

## **GOVERNOR'S REMARKS AT NAPOLEON'S TOMB**

Good afternoon.

To our distinguished guests, representing France and the French Navy, it is my great pleasure to officially welcome you to St Helena.

This Island's connection with France is firmly and forever embedded in our history. That enduring link began of course when former Emperor Napoleon, one of France's greatest leaders, was exiled to St Helena almost 200 years ago.

That decision opened a new chapter in St Helena's rich history. Since then, so much has been written and continues to be written about those years of exile, not least about the relationship between Napoleon and my predecessor at that time, Lt General Sir Hudson Lowe. I have no doubt it will continue to generate much passionate debate for many years to come!

As a schoolboy in England in the 1960s I was fascinated by the history between my country and France, especially during that turbulent period between 1789 and 1870. The drama of the revolution of 1789, bringing new ideas about governance that would change Europe and impact the rest of the world, made for good reading.

But for this schoolboy, the true excitement was in the great naval and land battles that changed national borders and convulsed Europe until the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Every schoolboy in England of my era would know that St Helena was the mysterious and distant Island that became the great General's place of exile.

For all of us assembled here today at his burial tomb, it is a memorable occasion and for me especially so. For this schoolboy that became Governor of St Helena, it is a privilege to stand alongside Captains of the French Navy, to honour so major a figure in the history of Europe. As that schoolboy, engrossed in my European history text books all those years ago, little did I know that I would experience a moment such as this.

On behalf of the people of this Island I thank you for visiting St Helena. We wish you well; we wish you calm seas and a safe return to your families. We hope too that you may visit our shores again. You will be welcome always.

(To the military detachment)

Et pour vous tous qui avez pris part à cette cérémonie, un grand merci pour l'honneur de votre présence en ce lieu, sur cette île qui vous accueille les bras ouverts.

Merci.

**Governor Mark Capes  
15 April 2014**