Lead: Having built his political and military career on acts of daring and boldness, Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France, in 1814, attempted to resurrect and salvage his greatness at the Battle of Waterloo.

Intro: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts

Content: Napoleon Bonaparte was born on the Mediterranean island of Corsica, the second surviving child of a politically well-connected lawyer whose family emigrated to Corsica from Tuscany in North Central Italy during the 1500s. His father’s
connections made it possible to send his sons to France for their education. Napoleon was not an exceptional student, graduating in 1785 42\textsuperscript{nd} in a class of 58 from the Military Academy in Paris. Despite this lackluster record, however, he continued to develop his understanding of tactics and strategy by readings in the military masters and to hone his understanding of public policy while consuming the political works of Voltaire and Rousseau.

The Corsican was a quick study and a perceptive commander who combined smoldering ambition with careful attention to his political alliances, a certain boldness of action
with willingness to take great risk. He wisely aligned himself with Maximilien Robespierre’s Jacobin faction during the early years of the Revolution, and during the great emergency of 1783 was rewarded with high rank in the National Convention’s army, then battling royalist forces and their British allies in the southern ports.

At Toulon in the fall of that year he assumed command of artillery. Despite being severely wounded in close combat, with conspicuous courage he led in attacks so severe that the British were forced to withdraw. In recognition of his critical role in the capture of the city, he was promoted to brigadier general
at the age of 24. From that point the meteoric rise of Napoleon to ultimate power in France seemed irresistible. His fall was almost as spectacular. Next time: Elba and the 100 Days.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.
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