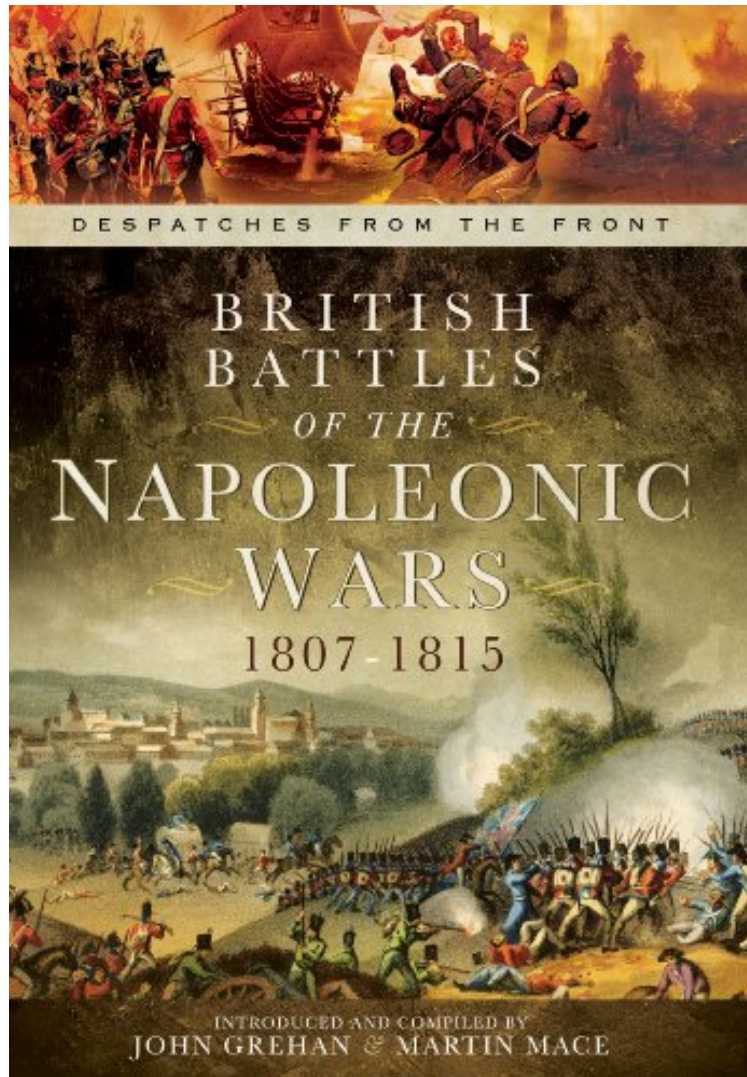


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British Battles of the Napoleonic Wars 1807-1815: Despatches from the Front

John Grehan, Martin Mace

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John Grehan, Martin Mace : British Battles of the Napoleonic Wars 1807-1815: Despatches from the Front before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised British Battles of the Napoleonic Wars 1807-1815: Despatches from the Front:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Assembly of facts, raw and untaintedBy Avon Napoleonic FellowshipThese two books present a collection of despatches written by British commanders (generals, admirals and captains) following selected battles that involved British land and/or naval forces during the Revolutionary and

Napoleonic Wars. This is not a complete list of actions involving British forces during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Grehan and Mace limit themselves to “reports of large-scale engagements from senior officers exercising independent commands” (p. viii), with ‘large-scale’ being in the context of the commitment of British forces over the 22 years covered by the books. The 89 battles selected (53 in the first book and 36 in the second) include the well-known such as Glorious First of June, Cape St Vincent, The Nile, Alexandria, Trafalgar, Coruña, Talavera, Salamanca, Vitoria, Toulouse and, of course, Waterloo. However, less well-known actions are also included, with some relating to defeats for British arms, such as the battles of Bergen, Alkmaar and Castricum (1799) and Battle of Grand Port 1810—Walcheren (July-September 1809) is a notable omission, although the capture of Flushing is included. The format of the two books is the same, with despatches from the selected battles presented in chronological order. Each simply comprises a heading with the name of the battle or action, followed by the note of the receipt of the original despatch and then despatch itself reproduced in full. The book does not include a map of each battle, however a world map and a more detailed map of Europe indicate the locations of each. This is useful to help the reader to find a particular battle of interest, or to check the geographic location of a battle. It is also quite impressive and demonstrates the geographic reach and impact of the wars. Included in the centre pages of each book are plates, most of them in colour, of paintings of some of the commanding officers who were the authors of despatches and of selected battles. Each plate has two images, either a commander and painting of a battle scene, two commanders or two battle scenes. While these images are now in the public domain, thanks to Wikimedia Commons, I found it helpful to have such plates included and they also add to the aesthetic value of the books. These are the type of books that one is unlikely to read from cover to cover, but rather to ‘dip’ into when a need or interest arises. I have read about a quarter of the presented despatches, choosing those related to the battles that we have done as wargames, others that we may look to do in the near future or just to get some understanding of a previously unknown (to me) action. The presentation of despatches, transcribed from the originals, provides a bonus for students of language. The despatches are replete with variations in spelling and the nuances of English writing of the time, all of which varied between the corresponding generals (or the staff officers who wrote the despatches). These include the copious use of capital letters, erratic hyphenation (such as Major-General) and the inclusion or exclusion of ‘u’ in words ending in ‘our’ (or). Grehan and Mace discuss this facet at some length in the introduction to each book, particularly since it is an aspect that has been maintained as the despatches presented are unedited transcriptions of the originals. “This then is our assembly of facts, raw and untainted. Their interpretation is yours alone” A ‘student’ of history cannot ask for much more. Rating: 7/10 For full review, please see [avonnapoleonicfellowship DOT blogspot DOT com DOT au](http://avonnapoleonicfellowship.blogspot.com.au)

The Napoleonic Wars was truly a worldwide conflict and Britain found itself engaged in battles, sieges and amphibious operations around the globe. Following every battle the commanding officer submitted a report back to the Admiralty or the War Office. Presented here together for the first time are those original dispatches from some forty generals, captains and admirals detailing more than eighty battles that took place in India, Africa, Europe and the Americas. This unique collection of original documents will prove to be an invaluable resource for historians, students and all those interested in what was one of the most important periods in British military and naval history. The reports include those from some of Britain’s most famous battles, the likes of Trafalgar and Waterloo, as well as less well-known but just as important engagements which resulted in the capture of the islands and territories which helped form the greatest empire the world has ever known.

About the Author Martin Mace has been involved in writing and publishing military history for more than twenty years. He began his career with local history, writing a book on the Second World War anti-invasion defences and stop lines in West Sussex. In 2006 he began working on the idea for Britain at War Magazine, This publication has grown rapidly to become the best-selling military history periodical. John Grehan has written more than 150 books and articles on military subjects, covering most periods of history. John is currently employed as the Assistant Editor of Britain at War Magazine.