

National Army Museum close to saving General Wolfe

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“This is a painting that belongs in Britain, for whom Wolfe’s victory meant so much” - Professor Richard Holmes

Image



Painting of General Wolfe by J S Schaak

The National Army Museum’s Wolfe appeal has received its biggest grant to date - from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF).

NHMF, the nation’s ‘fund of last resort’ has agreed to contribute £80,000 towards the £300,000 needed to save an important portrait of General Wolfe - victor of the Battle of Quebec and hero of the Seven Years War - from export to a private collection overseas. The grant brings the total raised by the appeal campaign, whose supporters include TV historian Professor Richard Holmes, to just over

£250,000.

The painting, by J S C Schaak, was sold at auction on 6 June, after the National Army Museum was outbid for it. After export of the portrait was temporarily stopped by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, the Museum, which preserves the heritage of Britain's armies from the middle ages to the modern day, formally expressed an interest in saving it for the nation.

To qualify for the grant, Pip Dodd, Curator of Fine and Decorative Art, had to demonstrate that the painting was not only severely at risk, but of outstanding significance to the heritage of the United Kingdom. He explained, "Like many of Britain's great military heroes, Wolfe's achievements are no longer widely known, but 250 years ago, he was a celebrity. His bold plan to outflank and surprise the French army at Quebec left Canada in the hands of the British Crown. Like Nelson at Trafalgar, he died at the moment of the victory which secured his fame."

Based on a drawing from life by Wolfe's aide-de-camp Hervey Smyth, the painting is the most authentic portrait of James Wolfe, at the time, and place, of his death.

Carole Souter, Director of NHMF, said: "General Wolfe's death in the service of this country epitomised leadership and sacrifice in conflict, and made him a national hero. It is fitting that the National Heritage Memorial Fund is helping to ensure that the most definitive painting of him is saved for future generations to learn from and enjoy."

The Museum has until 8 April 2008 to raise the remaining £50,000 needed to save General Wolfe. Public donations can be made online at www.national-army-museum.ac.uk.

Further information

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