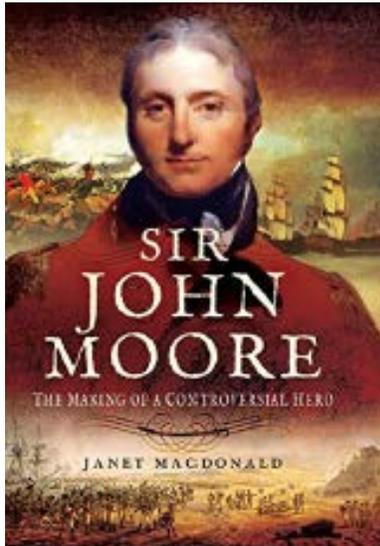


## The Napoleon Series Reviews

Macdonald, Janet. *Sir John Moore: The Making of a Controversial Hero*. Barnsley (UK): Pen & Sword, 2016. 276 pages. Maps. Illustrated. ISBN# 9781473833944. Hardcover. \$44.95/£25



Janet Macdonald has published books on numerous subjects. These include her books on feeding and victualing the Royal Navy and the British Army. This is her first biography. This book contains sixteen Chapters, four Appendices, Notes & Bibliography along with ten Maps and twenty-one Illustrations.

Macdonald has written a fresh biography of Moore, considered by many to be second only to the Duke of Wellington as Britain's best general of the Napoleonic Wars. The author relies heavily on Moore's correspondence and journals, as 'it is in his own words that the way he thought and reacted in various situations allows the character of the man to shine through.' Well researched, the author notes that some details on Moore, previously written about by others, are omitted as she was 'unable to find a creditable source for them.'

Most chapters begin with a brief background for the chapter followed by a look at Moore's service. For example, Chapter 3 titled "Corsica: Calvi and After" has a brief description of Calvi at the time Moore was there. Of the sixteen chapters, eleven of them concentrate on Moore's life and career prior to landing in Portugal. We get a good look at his evolution as a general. Four chapters are devoted to his service in the Peninsula and one chapter has the author's Character Assessment.

While the author is favourable to Moore, she presents him warts and all, for he was candid in his correspondence and journals which were not meant for publication. The writing is lucid and straight forward and the maps, though basic, compliment the text.

To clarify one point mentioned in the book on Moore's promotion to lieutenant general. In Chapter 9 Shorncliffe page 149, the author speculates that he was promoted in October 1805 for his service reconnoitring Boulogne a month earlier. In fact, Moore was one of twenty-seven officers promoted to that rank in a General Brevet promotion of major generals who had been promoted on 18 June 1798. This was progressive promotion and not as a reward.

Overall it is an excellent look at Moore and one can judge for oneself why Wellington wanted him to have the chief command and was himself willing to serve under Moore in

the Peninsula. For Wellington, years later, remarked to Lord Fitzroy Somerset, 'You know, Fitzroy, we'd not have won, I think, without him.'<sup>1</sup> Recommended.

Reviewed by [Ron McGuigan](#)

Placed on the Napoleon Series: March 2017

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<sup>1</sup> *Corunna* by Christopher Hibbert.