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**Q&A - Pistrucci Medal**

**What is the relationship between Waterloo 200, the London Mint Office and Worcestershire Medal Service?**

Waterloo 200 is an organisation approved and supported by the Government to oversee the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. As part of its plans, Waterloo 200 was keen to create a commemorative medal but didn’t have the funding or expertise within the organisation to make this happen. Creating a three-way partnership with the London Mint Office and Worcestershire Medal Service has, however, brought the investment and skills to the project to make it possible. The result is history in the making: the Pistrucci Medal finally being made after 200 years and the 500,000 Waterloo Campaign Medals being given free to the UK public – funded by the London Mint Office, given away by Waterloo 200 and produced by Worcestershire Medal Service.

The London Mint Office is the official commemorative coin and medal distributor for Waterloo 200. The London Mint Office is part of Samlerhuset Group, one of Europe’s largest coin companies, founded in 1994 and operating in 14 European countries. This European connection, and the fact that the Group operates in most of the countries which participated in the Battle of Waterloo, is one of the reasons why Waterloo 200 chose The London Mint Office as their official partner for distributing the Waterloo Medal and the Waterloo 200 coin sets.

Worcestershire Medal Service, official medallist to Her Majesty the Queen, completes the partnership and is producing the Pistrucci Medals and the Waterloo 200 Numismatic Programme. The fact that Worcestershire Medal Service is the official supplier to St James’s Palace of the UK honours ranging from the GCB to the BEM, coupled with its excellent craftsmanship, were the main reasons why Waterloo 200 chose it as the main producer for the Waterloo Medal and Waterloo 200 commemorative medal sets.

**Where does the revenue go from the sale of the Medal?**

A percentage of the revenue from the sale of the Medals is going to be donated to Waterloo 200. Waterloo 200’s purpose is educational and therefore the money will be used to support the development of an educational website which will be maintained and updated for a number of years after the commemoration. Other proceeds will be used to support the Service of Commemoration at St Paul's Cathedral on 18th June 2015.

**Why did you decide to produce the Waterloo Medal in its original size after 200 years?**

2015 will mark the 200th year anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, a key historical moment in European history which touched the lives of millions of people throughout Europe. We wanted to create something unique to commemorate such an important historical event and what better way to do so than to produce the Waterloo Medal for the very first time according to its original size and design.

**What is the Waterloo Medal?**

The Waterloo Medal is one of the two commemorative medals of the battle of Waterloo which William Wellesley Pole, brother of the Duke of Wellington, commissioned shortly after the battle. The Medal was to be in gold and intended for the Allied sovereigns and generals who defeated Napoleon in Waterloo. Renowned engraver Benedetto Pistrucci designed the moulds, known as dies, required to produce the Medal. It took Pistrucci 30 years to finalise the dies due to the mammoth dimensions of the Medal, which is 139mm in diameter, much larger than any previously created, and to the complexity and intricacy of the design itself.

**You mention that Pole commissioned two medals to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo – which is the second?**

Sir William Wellesley Pole also commissioned the Waterloo Campaign Medal, a bronze medal that would be presented to all the British soldiers who served at Quatre Bras, Ligny and Waterloo. This bronze medal was changed by the Prince Regent to be a silver medal and was issued in 1816–17 to every soldier present at one or more of the battles of at Quatre Bras, Ligny and Waterloo.

This was the first time in British history that a medal was issued by the British Government to all soldiers present in a battle, regardless of rank.

**Who was the Pistrucci Waterloo Medal intended for?**

The Waterloo Medal was intended for the four Allied sovereigns Tsar Alexander I of Russia, King Frederick William III of Prussia, Emperor Francis I of Austria and Prince George, The Prince Regent of Great Britain, as well as the Duke of Wellington, Commander of the Anglo-Allied army and Prince Gebhard von Blücher, Commander of the Prussian army.

**Can you describe the Pistrucci Waterloo Medal to me?**

The Waterloo Medal designed by Pistrucci is 139mm in diameter, much larger than any medals previously created. Its design is both beautiful and complex, the work of a true artist and master engraver. The Medal features on one side the four busts of the Allied rulers each wearing a laurel wreath, surrounded by allegorical scenes representing the battle and the peace that followed. On the reverse, the Duke of Wellington and Prince Blücher are depicted riding their horses into battle, while the Gigantomachy – the Greek mythological battle between the Giants and the Gods of Olympia – is featured around the central figures.

**Why was the Pistrucci Waterloo Medal never produced?**

The Waterloo Medal was never produced for a series of factors. Firstly, by the time Pistrucci completed the dies for the Medal all of the four Allied sovereigns who were to receive the medal had died. Secondly, the sheer size of the dies and complexity of the design made it impossible with the technology available at that time to produce the Medal in gold. Finally, Benedetto Pistrucci himself died shortly after completing the dies and the Mint never took the risk to harden them as they were considered too big to be hardened.

**How was the Pistrucci Waterloo Medal produced today?**

With today’s technological advances we were finally able to produce the Waterloo Medal for the very first time according to its original dimensions. In order to do so a mould of the original model, called electrotype, taken from the original dies in the 19th century, was loaned from a private collector and, using digital technology, was scanned. The scan was cleaned up and straightened using computer-aided design (CAD) software and then machine-cut. This process took four weeks in total, two weeks per side of the Medal. The dies were then hand finished by an engraver for four weeks, before finally being hardened, polished and used to strike the first Medals.

Worcestershire Medal Service, Medallists to Her Majesty the Queen, produced the Medals by applying a pressure of 2.500 tonnes to the dies to achieve the intricate details of the motive.

**Will the Pistrucci Waterloo Medal be available to purchase for the general public?**

Yes, up to 2,015 medals are being made to order to coincide with the 200th anniversary year of the Battle of Waterloo. All the medals will be individually numbered and produced in the engravers intended dimensions (139mm in diameter). The medals will be encased in a specially developed glass capsule and presented in a hand-made solid wood box with natural stone surface. The general public will be able to purchase these medals through the official distributor, the London Mint Office via www.200waterloo.co.uk.

**Will you be producing any other commemorative medals in honour of the 200th year anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo?**

Yes, a series of commemorative medals will be issued in the time leading up to the bicentenary on 18th of June 2015. From 11th of November, a commemorative Waterloo Campaign Medal, struck in bronze as originally intended in 1815, will be issued as a complimentary gift to the nation. Up to 500,000 free Medals will be made available to the British public on a first-come-first-served basis. The Medals can be ordered via [www.200waterloo.co.uk](http://www.200waterloo.co.uk) and are limited to only one per household.

Other collectables worth mentioning are a commemorative issue of the Waterloo Campaign Medal in silver bearing the exact specifications of the original medal awarded to the Waterloo-men in 1815, medals with original 19th century obverse designs of the Monarch of the Napoleonic Wars, and a gold medal bearing Benedetto Pistrucci’s original 1841 portrait of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington. There are also many more extraordinary collectables to look forward to.