

The Group newsletter didn't have a name for the first two years but this was in the first issue exploring where the Fleurieu Peninsula's name originated

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Charles Pierre Claret, Comte de Fleurieu lived part of his life during the "Ancient Regime" French Monarchy and part during the imperial era of Napoleon I.

He was born in Lyon on July 2nd, 1738. At the age of 17, he joined the navy and took part in several naval battles in the Mediterranean Sea, against England, during the "7 Year War", enabling him to be promoted to sub-Lieutenant in 1762. At the end of that war, he left Active Service in the Navy to dedicate himself to marine clockmaking scientific study and was authorised by the King to experiment with model designed with the clockmaker Berthould. The experimentation took place during a series of voyages in 1768/69, on the frigate "Isis", which sailed the Atlantic Ocean, along the European, African and American coasts.

However, around 1770 France decided to endow itself with a strong Navy and named C.P. de Fleurieu as Director of Harbours and Naval Dockyards (Directeur des Ports et Arsenaux) in charge of the Navy renovation.

While reorganising the Navy, he was very much involved in the preparation of the French intervention at the side of the "Insurgents" - campaign plans, reports to the King and instructions were written by his own hand.

As soon as the Independence war was ended by the "Traite de Paris" (Paris Peace Treaty) signed in 1783, C.P. de Fleurieu devoted himself to the preparation of a reconnoitring expedition at sea that would enable a French navigator to equal foreigners (especially the Englishman, Cook). A report addressed to the King brought about his approval and C.P. de Fleurieu suggested that his friend La Perouse be chief of his expedition, which was accepted by the monarch. All the navigation plans were designed by de Fleurieu to whom La Perouse regularly gave reports on his mission.

In account of La Perouse' disappearance, of which circumstances were to be known much later, C.P. de Fleurieu began himself writing the report of that fruitful voyage, but he had to interrupt this work when appointed Minister of Naval Affairs and Colonies (Ministre de la Marine) in October 1770, one year after the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Soon opposed to the revolutionary Assemblies, he resigned in April, 1791 and was then named, by Louis XVI as governor/tutor to his heir Le Dauphin), but once the Monarchy was abolished C.P. de Fleurieu was jailed for 14 months and the whole of his property seized.

Freed after the revolutionary period, he was then nominated as one of the members to the "Conseil des Anciens" Legislative Assembly of the new regime "Directoire". Henceforth, he assumed official functions close to Bonaparte, particularly in the marine field.

When the Empire was decreed, he became in 1804, Senator and General Administrator Intendant General of the Emperor's Civil List. Named Count of the Empire (Comte de l'Empire) he was appointed in 1805 to his last dignitary post, that of Governor of the Tuileries Palace, where the Emperor lived. He was at the time, member of numerous scientific societies.

He died on August 18th, 1810 at the age of 72. He had been married in 1790 with Miss Aglae Deslacs D'Arcambal, and two daughters were born to them.

Taken from a magazine held at the Mortlock Library of South Australiana, State Library of South Australia.