalty to the Spanish crown but it meant in reality independence. War soon followed, against wayward provinces, and in Paraguay against Royalist forces from Bolivia.

20 July, in Colombia, citizens of

Bogotá, New Granada declared independence from Spain.

16 September, with the Grito de Dolores, Father Miguel Hidalgo proclaimed Mexico's independence from Spain. Lip service was paid to the king, but that was soon forgotten.

18 September, in Chile, the first Government Junta was formed. Again it ruled in the name of the king, but it was in fact the first step towards independence, and is commemorated as such.

October 30, Mexico, the Battle of Monte de las Cruces, one of the pivotal battles of the early Mexican War of Independence, was fought. Though the insurgents won, they later chose to retreat, ending their chances of taking Mexico City.

18,000 Angolans were sold in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

In Africa

In what is now Niger and northern Nigeria, the Fulani War of 1804-1810 entered its final stages. The Fulani victors had defeated the Hausa kingdoms



The Grito de Dolores

using bow fire from their massed peasant soldiers formed in squares against their opponents' armored cavalry. The Kingdom of Sokoto was the result.

Further west in the Niger Bend, in present day Mali, Burkina Faso, and eastern Mauritania, Ahmad Lobo's Jihad began, a religious war fought by more Fulani against fainter Muslim and pagan rulers, which eventually created the Tukulor Kingdom.

In the Indian Ocean

Over 20–27 August, in the Battle of Grand Port, Île de France, the French won a rare naval victory. Celebration did not last long as the British captured the island on 3 December. This was very helpful for the Royal Navy, as Guadelupe in the Caribbean had also been captured on 4 February, meaning the French had lost the last of their naval bases overseas and the British freed up forces for further expansion. The character of Île de France changed rapidly, as Indians were brought in as indentured laborers, and later waves of Chinese immigrants arrived. Even the name changed, to Mauritius.

In India

In India the British prepared an expe-

dition to take Java from the Dutch. Meanwhile their ally, Ranjit Singh, began the Sikh conquest of the Punjab, exploiting the defeat of the Mahratta kingdoms by the British a few years before.

In the Pacific

A typhoon devastated the Caroline Islands, 500 miles south of the Marianas. The survivors sailed to Guam but only half survived. Spanish authorities sent the Carolinians to Saipan and Tinian to manage the Spanish cattle herds.

In China

1810 saw success for the Chinese government against the scourge of their southern coasts. Ching Shih and her husband, Cheung Po Tsai, surrendered their pirate fleet to the Chinese government. Their followers are said to have reached 50,000 and their fleet 600 ships. The couple accepted amnesty and comfortable government posts.

There was less success elsewhere. Emperor Jiaqing was forced to issue a decree against the Opium trade. It is thought 4,500 chests of opium were sold in China during the year. It soon became obvious the campaign against opium was a failure.



Little is really known about the life of Ching Shih, a prominent female pirate and one of history's greatest plunderers; much of what we know, and her portrait above, are likely fictional. Her real name has been lost; Ching Shih, which means "widow of Zheng," only relates her to her fellow-pirate husband. At some point in her early life, Ching Shih began working as a prostitute at a floating brothel near Canton, in Southern China. In 1801, she met and married Zheng Yi, a famous Chinese pirate. She joined Yi on his ship and learned pirating ways.

Shortly after Ching Shih's marriage, her husband banded together powerful pirate groups into one alliance. The pirate band was greatly feared and regularly sacked ships in the Canton area. When Zheng Yi died in 1807, Ching Shih worked her way into the command of the pirate group. She married her adoptive son, Cheung Po Tsai, perhaps for political motives. They terrorized towns and markets up and down the Chinese coast, collecting large sums of money in tribute along the way.

In 1810, the Chinese government offered Ching Shih amnesty, which she took, ending her pirating career. Ching Shi was allowed to keep her looted property. She married her adopted son and set up a gambling house on land.



British frigate HMS Sirius being scuttled in the harbor of Grand Port.

Book Review

The War of 1812 in the Age of Napoleon, by Jeremy Black, University of Oklahoma Press, 2009

This rather awkward title reflects Jeremy Black's insistence that the War of 1812 can only be examined properly if the wider world conflict is kept very much in mind. In the conclusion, he describes his aim.

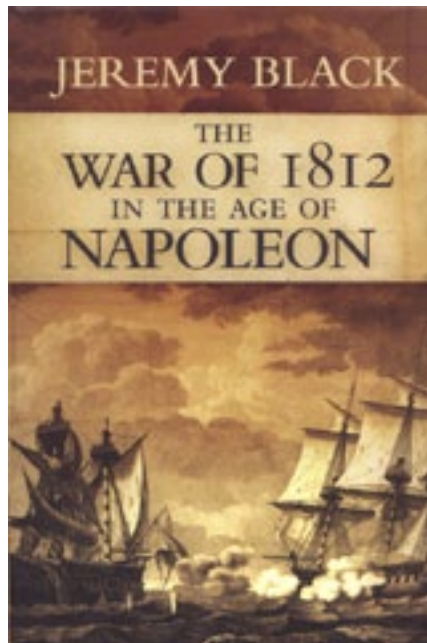
The central theme of this book has been an attempt to locate the War of 1812 in its international context, diplomatic, military, and economic. This context is important not only in describing and explaining what occurred, but also in providing a comparative framework for considering the relative capabilities of combatants, as well as in evaluating the consequences of decisions and the significance of events, in both the short and long terms.

Black doesn't just use comparisons with the wider world; frequently he refers back to the earlier struggle of the American Revolution in order to discern what was possible for both combatants and how well they coped with the peculiar constraints of the theater of war.

This naval situation between Britain and France, which was completely different to that during the War of Independence, when the French navy was not defeated until 1782, is a reminder of the extent to which American history was dependent on relations between other powers. This is one of the themes of this book and accounts for the space devoted to this wider context. In the case of the War of 1812, naval power meant that it was possible for Britain to put maritime pressure on America, not least by mounting a blockade, but also to send reinforcements, if any were available...

Black is at his best when considering the wider picture for the British.

This failure in the prime sphere of operations [Wellington's defeat before Burgos] was not the best background



for the British war effort in North America, which was only a secondary goal. It was scarcely surprising that Wellington, whom was always deeply suspicious and critical of British efforts being diverted from the peninsula, sought to persuade Bathurst that only so many resources should be diverted to North America.

Of course Wellington always downplayed the importance of the American War; not only did it compete with his own operations for troops and money, he had great doubts that Britain had anything to gain there.

Wellington had always been doubtful that the Americans could be attacked in a way that would compel them to capitulate. He clearly hoped that the Americans would be caught in a disadvantageous stalemate with an adequate but economical British defensive posture on land and an aggressive blockade at sea, where the British had more military assets, which would leave the Americans with few realistic options other than to seek peace.

Wellington pretty much had his way as long as the Peninsular War lasted. It was the resources released by French

defeats elsewhere in the world that provided the forces Britain needed to fight the United States. Black points out that many of the American problems stemmed from the unexpected fall of Napoleon following the Russian campaign of 1812, which exacerbated the American miscalculation in going to war in the first place. Though Napoleon's woes took some time to influence the American War, because it actually caused Britain to devote more resources to the European fronts, eventually it was decisive as by 1814 there could be no hope that the Americans could take Canada and the Americans were in fact thrown onto the defensive. In Black's wider view, the British defeat in the Lake Champlain campaign becomes more important in discouraging British ambitions, as that's where the bulk of British reinforcements went in 1814, whereas New Orleans was a glorious victory for the Americans but little more than a buccaneering adventure for the British, who had little to gain but a bargaining chip and some loot. It would have interesting though if Black had addressed how much Wellington and other policymakers were influenced by the fact that Canada had long been a dumping ground for second-raters.

Black is good when he takes the American view of the war, though some of these, the old patriotic myths, have long been discredited. But he's quick to attack American exceptionalism, the conviction that America was, and is, different, that there is, for example, a distinctive American way of war. He allows that some features, such as the vast distances and the presence of the Native Americans, were unusual, but not that unusual. He minces no words on some American attitudes, for example on the aftermath of the Battle of the Thames.

For the local population, the consequences of the battle were far bleaker.

continued on p. 14

THE NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

continued from p. 13

Initially the American troops did not attack the Moravians, but their discovery of some of Proctor's papers in one of the houses, combined with a ready indulgence for looting, led them to loot the village thoroughly and then to burn it down. As earlier in York, the destructiveness the Americans habitually applied to the Native Americans was readily extended to the European population. Their subsequent complaints about the fate of Washington at the hands of British troops in 1814 were totally hypocritical.

In all I found this to be an interesting and well-written book. It does face a major problem, in that to explain the

wider picture, Black finds it necessary to describe the course of the war year by year, so in the end it's another single volume general history of the war, and we already have some fine examples of that. Given its special concerns I'm not sure if I would recommend this as the first book to read on this subject. If you're already well read on this subject, you will have to cover a lot of well-trodden ground to find those snippets where Black has something more to add. That's a shame as it's a good book. If like myself you've already forgotten much of the history, a good reminder won't hurt, and I can readily recommend this book to you.

Reviewed by John Brewster

NAPOLEONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY CALENDAR

- to Dec 12 *Victory searches for her son: defending Spain and Portugal against Napoleon, 1810.* An exhibition at the Hartley Library, University of Southampton, UK.
- to Dec 31 *Pour l'Honneur & la Gloire; an exhibition at the Musée du Diamant in Antwerp (Anvers), Belgium.*
- to Jan 23 *In the service of the Tsars: an exhibition on the Russian Imperial Guard, at the Musée de l'Armée in Paris.*
- to Jan 23 *Staging Power. Napoleon. Karl Johan. Alexander, Stockholm, Sweden (see article on page 1).*

NAPOLEONIC SOLDIER STAMPS

Although there have been many stamps celebrating Napoleon and his Grande Armée over the years, this set released by the French Post Office in 2004 is probably the only one to commemorate them as model soldiers (note the bases at the figures' feet).

It is hard to say for certain which manufacturer they might represent, but at least some of the figures shown are reminiscent of those produced by Madame Metayer in the 1950s. Stamps like this turn up on eBay from time to time, often for less than \$10. They can also be purchased from dealers in collectible postage stamps.

There have been so many Napoleon stamps released by various countries, that they can easily form a fascinating collection on their own.



© Copyright 2010 the Napoleonic Historical Society. All rights reserved.

Contact: editor@NapoleonicHistoricalSociety.com. This newsletter edited by John Brewster.