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Waterloo 1815-A Commemorative Anthology. London: Extraordinary Editions, 2015. (No ISBN or total pagination listed), 950£.

Review by Michael Leggiere, University of North Texas.

According to the publisher, the anthology uses William Mudford's 1817 account of Wellington's campaign "to provide the spine of the book."^[1] In other words, the narrative, which begins on page 1 (of 470 including maps, prints, and illustrations) with "Every thing [sic] being prepared, hostilities were commenced, on the 15th of June, at three o'clock in the morning..." corresponds to page 243 of Mudford's 1817 work. At the front of the book, following a lithograph of the profiles of Wellington and Blücher as well as the title page is a letter from Arthur Charles Valerian Wellesley, 9th and current Duke of Wellington from Apsley House dated 18 June 2015 that extols the virtues of commemorating the Battle of Waterloo at its 200th anniversary because the First World War prevented the recognition of its centennial in 1915. True to his family's position on the individual role of Wellington and thus the minimal role played by the Prussians, the current duke tells us that "the success of the Duke of Wellington and the allied army at Waterloo was the culmination of a quarter of a century of war and the start of a long period of peace." Nevertheless, none can refute his claim that "The battle was a momentous event in European history" and all should honor his request "to reflect on the tens of thousands of men of many nationalities whose bravery and sacrifice formed the foundation for a more stable Europe that was to last for 99 years" before reading this book.

The majority of the text consists of "letters, reports, and recollections from men of both sides and all nationalities"—eighty-two in number—"some famous, many obscure, but all writing with the visceral voice of a frontline participant."^[2] The full name, nationality, and branch of service of all eighty-two "Correspondents" are listed on pp 466-467 with biographical summaries where such information is available. Among the eighty-two are forty-three officers, twenty-three soldiers, nine ensigns, six surgeons and hospital staff, and one servant. In terms of nationality, the Correspondents represent fifty-nine British eyewitnesses, twelve Hanoverians of the King's German Legion, six Dutch, three French officers, and two Prussians. One Hanoverian, a Lt. Karl Georg Friedrich Wilhelm von Berckefeldt, served in the Münden (not Munden) Landwehr Battalion. It should be clearly understood that this commemorative collection is intended mainly for a British audience.

The extremely colorful excerpts of their accounts are typically paragraph-sized with some expanding to more than one page. Although this reviewer would have preferred to see "all nationalities" better represented, the book generally delivers on the publisher's promise "to assemble a wealth of original sources which will bring the battle to life and make the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. These are the forgotten voices of Waterloo, reminding us of the astonishing events of the 16th, 17th and 18th June 1815. The result is an extraordinarily vivid depiction of the battle through the eyes of the men who were there. It is their voices that we seek to remember and their experiences that we seek to preserve for generations to come."^[3]

More than 200 beautiful prints, maps, diagrams, and facsimile documents, “culled from sources across Europe and the United States,” are interspersed throughout the book, including original hand-colored material from publishers proofs provided by the Getty family library at Wormsley.[4] Moreover, a series of thirty-four etchings, originally published by John Booth for George Jones’s 1852 illustrated account of Waterloo were professionally restored by water colorist Peter Frith to match the originals.[5] The excellent collection at the Anne S. K. Brown Library housed at Brown University was also tapped to provide the work with an incredible selection of sketches and Napoleonic satires. Other sources from which the illustrations were culled include the British Library; the Royal Armouries; the University of South Hampton Library’s collection of the papers of Sir Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington; Mudford’s original work; and the watercolor collection of the Scottish surgeon Charles Bell. John Booth’s panorama of the battlefield is tipped (a tipped-in page or tipped-in plate is a page that is printed separately from the main text of the book, but attached to the book) into the book, as is Jones’s plan of the battle, a battle panorama by Mudford, and an etching of Daniel Maclise’s panel of Wellington meeting Blucher. The smaller maps are reproduced within the book and include the campaign maps and battle plans published by Jones and Mudford. Of course, what would a book on Waterloo be without the Wellington Dispatch? The publishers consulted the Duke of Wellington’s papers at Southampton University to source the final notes and letters written immediately before and after the battle by the first duke himself to reproduce the first draft of the Waterloo Dispatch in its entirety, fully transcribed and with footnotes.

The publisher maintains that each image and map was scanned or photographed using ultra high-resolution equipment and then digitally corrected prior to printing. Although painstaking effort was made to remove blemishes and marks, the publisher took care to prevent over cleaning and to retain the original patina of each image in an effort to retain the original feel and look. This is most notable in the larger maps comprising all eight of William Siborne’s anaglyptographs (two each of Quatre Bras [3:00 pm and 9:00 pm]; Ligny [2:30 pm and 8:30 pm]; Waterloo [11:30 pm & 8:30 pm]; and Wavre on 18 and 19 June), which are folded and presented within a separate portfolio. The publisher wanted to recreate the anaglyptographs “in full size and to preserve the three dimensional effect created by their exceptionally fine engraving. This can be seen to best effect when a light source is placed at the center of the top of the maps and a little experimentation will reward the reader with a stunning image of the topography.”[6] This reviewer found that the most “stunning image of the topography” was a three-dimensional effect showing trees and forests. Some of the maps are dark and hard to read, a problem only remedied with extremely bright light. I would have preferred that the maps be more user friendly in areas where the light does not border on blinding. To protect your investment, the publisher has printed the text “on a specially made acid free archival quality paper,” and the maps and tipped-in illustrations are “printed on a similar but heavier stock to ensure their longevity.”

A total of 1,815 copies of *Waterloo 1815-A Commemorative Anthology* are available in two versions, both lavish and a must for the collector. The Commemorative Edition, of which 1,615 copies will be produced, sells for \$1,475.00 (£950). Each commemorative volume is quarter leather bound by hand in a high quality, chocolate calf, with gold bands and lettering to the spine, and with the covers of scarlet bookbinders silk blocked in a design featuring the British and Prussian flags rampant, with the Tricolor fallen. Each volume contains three ribbons in blue and red, matching that of the Waterloo medal. Siborne’s eight maps are secured in archival pockets crafted in a deep brown card within a separate portfolio that is quarter bound in chocolate calf with gilt bands and with the covers in scarlet silk to match the book. In turn, the portfolio and book are housed in a chocolate brown kashgar covered slipcase. The remaining 200 copies make up the Exemplary Edition, which sells for \$3,107.00 (£2000). The Exemplary Edition consists of the same book block, but all three sides are gilded, and it is fully leather bound in a specially selected chocolate calf, with raised bands and gold lettering to the spine and featuring the cover design embroidered in colored thread with gold and silver details. In addition, the map portfolio is a full leather binding of matching calf with raised bands on the spine, blocked in gold with the design of the Waterloo medal and lined with scarlet silk. The Exemplary Edition also includes two additional maps, including a facsimile of the Duke of Wellington’s own map, which he is believed to have used during the battle and a

full sized copy of Willem Benjamin Craan's detailed map, *Plan du champ de bataille de Waterloo, avec notice historique*, the key to which appears fully translated on the reverse. The Exemplary Edition and the leather map portfolio come in a hand crafted, wooden writing slope, "designed to replicate the traditional travelling desk that an officer would have taken on the campaign."^[7]

The publisher, Extraordinary Editions, is known for its handmade limited edition books that are produced by leading artists and craftsmen. *Waterloo 1815-A Commemorative Anthology* undoubtedly ranks among the very best of its products. Certainly, the collection of accounts, maps, prints, and illustrations, not to mention the superior and elegant craftsmanship, make *Waterloo 1815-A Commemorative Anthology* a one-of-a-kind collector's item that the enthusiast and investor with deep pockets should have in his or her personal library. The price does make it difficult for this reviewer to assert that this work is a must for scholars and students to own, but that caveat should not be held against Extraordinary Editions, since their market is decidedly not the academic audience. Anyone interested in the Napoleonic saga should aspire one day to own this handsome commemorative collection.

NOTES

[1] <http://extraordinaryeditions.com/waterloo-1815-3/the-writing/>. William Mudford, *An Historical Account of the Campaign in the Netherlands: In 1815, Under His Grace the Duke of Wellington, and Marshal Prince Blücher, Comprising the Battles of Ligny, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo; with a Detailed Narrative of the Political Events Connected with Those Memorable Conflicts, Down to the Surrender of Paris, and the Departure of Bonaparte for St. Helena.* (London: H. Colburn, 1817).

[2] <http://extraordinaryeditions.com/our-books/waterloo-1815-3/the-writing/>

[3] <http://extraordinaryeditions.com/waterloo-1815-3/the-writing/>

[4] <http://extraordinaryeditions.com/waterloo-1815-3/the-illustrations/>

[5] George Jones, *The battle of Waterloo, with those of Ligny and Quatre Bras, described by eye-witnesses and by the series of official accounts published by authority. To which are added, Memoirs of F. M. the Duke of Wellington, F. M. Prince Blücher, the Emperor Napoleon... Illustrated by maps, plans and views of the field, and thirty-four etchings from drawings* (London: Booth, 1852).

[6] <http://extraordinaryeditions.com/waterloo-1815-3/the-maps/>

[7] <http://extraordinaryeditions.com/waterloo-1815-3/the-exemplary-edition-3/>

Michael V. Leggiere
University of North Texas
michael.leggiere@unt.edu

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