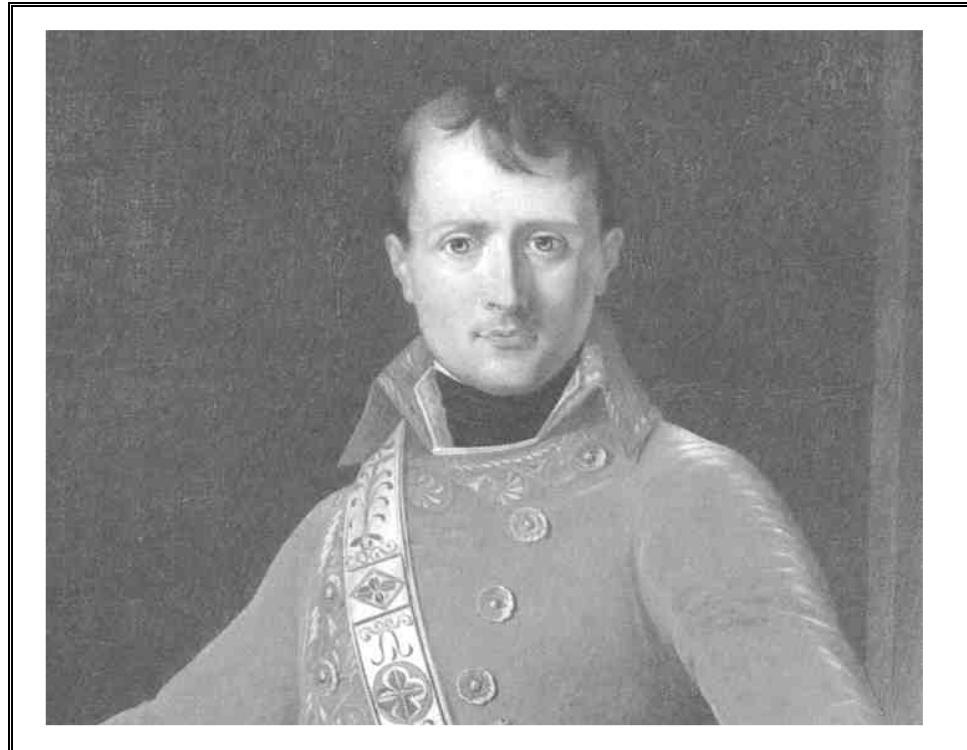


NAPOLEON and PARIS



**THERE IS NOT A SINGLE
BUILDING
STREET OR MONUMENT IN PARIS
NAMED AFTER NAPOLEON**

**AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW
MILLENNIUM, IT IS TIME THIS
MONSTROUS INJUSTICE
WAS REDRESSED**

The International Napoleonic Society

NAPOLEON and PARIS

In the special report “2001, the Year of Napoleon”, we emphasized the advantages that the entire human race would derive if Napoleon were to receive the recognition he so justly deserves.

We stated:

After all the legends are stripped away, and he is considered solely from the standpoint of the truth, Napoleon is the only man, at the beginning of this millennium, to have earned the status of a universal symbol. When his exploits, his great common sense, his stupendous energy that he devoted to improving the lives of people of all races and religions, his charm, his spirit of tolerance and his ardent desire for peace are fully brought to light, he will be seen as a model to be emulated by every head of state, and a powerful source of fraternity, inspiration and unity for the peoples of the world.

We also called attention to a monstrous injustice:

There is not a single building, street or monument
in Paris named after Napoleon

This has unleashed a mounting torrent of mail from every part of the world, expressing indignation and demanding that the “banishment” to which Napoleon is still subjected be lifted at the dawn of the new millennium.

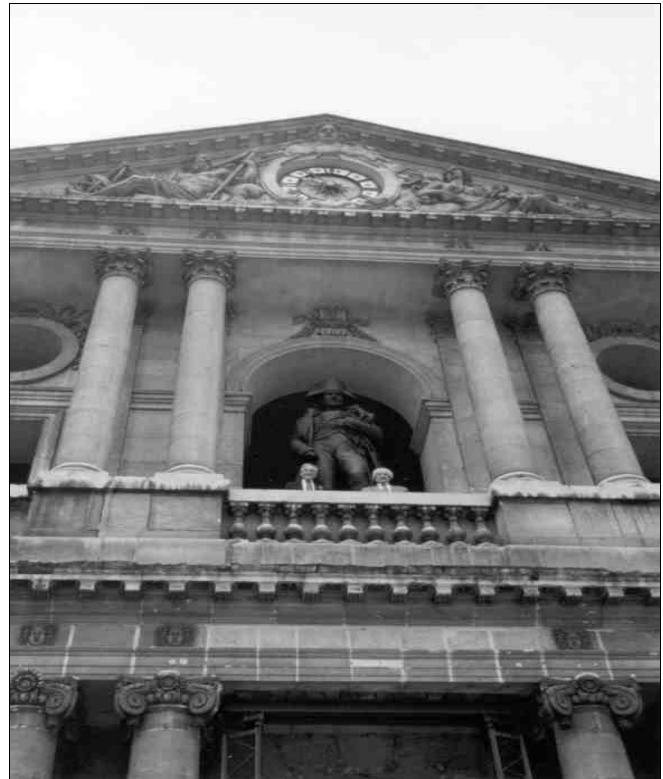
The two sites suggested as most appropriate for the honour of bearing Napoleon’s name are *Place Vendôme* and the *Esplanade des Invalides*.

Place Vendôme - Place de l'Empereur

There is already a statue of Napoleon atop the Vendôme Column. Why Vendôme? On the day of its inauguration, it was the "Austerlitz Column"; it was later renamed the "Column of the *Grande Armée*." The time has come to restore it to its former name. What would people think if the monuments erected to the memory of the soldiers at Verdun were rebaptized in this way?



La Place Vendôme (photo : R. Deshayes – Y.B.C.)



La statue des Invalides

The Emperor will assume his rightful place in this Square. He will be looking down onto the *rue Castiglione*, which leads onto the *rue Rivoli* and will be backed up by the *rue de la Paix*, which was the *rue Napoleon* until Louis XVIII was returned to France in the wagons of the foreign armies. We should remember that just like every soldier who knows the reality of the battlefield, Napoleon had a profound horror of war, and although he won most, he was not responsible for starting a single one.

Although Vendôme's achievements are admirable, his influence on history bears no comparison to that of Napoleon. He will still have a *cour* and a *passage* to his name; he could even be given the nearby *rue des Capucines*. (The Capucines will still have their boulevard).

Esplanade des Invalides - Esplanade Napoléon



L'Esplanade des Invalides by night

(photo : Jean Paul Nacivet / Explorer)

"I would like to be laid to rest by the banks of the Seine in the midst of the French people that I have loved so much." This is the wish the Emperor expressed in the will that he wrote on Saint Helena only a few days before his death.

To arrive at his grave on the banks of the Seine, one already has to cross the *Esplanade des Invalides*. Those old soldiers would certainly not mind surrendering this site to the most illustrious veteran of all. They would still retain seven other places named in their memory: (a boulevard, a hotel, two squares, a bridge, a port, and a *Métro* station).

Under the clock in the court of honour at *les Invalides* there is already a very fine bronze statue² of Napoleon that stands three and a half meters high. A decision has been made to move it, and Benjamin Mouton, Chief Architect of Historic Monuments, 73 rue Royal, 78000 Versailles, tel. 01 39 49 58 67, will soon decide what the new location is to be.

Why not install it on the *Esplanade des Invalides* on the very day that it is renamed the *Esplanade Napoléon*? One good idea would be to set it on a hexagonal base bearing the inscriptions: "To the soldiers of the *Grande Armée*" on the face side, and an inscription on each of the other sides attesting to the humanitarian and peaceful achievements of the First Consul and Emperor.

Our correspondents' most frequent arguments

There are two hundred places in Paris that bear the names of Napoleon's peacetime accomplishments, military victories, ministers and soldiers (General Cambronne alone has a square, a street, and a Metro station named after him). There is absolutely nothing named after Napoleon himself.

Julius Caesar, the Emperor who tortured Vercingétorix and put him on display in Rome as a chained slave before ordering him strangled, has a street named after him.

We are no less stupid or despicable than Sir Hudson Lowe who refused to inscribe "Napoleon" on his gravestone on Saint Helena.

Napoleon constantly risked his life and worked up to 140 hours a week to make sure that today we would work only 35.

Napoleon always wanted peace and never once declared war. It was the old European monarchies who, in seven coalitions from 1793 to 1815, systematically attacked France, the birthplace of human rights.

Even after the disastrous Russian and Spanish campaigns, the French never ceased to adulate Napoleon, as can be witnessed by:

- The return from the Island of Elba (1815) With a few soldiers, and in defiance of the police and armies of the king, he made the trip back from Provence to the *Tuileries* at the plodding pace of his horse, while whole populations of towns turned out to cheer him on his way.
- The return of his mortal remains (1840) In spite of the numbing cold (minus 20°C) hundreds of thousands of men, women and children (the largest crowd ever assembled in Paris) massed for hours along the route, from Courbevoie to *les Invalides*, to testify to their respect and recognition.
- The election of Louis Napoléon as President of the Republic by universal suffrage (1848) Just previously, the future Napoleon III had been primarily seen as an ex-convict who stood not the slightest chance against General Cavaignac.

Results of the election:

Louis Napoléon	5,572,834	% of popular vote	74.7%
Cavaignac	1,469,168		19.6%
Ledru-Rollin	376,834		5.0%
Raspail	37,106		0.45%
Lamartine	20,000		0.25%

Louis Napoléon was elected because he was the Emperor's nephew.

President Charles de Gaulle and his Minister of Culture, André Malraux, had planned to dedicate the summer of 1969 to the Emperor Napoleon. Unfortunately, the general retired to Colombey and Napoleon remained in limbo.

On behalf of the International Napoleon Society, I undertake to present these arguments to the Mayor of Paris. One single letter, however, has little chance of securing a favourable decision. This is why I am asking all who read this text, in whatever part of the globe you may be, to demonstrate your support by directly contacting the department in question. The address and phone and fax numbers are as follows:

**Monsieur le Maire de Paris
Sous-direction de la Foncière
Hôtel de Ville
75181 Paris cedex 04 France
Tel.: 01 42 76 32 64
Fax: 01 42 76 24 09**

Write, phone, send a fax, or distribute the information to everyone you know by every means at your disposal, remembering that the greatest tidal waves are simply made up of millions of drops of water.



BW/db

Ben Weider, C.M., C.Q., Ph.D.
President

Appendix

Place Vendôme

Place Vendôme was named after Louis Joseph de Bourbon, the duc de Vendôme (1654-1712). This great grandson of King Henri IV and Gabrielle d'Estrées was an army general who distinguished himself in several battles, winning victories in Flanders and Italy. On December 9, 1710, he defeated the Austrian general Starhemberg in Villaviciosa de Tajuna in Spain. This victory consolidated the position of Philippe V, Louis XIV's grandson, on the Spanish throne.

The Vendôme Column

On January 1, 1806, the Emperor Napoleon signed a decree to construct the "Austerlitz Column" putting his Minister of the Interior, Champagny in charge of the project. The artisans were given 1200 cannons, which yielded 180 tons of bronze. Under the direction of Vivant Denon and the architects Gondoin and Lepère, the work was begun on August 25, 1806 and was completed on August 15, 1810. At the summit of the 44-meter-high column is engraved: "Monument élevé à la gloire de la Grande Armée (Monument erected to the glory of the *Grande Armée*)."

Statue of Napoleon

In 1831, King Louis-Philippe decided to place a statue of Napoleon at the top of the column. This 3.5 meter bronze statue is the work of sculptor Jean-Marie Seurre. The strikingly lifelike work depicts the Emperor in his greatcoat and the uniform of the *Chasseurs de la Garde*, wearing his legendary hat.

He was the personification of goodness, sincerity and good will

Fearing that there was too great a risk of this valuable statue toppling over at such a height, Napoleon III had it removed to the Courbevoie traffic circle.

In 1911, President of the Republic Armand Fallières decided that Napoleon's statue deserved to be placed in the court of *honour at les Invalides*, which is where it remains to this day... pending removal one more time for safety reasons. Its weight, claims the Architect in Chief of Historic Monuments, is threatening to cave in the gallery.

The International Napoleonic society



Napoleon assured public education by creating primary schools, secondary schools and the university. Through the civil code, he established equitable laws for relations within the family and society. Napoleon was also the first Head of State to accord freedom of worship to all religions. In this engraving, he is seen granting this right to Jews, many of whom venerated him as a Messiah.

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