



Napoleon and Wellington: The Battle of Waterloo- -and the Great Commanders Who Fought It

Andrew Roberts

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"An award-winning historian offers an eye-opening view of the relationship between Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Wellington, whose lives moved inexorably to their meeting at Waterloo, one of the most famous battles of all time." At breakfast on the morning of the battle of Waterloo, the Emperor Napoleon declared that the Duke of Wellington was a bad general, the British were bad soldiers and that France could not fail to win an easy victory. Forever afterwards, historians have accused him of gross overconfidence and massively underestimating the caliber of the British commander opposite him. Now Andrew Roberts presents an original, highly revisionist view of the relationship between the two greatest captains of their age and of the great battle that determined European history in the nineteenth century. Napoleon, who was born in the same year as Wellington -- 1769 -- fought Wellington by proxy years earlier in the Peninsular War, praising his ruthlessness in private while publicly deriding him as a mere "general of sepoys." In contrast, Wellington publicly lauded Napoleon, saying that his presence on a battlefield was worth forty thousand men, but privately he wrote long memoranda lambasting Napoleon's campaigning techniques. Although Wellington saved Napoleon from execution after Waterloo, the emperor left money in his will to the man who had tried to assassinate the duke. Wellington in turn amassed a series of Napoleonic trophies of his great victory, even sleeping with two of the emperor's mistresses. The fascinating, constantly changing relationship between these two historical giants forms the basis of Andrew Roberts's compelling study in pride, rivalry, propaganda, nostalgia and posthumous revenge. It is at once a brilliant work of military history and a triumphant biography. Featuring a cast of fascinating supporting characters -- including the empress Josephine, the Prince Regent and Talleyrand -- "Napoleon and Wellington" provides the definitive account of the most decisive battle of the nineteenth century.

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