

**THE WASHINGTON - ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE
IN THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND, 1780 - 1783**

**An Architectural and Historical Site Survey
and Resource Inventory**



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Further information may be obtained by contacting formally organized collector organizations. Listings of qualified archaeologist may be obtained by contacting formally organized archaeological associations.

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This article includes the "Treaty of Alliance between the United States and France" (6 February 1778), the "Act Separate and Secret" (6 February 1778), the "Preliminaries of Peace" (30 November 1782), the "Declaration for Suspension of Arms and Cessation of Hostilities" (20 January 1783), the "Declaration signed in Paris by the American Commissioners" (20 February 1783) and the "Treaty of Paris" (3 September 1783)

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| 20. | APPENDIX 6: "Eighteenth-Century Currencies." Repr. from <i>The Brigade Dispatch</i> vol. 43 no. 3 (Autumn 2013), pp. 16-32. | |
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any series of national WASHINGTON - ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL resource inventories and site surveys should begin in Rhode Island, the state where French forces under the *comte* de Rochambeau landed in July 1780. Instead it began almost 20 years ago in neighboring Connecticut and from there wound its way on the land and water routes of the allied armies to Yorktown. And yet it is more than fitting that it should find its completion in Rhode Island in the year 2015, the year of the return of the reconstructed French frigate *l'Hermione* to the United States and to Rhode Island, the very vessel that had carried the *marquis* de Lafayette across the Atlantic in the spring of 1780 with the news of the impending arrival in the New World. It is therefore my great pleasure to thank the many supporters who have assisted me over the years in the completion in this "Architectural and Historical Site Survey and Resource Inventory" for the State of Rhode Island.

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Holland, MI, March 2015

TIMELINE

France and the American War of Independence

- 1763 10 February. First Treaty of Paris ends the French and Indian War. France cedes Canada and territories east of the Mississippi to Britain.
- 1764 5 April. British Parliament passes the Sugar Act.
- 1765 22 March. British Parliament passes the Stamp Act.
24 March. British Parliament passes the Quartering Act.
- 1767 29 June. British Parliament passes the Townshend Act imposing duties on tea, paper, and other items imported into the colonies.
- 1770 5 March. British troops in Boston fire on rioters. The event becomes known as the Boston Massacre.
12 April. Repeal of most of the Townshend Act duties.
- 1772 9 June. The British revenue schooner *Gaspée* runs aground off Warwick and is looted and burned to the waterline the following day
- 1773 16 December. Boston Tea Party.
- 1774 31 March. British Parliament shuts down Boston Harbor under what the British call the Coercive Acts and colonists call the Intolerable Acts.
20 May. British Parliament passes the Quebec Act, sharpening the divide between Canada and the lower 13 colonies.
5 September. First session of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia. It adjourns in October.
- 1775 9 February. British Parliament declares Massachusetts to be in rebellion.
19 April. Battles of Lexington and Concord.
10 May. First session of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.
14 June. Congress establishes the Continental Army and appoints George Washington its commander-in-chief the following day.
- 1776 April. Silas Deane sent to Paris to obtain military supplies and skilled military engineers for the Continental Army.
2 May. First shipment of arms and ammunition in support of the American rebels leaves France for the New World.
June. Hortalez & Cie. receives an initial one million livres from French Government, and another million from Spain, via the French Minister.
4 July. Congress ratifies the Declaration of Independence.

- 1777 February. Duportail, first of about 100 French volunteers, joins Continental Army.
 31 July. Congress appoints the *marquis* de Lafayette a major-general.
 12 October. British forces under General John Burgoyne are surrounded at Saratoga. They surrender within a week.
- 1778 6 February. French-American treaty of Amity and Friendship and a secret Treaty of Military Alliance signed.
 4 May. French treaty recognizing American independence ratified by Continental Congress.
 17 June. First naval engagement of the war between French and British.
 12 May. Charleston, South Carolina, falls to the British.
 27 June. Naval battle off Ile d'Ouessant [Ushant] -- indecisive engagement between France and Great Britain (English Channel)
 28 June. Following the Battle of Monmouth, Lafayette returns to France and requests more assistance from the king.
 11 July -31 August. French Admiral D'Estaing's unsuccessful naval operations at New York and at Newport.
 7 September. French capture Dominica (West Indies).
 14 September. British capture St. Pierre-et-Miquelon Islands
 1 October. British capture Pondichery (India).
 9 October. Franco-American forces are defeated at Savannah, Georgia.
 13 December. British capture St. Lucia (West Indies).
 13 December. French under *duc* de Lauzun capture St. Louis (Senegal).
- 1779 5 April. An *Acte Royal* sets 17 June 1778 as starting date of hostilities with Great Britain.
 1 May. Unsuccessful French raid on Jersey Islands. (English Channel)
 18 June. French capture St. Vincent (West Indies).
 4 July. French capture Grenada (West Indies).
 23 September -20 October. D'Estaing and Americans conduct unsuccessful siege of Savannah (Georgia).
 23 September. French troops at naval battle of Flambourgh Head (English Channel) -- (*Bonhomme Richard* vs *HMS Serapis*)
- 1780 21 February -12 May. French troops at failed defense of Charleston, SC.
 17 April, 15 & 19 May. British and French forces engage in naval battles off Martinique (West Indies).
 27 April. Lafayette returns from France with the promise of more support.
 10 July. Commanded by Admiral de Ternay, a fleet carrying some 450 officers and 5,300 men under the *comte* de Rochambeau sails into Narragansett Bay in Newport.
 21 September. Generals Washington and Rochambeau meet at the Hartford Conference.
 25 September. Benedict Arnold's attempt to hand West Point over to the British fails.

- 1781 5 January. Unsuccessful French raid on Jersey Island. (English Channel).
British capture Dutch possessions in West Indies,
South America, Ceylon and India.
- 16 March. British and French naval battle off the Chesapeake Bay
(1st 'Battle off the Virginia Capes').
- 16 May. British and French naval battle of Porto Praya (Cape Verde)
- 10-12 May. French raid on St. Lucia (West Indies).
- 22-24 May. Washington and Rochambeau meet at Wethersfield,
Connecticut, to discuss their strategy for the upcoming campaign.
- 26 May. Spanish and French capture Pensacola (Florida).
- 4 June. French forces capture Tobago (West Indies).
- 10 June. The French infantry leaves its winter quarters in Newport.
- 19 June. The Regiment Bourbonnois is the first French unit to cross into
Connecticut from winter quarters in Rhode Island on its way to
Philipsburg, New York.
- 21 June. Lauzun's Legion leaves Lebanon, Connecticut, for Philipsburg,
New York, on a route covering the left flank of the French infantry.
- 6 July. French forces join the Continental Army near Philipsburg, NY.
- 18 August. The Franco-American armies depart Philipsburg for Virginia.
- 19 August. Brigadier General Moses Hazen's Canadian Regiment
(Congress' Own) and the combined New Jersey regiments cross
the Hudson at Sneed's Landing and march to Paramus.
- 21 August. The two regiments reach Springfield.
- 24 August. Major Sebastian Baumann's detachment encamps at Pompton.
- 25 August. Coming from Suffern, New York American forces under
Generals Washington and Lincoln enter New Jersey.
- 26 August. The First Brigade of French forces enters New Jersey.
- 27-28 August. The Continental Army is encamped on the heights
between Springfield and Chatham.
- 31 August. First elements of the Continental Army reach Trenton.
- 1 September. The first elements of the Continental Army embark in
Trenton and/or cross the Delaware at Trenton for Philadelphia.
- 2 September. The Continental Army parades before Congress.
- 3 September. The First French Brigade parades before Congress.
- 4 September. The Second French Brigade parades before Congress.
- 4 September. The last elements of the Continental Army have crossed
the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.
- 5 September. At Marcus Hook, Washington receives news of the arrival
of Admiral de Grasse in the Chesapeake Bay.
- 5 September. British and French naval battle off the Chesapeake Bay
(2nd 'Battle off the Virginia Capes').
- 9 September. The first elements of the Continental Army and parts of the
French army embark at Elkton and sail two days later. The
remainder begins its march to Baltimore.
- 12 September. The flotilla reaches Annapolis.

- 19-21 September. French army embarks in Annapolis.
 - 26 September. The allied forces are re-united in Williamsburg.
 - 28 September - 19 October. American and French siege of Yorktown, VA
 - 19 October. Cornwallis' troops march out of Yorktown.
 - 1 November. The first detachments of the Continental Army begin their march north to winter quarters. French forces will spend the winter of 1781-82 in and around Williamsburg.
 - 4 November. Admiral de Grasse sails from Yorktown for Martinique.
 - 26 November. French capture St. Eustatius (West Indies).
 - November- December. Continental Army troops march into and through Pennsylvania for their winter quarters in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey.
 - December. Lafayette sails back to France.
- 1782
- 6 January - 5 February. French and Spanish forces capture Fort St. Philip in Minorca.
 - 25-26 January French capture St. Kitts (West Indies).
 - 18 February. British and French naval battle off Madras (India).
 - 20 February. French capture island of Nevis (West Indies).
 - 22 February. French capture Monserrat (West Indies).
 - 12 April. British navy under Admiral Rodney destroys French naval squadron under Admiral de Grasse in Battle of the Saints
 - 1 July. Rochambeau's infantry begins its march north to Boston.
 - 6 July. British and French naval battle off Negapatan (India).
 - July through March 1783. Unsuccessful Spanish and French blockade of Gibraltar.
 - 14-24 July. Washington and Rochambeau meet in Philadelphia to discuss plans for the campaign of 1782.
 - 17-20 July. French forces are encamped in Alexandria, Virginia.
 - 24 July-23 August. French forces are encamped in Baltimore.
 - 28 July. Rochambeau rejoins his forces in Baltimore.
 - 8-31 August. French capture and destroy Fort Prince of Wales in Hudson Bay (Canada).
 - 25-28 August. French besiege and capture Trincomalee (Ceylon).
 - 28 August. Lauzun's Legion departs from Baltimore.
 - 29 August. Coming from Wilmington, Lauzun's Legion is the first French unit to enter Pennsylvania and encamps in Chester
 - 30 August. Lauzun's Legion camps in Philadelphia. The Bourbonnois Regiment camps in Chester.
 - 31 August. With Rochambeau at its head, the Bourbonnois parades through Philadelphia before Congress and President Thomas McKean. Lauzun's Legion rests in Philadelphia.
 - 1 September. The Bourbonnois rests in Philadelphia. The Royal Deux-Ponts parades through Philadelphia before Congress and McKean.
 - The Soissonnois camps in Chester.

- Lauzun's Legion leaves Philadelphia for Red Lion.
- 2 September. The Saintonge camps in Chester. The Soissonnois parades through Philadelphia before Congress and McKean. The Royal Deux Ponts rests in Philadelphia. Rochambeau and Bourbonnois leave for Red Lion. Lauzun's Legion Red Lion.
- 3 September. The Saintonge parades through Philadelphia before Congress and McKean. The Soissonnois rests in Philadelphia. The Royal Deux Ponts leaves for Red Lion. The Bourbonnois leaves Red Lion for Trenton. Lauzun's Legion in Trenton.
- 6 September. The last French forces cross the Delaware into New Jersey
- 4-13 September. French forces cross New Jersey on the way to Boston
- 25 October - 22 December. Lauzun's Legion crosses New Jersey on its way to winter quarters in Wilmington.
- 30 November. Preliminaries of Peace between the United States and Great Britain signed in Paris.
- 9-11 December. Coming from Newburgh, New York, Rochambeau crosses New Jersey on his way to Philadelphia.
- 12 December. Rochambeau and his staff arrive in Philadelphia on their way to Baltimore. They stay until 2 January 1783.
- 21-23 December. Lauzun's Legion passes through Philadelphia on its way to winter quarters in Wilmington, Delaware.
- 25 December. French infantry sails from Boston for the Caribbean.
- 1783 20 January. Preliminaries of Peace are signed in Paris
- 10 February. Rochambeau arrives in Saint-Nazaire
- March - July. French participate in capture of Voloze; siege of Mangalore
- 3 April. Hostilities end in the territory of the United States.
- 16 April. Peace is proclaimed in Philadelphia.
- 11 May. Lauzun's Legion sails out of Philadelphia for France.
- 20 June. British and French naval battle off Cuddalore (India).
- 3 September. Second Peace of Paris signed. Britain acknowledges the independence of the United States of America.
- 5 October. A final transport of 85 soldiers under Captain François Xavier Christophe *baron* de Hell of Lauzun's Legion sails from Baltimore on the *Pintade* and enters Brest on 10 November
- 2 November. Congress disbands the Continental Army.
- 1784 14 January. Congress ratifies the Treaty of Paris.
- 1787 7 December. Delaware is the first state to ratify the Constitution.
- 1789 4 February. George Washington is elected first president of the United States of America.
- 30 April. George Washington is sworn in as first president of the United States of America.

TIMELINE

Rhode Island in the American War of Independence 1763-1790

(Courtesy Newport Bicentennial Commission, 1976; adapted)

- Dec. 1763:** Arrival of frigate *Squirrel* to enforce anti-smuggling laws.
- 1764:** Rhode Island angered by Sugar Act, Paper Money Act, Stamp Act.
- 25 Jun 1764:** Delegates chosen for the Stamp Act Congress at Albany.
- 3 Mar 1764:** Rhode Island College (now Brown University) chartered.
- 1764:** Robert Melville reports to Admiralty about Newport Harbor.
- 9 Jul 1764:** Customs schooner *St. John* fired on by order of Legislature.
- 31 Jul 1764:** Legislature appoints Stamp Act Committee of Correspondence
- Dec 1764:** Stephen Hopkins publishes *Rights of the Colonies Examined*.
- 4 Jun 1765:** Tender to frigate *Maidstone* burned by Newport mob.
- 27 Aug 1765:** Stamp Act Riots begin, including hanging in effigy, destruction of houses; stamps kept aboard frigate *Cygnets*.
- 16 Sep 1765:** Legislature votes resolution against Stamp Act.
- 31 Oct 1765:** Governor Ward refuses to take Stamp Act Oath, alone of all American governors.
- 14 Feb 1766:** Liberty Tree dedicated at Newport.
- 4 Mar 1766:** Daughters of Liberty established at Newport, first such women's group in America.
- 11 Jul 1767:** Thomas Sabin starts weekly stagecoach service Newport to Boston.
- 3 May 1766:** Newport Massacre; Henry Sparker killed by British officer.
- 25 July 1768:** Silas Downer calls for Independence at dedication of Providence Liberty Tree.
- 16 May 1769:** Jessie Sackville & other Customs officials tarred & feathered in Providence.
- 19 July 1769:** Customs schooner *Liberty* destroyed & burned at Newport.
- 7 Sep 1769:** First commencement of Rhode Island College (now Brown University).
- Feb 1772:** HMS *Gaspee* arrives in Newport to enforce maritime trade regulations
- 10 Jun 1772:** British Schooner *Gaspee* burned off Pawtuxet

20 Aug 1772: British establish Royal Commission to investigate *Gaspee* incident; extraordinary powers granted to Commission.

Mar 1773: RI and Virginia establish permanent Committees of Correspondence to report on outcome of *Gaspee* inquiry and look into suspension of Charter rights by *Gaspee* Commission.

Dec 1773: A non-event: no Newport Tea Party occurs because tea officials in London think Newport is too dangerous to send tea.

1774: Legislature outlaws importation of slaves as result of movement started by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport.

12 Jan 1774: Tea boycott imposed in Newport.

17 May 1774: Providence Town Meeting issues call for Continental Congress.

14 Jun 1774: Legislature selects delegates Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward to send to Continental Congress; first to do so.

3 Dec 1774: Legislature orders removal of cannons and powder from Fort George, Newport; orders carried out 9 December. First such move in America.

12 Dec 1774: Arrival of frigate *Rose* at Newport to curb smuggling under command of James Wallace.

4 Jan 1775: 60 cannons cast at Hope Furnace, first in America.

2 Mar 1775: 300 pounds of tea burned at Providence.

22 Apr 1775: 1,500 troops ordered raised in RI to assist Massachusetts after Lexington.

3 May 1775: Governor Wanton suspended by Legislature.

3 Jun 1775: RI troops encamp at Boston under command of Nathanael Greene.

Jun 1775: Flour Riot. Newport, caused by George Rome.

12 Jun 1775: Legislature creates RI Navy, first in America.

15 Jun 1775: RI Navy sloop *Katy* captures Royal Navy tender *Dianna*, off Jamestown, first naval battle of Revolution.

17 Jun 1775: RI troops assist at Battle of Bunker Hill.

22 Jun 1775: Nathanael Greene made brigadier general of RI troops.

20 Jul 1775: Frigate *Rose* threatens to bombard Newport if rebel activists are not thrown out of city.

9 Aug. 1775: Sloop *Katy* removes rest of cannons from Fort George, Newport.

26 Aug 1775: Legislature sends instructions to Stephen Hopkins to make Congress establish a Continental Navy "to protect us from the *Rose*".

30 Aug 1775: Frigate *Rose* conducts raids on Block Island, and Stonington, CT

11 Sep 1775: RI troops depart on Arnold's Expedition to Quebec.

4 Oct 1775: Esek Hopkins made brigadier general of troops stationed around Newport

7 Oct 1775: Frigate *Rose* makes night-time raid on Bristol to divert American troops who had orders to burn Newport.

13 Oct 1775: Continental Congress passed RI resolution to create Continental Navy.

5 Nov 1775: Esek Hopkins made commander-in-chief of Continental Navy.

7 Nov 1775: Governor Wanton officially deposed by Legislature.

3 Dec 1775: RI Navy sloop *Katy* sold to Continental Navy and renamed *Providence*.

10 Dec 1775: Frigate *Rose* raids Jamestown in retaliation for snipers.

2 Jan 1776: Sloop *Providence* on short cruise in Delaware becomes first vessel of Continental Navy to set sail.

3-4 Mar 1776: Continental fleet captures Nassau; *Providence* is first vessel ever to land US Marines.

5-7 Mar 1778: George Washington visits Providence.

26 Mar 1778: Death of Samuel Ward of smallpox at Philadelphia. He was replaced by William Ellery of Newport.

4 Apr 1776: Continental fleet captures British warships *Bolton* and *Hawke* off Newport, first captures made by Continental Navy.

6 Apr 1776: Continental fleet attacks but fails to capture British frigate *Glasgow* off Newport. Frigate *Rose* departs from Newport for repairs at the Halifax Dockyard.

4 May 1776: RI Legislature renounces allegiance to George III in session at Colony House at Newport; first declaration of independence in America.

12 May 1776: John Paul Jones made captain of sloop *Providence*, his first command.

15 May 1776: Launching of Continental frigates at Providence: 32 gun *Warren* and 28 gun *Providence*.

4 Jul 1776: Congress declares independence from Great Britain

9 Aug 1776: Congress makes Nathanael Greene major general

Aug 1776: General Greene reprimands RI troops on Long Island for streaking

8 Dec 1776: A large British army arrives to occupy Newport.

10 Jan 1777: Action at Fogland Ferry.

12 Mar 1777: Nathanael Greene appointed quartermaster general by Congress.

13 Mar 1777: RI Galley *Spitfire*, run aground, captured and burned by British.

19 Apr 1777: William Vernon appointed secretary of the Eastern Navy Board,
equivalent to modern post of Secretary of the Navy.

9 Jul 1777: British General Prescott captured by Colonel Barton, at Overing Farm.

2 Aug 1777: Action at Dutch Island.

5 Aug 1777: While British are raiding Narragansett, RI, troops from Tiverton raid
British positions in Portsmouth.

27 Jan 1778: Sloop *Providence* captures Nassau again, this time single-handedly.

9 Feb 1778: Legislature authorizes raising a regiment of black troops.

16 Feb 1778: Continental frigate *Warren* escapes British blockade to the open sea,
commanded by John B. Hopkins.

27 Feb 1778: Continental ship *Columbus* wrecked and burned at Point Judith while
attempting to escape British blockade.

30 Apr 1778: Continental frigate *Providence* escapes to open sea commanded by
Abraham Whipple

18 May 1778: RI 16-gun privateer Oliver Cromwell (originally *Ye Terrible Creture*)
captured by British frigate *Beaver* and is renamed *Beaver's Prize*.

25 May 1778: British forces raid Bristol and Warren.

31 May 1778: British forces raid Tiverton and Fall River.

28 Jun 1778: Generals Greene and Varnum save American Army at Monmouth, NJ.

29 Jul 1778: Large French army and navy force under D'Estaing arrive at Newport;
British dig in for siege.

5 Aug 1778: British frigates sunk around Newport as French fleet advances.

10-12 Aug 1778: French fleet defeated by Lord Howe's smaller British fleet off
Newport, then both fleets smashed by hurricane.

29 Aug 1778: During Battle of Rhode Island Americans under General Sullivan retreat from Newport under fire; Black regiment distinguishes itself.

28 Oct 1778: RI Navy vessel *Hawk* (Silas Talbot) captures British warship *Pigot* off Newport.

17 Dec 1778: British guardship off Newport captured by Lt. Chapin and six men in a whaleboat.

May 1779: John Brown builds 20 gun privateer *General Washington* at Providence.

21 May 1779: British raid North Kingstown.

6 Jun 1779: British raid Point Judith.

7 Jul 1779: RI sloop *Argo*, commanded by Silas Talbot, captures RI Loyalist (Tory) brig *King George*, captain Hazard, and other British vessels.

14 Aug 1779: Frigate *Warren* and sloop *Providence* blown up in Penobscot River, Maine, to avoid capture.

16 Oct 1779: British burn Beavertail Lighthouse, Jamestown, preparatory to leaving Rhode Island.

25 Oct 1779: Contrary to all advice from naval experts, British garrison evacuates Newport to consolidate their position in New York.

12 May 1780: Frigate *Providence* commanded by Abraham Whipple captured by British at the fall of Charlestown, SC

22 Jun 1780: Col. Israel Angell and RI troops win battle at Springfield, NJ.

10 Jul 1780: Large French army under Gen. Rochambeau arrives in Newport.

Sep 1780: The *General Washington*, commanded by Silas Talbot, captured by 74-gun British ship *Culloden* off Newport, and renamed *General Monk*.

11 Oct 1780: British ship *Beaver's Prize* (former RI privateer *Oliver Cromwell*) wrecked at St. Lucia, West Indies.

14 Oct 1780: Nathanael Greene made commander-in-chief of American forces in the South.

17 Jan 1781: Nathanael Greene fights battle at Cowpens, SC

6-14 Mar 1781: George Washington visits Newport to plan the final campaign of the War with Rochambeau and Lafayette.

15 Mar 1781: Nathanael Greene fights battle at Guilford Courthouse, NC.

19 Apr 1781: Nathanael Greene fights battle at Camden, SC.

25 Apr 1781: Nathanael Greene fights battle at Hobkirk's Hill, SC.

14 May 1781: Col. Christopher Greene killed in battle near Fishkill, NY.

5 Jun 1781: Nathanael Greene captures Augusta, GA

10 Jun 1781: French army evacuates Newport.

8 Sep 1781: Nathanael Greene fights battle of Eutaw Springs, SC

14 Oct 1781: Stephen Olney of Providence leads American charge at Redoubt No. 10 before Yorktown

8 Apr 1782: British frigate *General Monk* (former Rhode Island privateer) recaptured by Hyder Ali (or Ally) in Delaware; sold to Continental Navy and renamed *General Washington* (again).

1 Nov 1782: RI Legislature refuses to accept the authority of Congress to levy customs duties.

25 Apr 1783: News of cessation of hostilities arrives and great celebrations are held.

3 Sep 1783: Final peace treaty signed at Paris.

Sep 1783: Frigate *General Washington* visits Plymouth, England, first vessel of Continental Navy to do so on good-will visit.

23 Feb 1784: RI Legislature passes Negro Emancipation Act, first law forbidding slavery in America.

11 Mar 1784: Royal Navy sells frigate *Providence* at auction.

1784: Continental Navy sells frigate *General Washington* back to John Brown, her original owner. She is next to last vessel owned by Continental Navy.

13 Jul 1785: RI Signer of the Declaration of Independence, Stephen Hopkins, dies.

19 Jun 1786: Nathanael Greene dies of heatstroke.

1787: The *General Washington* is first RI vessel to visit China.

29 May 1790: Rhode Island ratifies United States Constitution, last of 13 original States to do so.

TIMELINE

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

NOTE: Unlike the preceding timelines this timeline is arranged by month, not by year

January

February

March

- 1781, March 2: Washington departs from New Windsor with Major General Robert Howe and his aides Tench Tilghman and David Humphries to meet with Rochambeau in Newport.
- 1781, March 3: Washington spends the night at the home of Col. Andrew Morehouse of Dutchess County on the Fishkill-Hopewell road, near the Connecticut State line.
- 1781, March 4: Washington and his entourage arrive in Hartford where they meet up with Governor Jonathan Trumbull and his son Jonathan Jr. Washington and the younger Trumbull continue on to Lebanon where they spend the night.
- 1781, March 5: Washington reviews Lauzun's Legion and continues on to spend the night in Kingston, RI.
- 1781, March 6: Washington and his military family take the Narragansett Ferry to Jamestown and arrive in Newport around 02:00 p.m.. Here they board a barge sent by Admiral Charles René Dominique Gochet, *chevalier* Destouches that takes them to Destouches' flagship the *duc de Bourgogne*.
- 1781, March 6-12: Washington visits with Rochambeau in Newport.
- 1781, March 8: Departure of a French fleet under Admiral Charles René Dominique Sochet, *chevalier* Destouches, Destouches with 1,500 troops under the *baron* de Vioménil for the Chesapeake. Their aim is to capture Benedict Arnold.
- 1781, March 13: Travelling from Newport via Bristol Ferry and Warren, Washington reaches Providence where he spent the nights of 13/14 and 14/15 March.

- 1781, March 15: Washington and his military family leave Providence and ride to Lebanon in Connecticut via Canterbury, Scotland and Windham, traveling more than 60 miles on horseback that day.
- 1781, March 16: Washington spends the night in Hartford.
- 1781, March 17: Washington spends the night in Hartford.
- 1781, March 18-21: The itinerary for these days is unknown.
- 1781, March 22: Washington and his military family are back in New Windsor.
- 1781, March 27: Destouches returns from Virginia after having engaged a Royal Navy fleet under Admiral Mariot Arbuthnot off the Chesapeake Bay.
- 1782, March 28: The frigate *Emeraude* arrives in Newport with 4.8 million *livres*. She had left Brest on 14 February.
- The funds are escorted overland by Major DePrez of the Royal Deux-Ponts to Philadelphia, where they arrive in the second week of May. With the departure of DePrez all French forces have left Rhode Island.

April

May

- 1781, May 18: Washington leaves New Windsor and spends the night at "Morgans Tavern 43 miles from Fishkill Landing".
- 1781, May 19: Washington arrives in Wethersfield accompanied by Generals Henry Knox and Louis Lebègue Duportail and lodges in the home of Joseph Webb.
- Rochambeau and Chastellux set out from Newport for Wethersfield in Connecticut. They spend the night most likely with Lieutenant Governor Jabez Bowen in Providence.
- 1781, May 20: Rochambeau and Chastellux spend the night at Daniel "White's Tavern at the Sign of the Black Horse" in Andover.
- 1781, May 21: Rochambeau and Chastellux arrive in Wethersfield and lodge at Stillmann's Tavern.

- 1781, May 22: Washington and Rochambeau meet at Wethersfield to discuss strategy. They decide to focus on New York City.
- 1781, May 23: Rochambeau and Chastellux spend the night in Wethersfield.
- 1781, May 24: Rochambeau and Chastellux spend the night at Daniel "White's Tavern at the Sign of the Black Horse" in Andover.
- 1781, May 25: Rochambeau and Chastellux spend the night in Providence.
- 1781, May 26: Rochambeau and Chastellux return to Newport.

June

- 1781, June 5: The town council of Newport votes "to draw up an address of thanks, to His Excell[enc]y General Rochambeau, for his particular Attention for the Welfare of this Town during his command here."
- The infantry and artillery of Lauzun's Legion receive orders to embark at 6:00 a.m. the next day to cross over to Providence.
- 1781, June 6: Lauzun's men spend the night in the barracks at Poppasquash.
- 1781, June 7: A convoy of eight vessels accompanied by the 50-gun ship of the line Le Sagittaire carrying 592 infantry replacements and two companies, 68 men, of artillery, arrives in Boston from France. The replacements had been drawn from the Regiments of Auvergne (71 healthy and 7 sick soldiers) and Neustrie (19 plus 28) for the Bourbonnois; Languedoc (80 plus 6) for the Soissonnois; Boulonnois (112 plus 36) for Saintonge; Anhalt (46 plus 4) and La Marck (39 plus 36) for the Royal Deux-Ponts; and Barrois (31 plus 17) for Lauzun's Legion.
- Upon arrival in Providence on 13 June the 398 men fit for duty Will join their units, the 262 sick will continue on to Newport.
- Lauzun's Infantry and artillery reach Providence from Newport.
- 1781, June 10: Around 5:00 a.m. in the morning of 10 June 1781, the First Brigade of French forces begins to embark on vessels waiting for them in the harbor of Newport to take them to Providence.
- Rochambeau leaves behind in Newport an infantry detachment of half a dozen officers, 100 NCOs and enlisted men from each of the four infantry regiments and 30 men artillery under the command of Brigadier Gabriel de Choisy.

He also leaves behind his siege artillery consisting of twelve 24-lb guns, eight 16-lb guns, four 8-inch and seven 12-inch mortars and two 8-inch howitzers.

1781, June 11: The First Brigade of French forces arrives in Providence around 9:00 p.m., too late to set up camp.

Those who reach Providence spend the night in the Market House, others in the Old Work House on the west bank of the Moshassuk River just north of Smith Street.

The Second Brigade embarks.

The replacements leave Boston and march to camp in Dedham.

The exact march route is unknown; the stops in Dedham and Wrentham are based on the route of Rochambeau's infantry to Boston in December 1782.

1781, June 12: The Second Brigade of French forces disembarks in Providence and joins the First Brigade in camp on either side of Cranston Street between Westminster Avenue and Broad Street.

The replacements leave Dedham march to Wrentham.

The exact march route is unknown.

1781, June 13: Lieutenant-Colonel Hugau of Lauzun's Legion receives orders to march from Providence to Lebanon on Saturday, 16 June, with the 31 healthy replacements for the Legion from the Royal Barrois due to arrive that day from Boston.

1781, June 14: The infantry and artillery of Lauzun's Legion leave Providence and spend the nights of 14/15 June in Plainfield, and of 16/17 June in Windham. They arrive in Lebanon on 17 June.

1781, June 16: Lt.-Col. Hugau of Lauzun's Legion departs from Providence with the replacements for Lauzun's Legion for Lebanon where they arrive on 19 June.

1781, June 18: For the march to New York Rochambeau organized his forces into four divisions of one infantry regiment each plus its artillery complement and wagon train. Lauzun's Legion took a route separate from the infantry that took it along the coast..

The Regiment Bourbonnois as the first French division leaves its camp in Providence for its next camp at Waterman's Tavern. The remaining three Regiments Royal Deux-Ponts, Soissonnois and Saintonge follow over the next three days.

1781, June 19: The Regiment Bourbonnois leaves its camp at Waterman's Tavern on its way to its camp in Plainfield, CT. The remaining three regiments, Royal Deux-Ponts, Soissonnois and Saintonge follow over the next three days.

1781, June 20: The frigate *Concorde* leaves Newport for the Caribbean with a report about the Wethersfield Conference and a request that de Grasse borrow 1.2 million *livres* in Martinique or St. Domingue. Eventually de Grasse will borrow the funds in Cuba.

De Grasse receives Rochambeau's letter of 28 May (with post-scripts) on 16 July; his response informing Rochambeau that he would sail to the Chesapeake, leaves St. Domingue on the *Concorde* on 28 July, reaches Newport on 11 August, and White Plains on 14 August 1781.

July

1781, July 10: A small French fleet under Captain de La Villebrune sails out of Newport for Long Island.

1781, July 12: The *Romulus* and three French frigates from Newport enter the Sound between Long Island and the mainland in an attempt to capture Fort Lloyd (or Fort Franklin near Huntington, Long Island). The enterprise fails.

1780, July 11: Around 10:30 a.m. a fleet commanded by Admiral Charles-Henri-Louis d'Arsac de Ternay carrying some 450 officers and 5,300 men under the *comte* de Rochambeau, sails into Narragansett Bay and anchors between Conanicut, Rose and Goat Islands.

1780, July 12: "The town (Newport) was beautifully illuminated this evening."

1781, July 14: The small French fleet under Captain de La Villebrune returns from Rhode Island to Newport.

1780, July 18: News of safe arrival in Boston of the *Ile de France* with 350 men of the Bourbonnois Regiment reaches Newport. This would indicate an arrival date of 14/15 July 1780.

1780, July 20 (?): The Bourbonnois soldiers set out for Providence and Newport. Presumably they spend the night in Dedham (?). The departure date is probably 20 July since it is a three day's march to Providence where the unit arrives on 22 July.

The exact march route is unknown; the stops in Dedham and Wrentham are based on the route of Rochambeau's infantry to Boston in December 1782.

1780, July 21 (?): The Bourbonnois soldiers spend the night in Wrentham (?).

1780, July 22: The *Providence Gazette* reports that "a Transport with 350 troops on board and a large quantity of Military Stores which had been separated from the fleet is safe arrived in Boston. The Troops are on their march for this Town on their way to Newport and are expected to arrive here To-day."

1780, July 22: Navy Lieutenant de Valernais of the frigate *Hermione* is buried in the cemetery at Trinity Church.

1780, July 23: The Bourbonnois detachment marches from Providence to Newport and rejoins the regiment on 24 July.

August

1781, August 11: The *Concorde* arrives in Newport with a letter for Rochambeau from Admiral de Grasse in Haiti dated 28 July 1781 stating that he would sail for the Chesapeake on 13 August but that he would only stay until 15 October.

The letter reaches Rochambeau in the Odell House in Westchester County, NY on 14 August 1781.

De Grasse in fact departed eight days earlier on 5 August with 28 ships of the line, supporting frigates and around 3,300 officers and men from the Gâtinois, Agenois, Tourraine and the Metz artillery.

1781, August 23: Admiral Barras slips out of Newport with nine ships, incl. seven ships of the line carrying 480 men infantry and 130 men artillery as well as the siege artillery. They arrive in the James River in Virginia on 10 September.

The remaining garrison of Newport, 104 men under Major Louis Aimable de Prez de Crassier of the Royal Deux-Ponts, march to Providence, where they arrive on 23 August.

1780, August 29: A delegation of Oneida Indians from upstate New York visits General Rochambeau at Newport.

September

1780, September 18: Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay set out from Newport at around 9:00 a.m. to meet Washington in Hartford, CT. They spend the night with Lt.-Gov. Jabez Bowen in Providence.

1780, September 19: A broken wheel forces Rochambeau and de Ternay to spend the night in an unknown Tavern in Scotland.

1780, September 20: Rochambeau and Ternay take lodgings in the home of Jeremiah Wadsworth in Hartford.

1780, September 21: Hartford Conference between Rochambeau and Washington.

1780, September 22: Another broken wheel at the same spot as on 19 September forces Rochambeau and de Ternay to again spend the night in an unknown Tavern in Scotland.

1780, September 23: Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay spend the night with Lt.-Gov. Jabez Bowen in Providence.

1780, September 25: Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay return to Newport at around 7:00 p.m.

October

1780, October 19: State of Connecticut offers winter quarters to Lauzun's hussars after Providence refused to provide quarters

1781, October 26: News of the surrender of Cornwallis reaches Newport

1780, October 28 : French frigate *Amazon* under Jean-François de Galaup, *comte* de Lapérouse leaves Newport for Brest with Rochambeau's son, the *vicomte* de Rochambeau. The *Amazon* is accompanied by the *Hermione* and the *Surveillante*. He arrives in L'Orient on 15 November 1780 and is back in Paris on 23 November 1780.

November

1780, November 1: French infantry enters winter quarters in Newport.

1780, November 9: Hussars of Lauzun's Legion ride from Newport to Providence.

1782, November 9: In preparation for the march to the northward Rochambeau had divided his forces into five divisions of one regiment each which are to march one day apart. Lauzun's Legion forms the first division, the Bourbonnois Regiment the second, Royal Deux-Ponts the third, Soissonnois the fourth and Saintonge the fifth division.

That structure was maintained until the arrival of the Second Division, i.e., the Bourbonnois Regiment, in Trenton on 3 September 1782, when Rochambeau re-organized his units into two-regiment brigades for the march to Massachusetts.

Lauzun's Legion does not join the infantry regiments on their march to Boston. It marches instead from New York to winter quarters in Wilmington, Delaware.

Coming from Dorrance Tavern in Connecticut the French First Brigade consisting of the Regiments Bourbonnois and the Royal Deux- Ponts camp near Waterman's Tavern in Rhode Island.

1782, November 10: Coming from Waterman's Tavern the French First Brigade consisting of the Regiments Bourbonnois and the Royal Deux-Ponts camp in Providence.

The Second Brigade consisting of the Regiments Soissonnois and Saintonge arrives in Providence

1780, November 12: Lauzun's hussars leave Providence for Windham, Connecticut.

1782, November 13: The French camp is moved to the property of Jeremiah Dexter. French forces will remain here until 4 December.

1782, November 16: The campaign artillery leaves Providence for Wrentham.

1782, November 19: French artillery arrives in Boston and is quartered in vacant houses in the harbor.

1780, November 20: Hussars enter winter quarters in Lebanon.

December

1782, December 1: Rochambeau, accompanied by his son, by the *comte* de Vauban and the *comte* de Lauberdière, says farewell to his troops in Providence and in a heavy snowfall sets out for Newburgh, NY. They spend the night at Dorrance' Tavern in Connecticut.

1782, December 4: The French First Brigade consisting of the Regiments Bourbonnois and the Royal Deux- Ponts leaves Providence for a camp in Wrentham, Massachusetts.

The Second Brigade consisting of the Regiments Soissonnois and Saintonge camps in Providence.

1782, December 5: The Second Brigade consisting of the Regiments Soissonnois and Saintonge leaves Providence for a camp in Wrentham.

INTRODUCTION

5.1 Purpose of the Project

In a 1999 interview with the historical magazine *American Heritage*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author David McCullough claimed that “When you’re working on the Revolutionary War, as I’m doing now, you realize what the French did for us. We wouldn’t have a country if it weren’t for them.”¹ Few historians of the war on either side of the Atlantic would dispute that there is a very large grain of truth in McCullough’s statement. Still, the notion of Frenchmen fighting side by side with Continental soldiers for American independence comes as a surprise to many Americans: almost 235 years after Yorktown few Americans are aware of the critical importance of America’s French allies during the Revolutionary War.

The support provided by French King Louis XVI toward the success of that war has been largely obliterated in the collective memory of the American people. Following the end of the war, the struggle between Federalists and Anti-Federalists over the future organization of the United States occupied the politically-minded while the vast majority of the population struggled to meet the challenges of life in the now independent country. The struggle with England that culminated in the War of 1812 saw many a Revolutionary War veteran pick up his musket again, but the Revolutionary generation was already thinning out when on 14 August 1824, the *marquis* de Lafayette arrived in New York on the packet *Cadmus* at the invitation of President James Monroe and Congress for a triumphal tour across the country he had helped gain its independence. Traveling south from New York City, Lafayette arrived in Philadelphia on 29 September 1824, where he was greeted by a parade that included 160 Revolutionary War veterans. Lafayette’s tour culminated in a celebration attended by thousands of veterans and spectators on the siegefield of Yorktown on 19 October 1824. Almost a year later, on 9 September 1825, Lafayette sailed out of the mouth of the Potomac on the frigate *Brandywine* for France.²

Lafayette’s visit had been the Swan Song of a Revolutionary War generation that was quickly passing away, taking their memories with them. As the men of 1776 passed away in the 1820s and 1830s, and canals and railroads altered modes and

¹ "There Isn't Any Such Thing As The Past." *American Heritage* vol. 50. no. 1, (February/March 1999), pp. 114-125, p. 124.

² See Edgar Ewing Brandon, *Lafayette. Guest of the Nation. A Contemporary Account of the Triumphal Tour of General Lafayette* 3 vols., (Oxford, OH, 1954), and J. Bennett Nolan, *Lafayette in America Day by Day* (Baltimore, 1934), pp. 14-17.

patterns of transportation in the 1840s and 1850s, the memory of the "gallant" Frenchmen under General *comte* de Rochambeau, of their crucial contributions to American Independence, and of the bond forged in the crucible of war, was covered by the mantle of Revolutionary War iconography.³ A prime example of this is given by Benson J. Lossing, who could write in 1852, that "a balance-sheet of favors connected with the alliance will show not the least preponderance of service in favor of the French, unless the result of the more vigorous action of the Americans, caused by the hopes of success from the alliance, shall be taken into the account."⁴

The tragedy of the Civil War and the turmoil of the Second Industrial Revolution brought massive economic and demographic dislocation in the 1860s and 1870s. As millions of immigrants from southern and east-central Europe settled mid-western and western America in the 1880s and 1890s, interest in the French alliance was increasingly confined to professional historians and Americans living in France.⁵ The celebrations of the centennials of the American and French Revolutions in 1876 and 1889 saw the publication of Thomas Balch's *Les Français en Amérique pendant la Guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis, 1777-1783*, published in Paris and Philadelphia in 1872.⁶ In 1881, Henry P. Johnston published the still useful *The Yorktown Campaign and the Surrender of Cornwallis*, and Edwin M. Stone followed suit with *Our French Allies ... in the Great War of the American Independence*, (Providence, Rhode Island, 1884).

In Paris, Henri Doniol published between 1886 and 1892 his ambitious *Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des États-Unis d'Amérique*.

³ See Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood. War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America*. (Philadelphia, 2002), Lafayette's journey here on pp. 171-209, and John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers. Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (Amherst, 1999). The last Revolutionary War veterans died in the 1860s. For some examples see Rev. Elias Hillard, *The last men of the Revolution. A Photograph of each from Life ... Accompanied by brief Biographical Sketches of the Men* (Hartford, 1864).

⁴ Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* 2 vols. (New York, 1852), vol. 2, p. 83, note 4. A few years later, *Harper's* would characterize Rochambeau's officers as "Frenchmen of talent and capacity [who] weary of intrigue, or worsted by it, threw themselves into any career that promised sidtraction and excitement. To these exhausted votaries of of an effete civilization the wilds of America were fascinating" as they compared "the modest eye of maiden purity" with the "gay record of [their] licentious lives at home." "Newport Historical and Social" *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* vol. 9 no. 51 (August 1854), pp. 289-317; French visit on pp. 304 -310, p. 304.

⁵ See David McCullough, *The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris* (New York, 2011).

⁶ An English translation appeared in two volumes in Philadelphia in 1891/95.

Correspondance diplomatique et documents in five volumes.⁷ In 1903, Amblard Marie vicomte de Noailles' *Marins et Soldats Français en Amérique Pendant la Guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis, 1778-1783* ran off the presses in Paris. Supported by the *Society in France, Sons of the American Revolution*, founded in Paris in September 1897, the French Foreign Ministry in 1903 published a partial list of names in *Les Combattants Français de la Guerre Américaine 1778-1783*.⁸

A few years later, the First World War brought the renewal of an alliance that had flourished some 140 years earlier. "Lafayette, we are here!" Lt.-Col. Charles Stanton declared at the tomb of the *marquis* in Paris on 4 July 1917. With Armistice Day 1918, the "debt to Lafayette" was paid. But the war "over there" also brought renewed interest in the earlier military cooperation during the Revolutionary War. When in the early 1920s Boston banker Allan Forbes retraced the route taken by Rochambeau's forces, he concentrated on the New England states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.⁹ His research ended at the New York State line; the mid-Atlantic states received a single article.¹⁰ Forbes' efforts and recommendations remained without a follow-up, and even though a few determined individuals tried over the course of the century to revive the memory of the role of France in the Revolutionary War, it had until recently been left to town historians and private organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Sons of the Revolution, Society of the Cincinnati and/or the *Souvenir Français*, to commemorate the Franco-American alliance.

During the celebrations for the Bi-centennial of the American Revolution in the 1970s Rhode Island paid considerable attention to the important role played by France in the struggle for independence as well as to the almost year-long stay of French forces in the state. The compilation of maps and route descriptions published in a superb edition by Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1782*. 2 volumes,

⁷ A supplement volume bringing the history of events to the signing of the Peace Treaty of 1783 (the original vol. 5 ends with the Preliminaries of Peace) was published in 1899.

⁸ Published in the United States as: United States. Congress. Senate. Miscellaneous Publications. 58th Congress, 2nd Session. Document no. 77. (Washington, D.C., 1903/4). For the German-speaking regiment Royal Deux-Ponts and the Irish regiments Walsh and Dillon the document lists "officiers seulement."

⁹ Forbes, Allan and Paul F. Cadman, *France and New England* 3 vols., (Boston, 1925-1929).

¹⁰ Allan Forbes, "Marches and Camp Sites of the French Army beyond New England during the Revolutionary War" *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* vol. 67 (1945), pp. 152-167. Forbes' research notes seem to be lost; they are not among his papers in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

(Princeton and Providence, 1972) caused Representative Hamilton Fish of New York to introduce on 16 April 1975, House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution 225. It called upon federal, state, county, and local governments to recognize the route taken by Rochambeau's forces, as identified in the Brown and Rice work as "The Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Route." Though that effort did not result in the creation of a National Historic Trail, the current effort to create such a trail rests to a large degree on the work done in Rhode Island the 1970s. Supplementing the work done by Mrs Brown and Dr. Rice, the Franco-American Sub-Committee of the Rhode Island Bicentennial Commission staged numerous programs to commemorate the role of France, while the Office of the Adjutant General of Rhode Island under the leadership of BG Gilbert A. Hempel (RIM) organized a re-enactment of the march to Yorktown.

These celebrations of the 1980s were followed by an almost inevitable hiatus which lasted until the late 1990s when commemorative and preservation efforts that had begun in the State of Connecticut developed into a nation-wide effort to celebrate both the 225th anniversary of the American War of Independence as well as the role of France in achieving that independence. In the fall of 2000, both Houses of Congress passed "A Bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to complete a resource study of the 600 mile route through Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia, used by George Washington and General Rochambeau during the American Revolutionary War." The bill was presented to President Bill Clinton on 2 November and signed into law on 9 November 2000.¹¹ President Clinton's signature created Public Law No. 106-473, the *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000*. Similarly on 22 July 2002, the United States House of Representatives voted to make Lafayette an honorary citizen of the United States. This honor places Lafayette among only five others who were similarly honored.¹²

¹¹ Concurrently First Lady and (then) Senator-elect Hilary Rodham Clinton designated the W3R a *Millennium Trail*, making properties along the route eligible for federal TEA-21 funds through each State's Department of Transportation.

¹² The Senate approved the Joint Resolution on 24 July 2002 and President George W. Bush signed it into law. The other honorees are Winston Churchill, Mother Teresa, Raoul Wallenberg, and William Penn and his wife Hannah. Since Lafayette was made a citizen of Maryland in 1785, historians such Louis Gottschalk have argued that Lafayette effectively became a US citizen when Maryland became one of the United States. See his *Lafayette Between the American and French Revolutions* (1950); Appendix III, and pages 145-47 of the main text. Congress already proclaimed Lafayette an honorary citizen in 1824.

The present resource survey of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail (W3R-NHT) in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations contributes to the federally mandated nine-state plus the District of Columbia study authorized by Congress and completed in 2006.

The purpose of this architectural and historical site survey and resource inventory in and for the State of Rhode Island is six-fold:

1. To identify the land and river routes that the *comte* de Rochambeau's French forces took through Rhode Island between July 1780 and June 1781 during their almost one-year long stay in the state. Side trips by officers such as the travels of the *chevalier* de Chastellux are not included in this report.
2. To identify the routes of the marches of French forces from Newport to Providence and on to Connecticut in June 1781 on the way to Yorktown.
3. To identify the routes of the return march of the French forces in November and December 1782.
4. To identify sites and resources along these routes.
5. To research and write a historical survey of the winter quarters of 1780/81 and of the campaign of 1781 around these sites that focuses on the marches rather than the siege and victory at Yorktown.
6. To assist in developing a plan to interpret those sites within the context of the national W3R commemorating the march to Yorktown in 1781 and the return marches north in 1781 and 1782.

5.2 Scope of the Project

The current report undertakes a historical and architectural survey of resources for the W3R in the State of Rhode Island. As such its goal is to touch on as many aspects of the French presence in Rhode Island as possible and to point out further areas and topics of research rather than to write an in-depth and exhaustive study of each and every domestic and foreign aspect related to France and the United States during these momentous months in Newport and Rhode Island history. In addition it is intended as a tool to provide start-up information to support potential archeological surveys and excavations of the campsites, routes, and other physical evidence of the presence of the French army in Rhode Island from 1780 to 1783.

This dual approach adheres to the template developed by consultant and followed by states such as Connecticut, New York, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Upon completion Rhode Island will have the historical basis for joining the W3R National Historic Trail. The W3R through the State of Rhode Island will be one element of the greater W3R project aimed at bringing to life the entire nine-state route as a National Historic Trail administered by the NPS. It will also have the foundation needed to begin the research for nominating to the NHR newly identified sites such as eighteenth-century sections of the trail and for a more inclusive interpretation of existing sites within the state.

5.3 Goals of the Project

Following the pattern established in similar surveys in other states along the route, the project has set itself three goals:

- 1) to collect and provide information out of American, French, British, and German primary and secondary sources for information concerning the French role in the American Revolutionary War with a view toward explaining the reasons, goals, and results for and of that involvement.
- 2) to review these sources for information about the presence of French troops in Rhode Island and their interaction with the inhabitants of the state in 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783.
- 3) to identify historic buildings and/or sites as well as modern monuments and markers associated with the campaigns of 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783. This identification of above-ground resources, including portions of the trail where still in existence, and of the campsites (as archeological sites) should (where possible, necessary, or feasible) be followed by the research necessary to bring about nomination of these resources for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or other appropriate state and/or national registers.

The route as identified in the historical and architectural survey will be determined by above-ground resources and described in relationship to the currently existing road patterns within the State of Rhode Island. It will by necessity vary at different locations from the actual eighteenth-century routes taken by the French army.

Goals 1) and 2) were achieved by research in American and European libraries and archives with a special focus on little-known and/or unpublished materials

relating to the French role in the American Revolutionary War. Local historical research was conducted in the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Office, the Rhode Island Public Archives, the Historical Society of Rhode Island, the Historical Society of Newport and in cooperation with individuals and libraries along the route during fieldwork in the Fall of 2004, the Summer of 2005, and on subsequent research visits since then.

Within the parameters set in Goal 3) only structures and sites connected directly and through primary source materials (such as journals, diaries, letters, receipts, or maps) with the presence of the infantry, artillery, and cavalry portions of Rochambeau's armies between the summer of 1780 and 1781 and the fall and winter of 1782/83, were included. Movements of French forces and/or of French officers in American service such as the *marquis* de Lafayette are not covered here.

In its style, its detailed comparative footnoting, its discussion of sources, and its repeated references to the need for additional research of particular subject areas this survey betrays the fact that it is meant more as a research tool than for the general reader. French and German words are in italics unless they are included as English words in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, tenth edition. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

5.4 Sources

The primary goal of this architectural and historical resource inventory and site survey from the arrival of French forces in Rhode Island in June 1780, their winter quarters 1780/81 to their departure for Virginia in the summer of 1781 as well as its brief return to Rhode Island in November 1782, is the identification of the routes of these forces and their location on the ground today.

The indispensable collection of primary source materials to reconstruct the French presence in Rhode Island is the compilation of maps and route descriptions published by Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown in their *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1782*. 2 volumes, (Princeton and Providence, 1972). Volume 2 re-produces maps of the routes and camp-sites as well as the road descriptions that are located in the Rochambeau Papers, the Rochambeau Family Cartographic Archive (GEN MSS 146) at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University and in other repositories world-wide. These maps were drawn mostly by Louis Alexandre de Berthier and, though not always to scale, provide the exact location of the camp sites. These superbly edited volumes are indispensable for anyone interested in the march of

Rochambeau's troops from Newport to Yorktown in 1781 and back to Boston in 1782. There are a very few sites and routes such as the route of Lauzun's Legion through Connecticut in June 1781, or the 1782/83 winter quarters of Lauzun's Legion in Wilmington, that Rice and Brown either could not locate or that lay outside their immediate research interest, but for the march of French forces through Rhode Island the itineraries and maps are complete.

Orders and arrangements for the marches as well as supply issues are addressed in itineraries and official orders for the march published in Volume 2 of Rice and Brown's *American Campaigns*. Berthier, an assistant quartermaster-general, provides a very detailed description of the order and organization of each column of the march until August 1781, when his account ends abruptly in mid-sentence. The same is true for another invaluable source for French troop movements, the *Livre d'ordre* of Rochambeau's little army, which allows a minute reconstruction of the daily life of the soldiers in America as well as the order and organization of the march to White Plains. The *livre*, the equivalent of an Orderly Book in the Continental Army, is preserved in the Archives Générales du Département de Meurthe-et-Moselle in Nancy, France, under the call number E 235. Unfortunately it too ends on 17 August 1781, the day before the troops got ready to break camp and set out for the march to Yorktown. A second volume for the siege of Yorktown and/or the march north in 1782 has not been found yet. Though about two-thirds of the book cover mundane items such as sign/counter-sign, which regiment provides guards when and where, it is a source that deserves closer research for any in-depth study of Rochambeau's forces in Rhode Island and the march to White Plains.

A continuation of sorts of the *Livre d'Ordre* is the "Journal des operations du corps Français, Depuis le 15 Aôut," a brief 14-page manuscript narrative of the march of the French army to Virginia, the siege of Yorktown, and the surrender of Cornwallis. From the appearance of the handwriting throughout this volume, it seems that it is the original day-to-day record dictated by Rochambeau. For the return march of 1782, there exists a 19 1/2 page manuscript, partly autograph, with heading on first page, "1782," and heading on page 16, "1783," giving Rochambeau's very brief narrative of events of 1782 and early 1783. Both of these manuscripts are located in the Rochambeau Papers at Yale University, but neither of them covers the marches through Rhode Island in more than a sentence. The Rochambeau Papers in the Library of Congress and the Beinecke Library at Yale University,¹³ however, should form the basis of any future in-depth study of the French presence in Rhode Island.

¹³ The Rochambeau Papers are catalogued as GEN MSS 308, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

If sources such as the *Livre d'ordre* have hardly, if ever, been used in historical analyses of the 1781/82 campaigns, personal accounts, letters, diaries, and memoirs by American and French military personnel have always formed one of the backbones of the historiography of the war. But here too a lot of new ground remains to be broken as historians have all too often focused their attention on only a few well-known and easily accessible sources rather than mine the treasure-trove of the many lesser-known materials available in out-of-the-way places. In an appendix to Volume 1 (pp. 285-348), of their *American Campaigns*, Rice and Brown provide a list of journals, diaries, memoirs, letters, and other primary sources available at the time of publication of their book. Since then, almost two dozen primary sources have appeared in European and American archives that can be added to the 45 sources, i.e., accounts of events in America written by officers in Rochambeau's army listed by Rice and Brown. Most surprising is the fact that three journals/diaries/memoirs of enlisted men have come to light since 1972. The most important of these three is the journal of Georg Daniel Flohr, an enlisted man in the Royal Deux-Ponts, located in the Bibliothèque Municipale of Strasbourg, France.¹⁴ The Milton S. Latham Papers in the Library of Congress are home to the *Journal Militaire* of an unidentified grenadier in the Bourbonnois regiment.¹⁵ Finally there is the *Histoire des campagnes de l'Armée de Rochambaud (sic) en Amérique* written by André Amblard of the Soissonnois infantry.¹⁶

Also added can be the papers of Antoine Charles du Houx baron de Vioménil, Rochambeau's second in command. Some 300 items and about 1,000 pages long, the Fonds Vioménil is preserved in the Académie François Bourdon in Le Creusot, France. This never-before used material sheds much new light on the decision-making process at the top of the French military hierarchy. They are especially valuable for the time periods when Rochambeau was absent from the troops and

¹⁴ *Reisen Beschreibung von America welche das Hochlöbliche Regiment von Zweybrücken hat gemacht zu Wasser und zu Land vom Jahr 1780 bis 84.*

¹⁵ Milton S. Latham Journal MMC 1907, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁶ Amblard enlisted at age 19 in 1773 and was discharged as a captain in 1793. His manuscript is located in the Archives Départementales de l'Ardèche in Privas, France. Excerpts were published in four installments by Francis Barbe, "De Lussas vers l'aventure . . . dans l'Histoire de France," *Revue de la Société des Enfants et Amis de Villeneuve-de-Berg*, new ser., vol. 57 (2001), pp. 183-198, vol. 58 (2002), pp. 239-56, vol. 59 (2003) and vol. 60 (2004). I am at a loss to explain why numerous passages from this journal are repeated verbatim in a ms by an unidentified officer of the Soissonnois regiment in the Huntington Library in California and which also contains maps of all French campsites that may have been copied from Berthier. See my "A New View of Old Williamsburg. A Huntington Library Manuscript provides another glimpse of the city in 1781." *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 22 no. 1, (Spring 2000), pp. 30-34.

Vioménil was in charge, but they contain little for the stay in Rhode Island. For Lauzun's Legion, long the only component of Rochambeau's army without a contemporary eye-witness account, a manuscript journal kept by its Lieutenant-Colonel Etienne Hugau entitled *Détails intéressants sur les événements arrivés dans la guerre d'Amérique. Hyver 1781 à 1782. Hampton, Charlotte et suite* has come to light in the Bibliothèque municipale in the town of Evreux, France. But these *Détails* begin only after the siege of Yorktown while Lauzun's Legion never entered Rhode Island in 1782 but returned to Delaware from Crompond/Yorktown Heights, New York.¹⁷

Among new sources not listed in Rice and Brown are also the correspondence of Rochambeau's aide-de-camp Captain Charles Malo François *comte* de Lameth, *aide-maréchal général des logis* (in May 1781), and that of his brother Captain Alexandre Théodor Victor *chevalier* de Lameth, who replaced Charles Malo François in the summer of 1782.¹⁸ Also unavailable in 1972 was the *Journal de l'Armée aux ordres de Monsieur de Comte de Rochambeau pendant les campagnes de 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783 dans l'Amérique septentrionale* kept by *comte* de Rochambeau's 21-year-old nephew Louis François Bertrand Dupont d'Aubevoye, *comte* de Lauberdière, a captain in the Saintonge Regiment of Infantry and one of his aides-de-camp.¹⁹ The largest body of materials not listed in Rice and Brown concerns the Royal Deux-Ponts regiment of infantry. Through the good offices of Ms Nancy Bayer I gained access to four letters written by her ancestor Wilhelm de Deux-Ponts from America²⁰ while the papers of Colonel Christian de Deux Ponts, which have been in part deposited in and in part acquired by German archives.²¹ Also new are a letter

¹⁷ Published by Gérard-Antoine Massoni, *Détails intéressants sur les événements arrivés dans la guerre d'Amérique. Hyver 1781 à 1782. Hampton, Charlotte et suite. Manuscrit de Claude Hugau, lieutenant-colonel de la Légion des Volontaires Etrangers de Lauzun* (Besançon: Université de Franche-Comté, 1996). Hugau's account can be found on pp. 219-227.

¹⁸ The letters are in the Archives du Département Val d'Oise in Cergy-Pontoise, no. 1J 191 and 1J 337/338. For the stay in Newport they contain mostly strength reports.

¹⁹ Lauberdière's *Journal* is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Nouvelle Acquisitions Françaises, 17691. See my "America the Ungrateful: The Not-So-Fond Remembrances of Louis François Dupont d'Aubevoye, Comte de Lauberdière" *American Heritage* vol. 48, no. 1, (February 1997), pp. 101-106, and "Lauberdière's Journal. The Revolutionary War Journal of Louis François Bertrand d'Aubevoye, Comte de Lauberdière" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 18, no. 1, (Autumn 1995), pp. 33-37.

²⁰ The letters are owned by Anton Freiherr von Cetto in Oberlauterbach, Germany. They deal mostly with family affairs in France and Germany; the correspondence ends with William's departure for France after the victory at Yorktown.

²¹ The papers of Christian von Zweibrücken deposited in the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv - Geheimes Hausarchiv - in Munich are owned by Marian Freiherr von Gravenreuth; those deposited in the Pfälzische Landesbibliothek in Speyer were acquired at auction and are owned by the library.

written by Jean-François de Thuillière, a captain in the Royal Deux-Ponts preserved in the Archives Nationales²² and two letters by Louis Eberhard von Esebeck, lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Deux-Ponts, dated Jamestown Island, Virginia, 12 and 16 December 1781.²³

In 2008, the Society of the Cincinnati acquired at auction the papers of Captain François-Ignace Ervoil d'Oyré, an engineer with Rochambeau's army. The papers consist of a group of journals gathered in four parts entitled *Notes relatives aux mouvements de l'armée française en Amérique* and cover the period of 1780 to 1782. In February 2009, the library also acquired one additional journal that fits into this series along with a collection of 37 letters of Captain Oyré written to a family member back in France, which cover his experiences in America.²⁴ Additionally, I have been able to locate the journal kept by Antoine de Bellemare de Saint-Cyr, a *capitaine* in the Saintonge Regiment of Infantry, in the Warrington Dawson Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University²⁵ and the Journal of Captain Charles Joseph de Losse de Bayac of the Bourbonnois Regiment of Infantry, whose two volumes begin with a brief history of the American troubles and end in 1783.²⁶ Though it only covers the months between 1 July 1782 to 20 September 1782 when French forces marched from Georgetown to Hunt's Tavern in New York and thus ends before they entered Rhode Island, the "Suite de journal des campagnes 1780. 1781. 1782 : Dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, 1782" purchased at auction by Princeton University in 2007 needs to be added to the list of newly discovered manuscripts since it contains valuable information on the regimental organization and logistics of the marches.²⁷

²² The letter is catalogued in Marine B4 172, Archives Nationales, Paris.

²³ John M. Lenhart, "Letter of an Officer of the Zweibrücken Regiment," *Central-Blatt and Social Justice*, vol. 28, (January 1936), pp. 321-322, and (February 1936), pp. 350-360.

²⁴ d'Oyré (1739-1798) was one of nine engineers to serve with Rochambeau's army in North America. His *Notes relatives aux mouvements de l'armée française en Amérique* have the call number MSS L2008F163 M; his 37 letters are catalogued under MSS L2009F30 M.

²⁵ *Extrait des Mémoires du chevalier de Bellemare de Saint-Cyr, lieutenant-colonel d'infanterie [Rég. de Saintonge] rédigé par lui-même en 1815*. The version at Duke University is a typed copy of a transcript made in 1856 by his great-nephew L.A. de Captot. The Warrington Collection consists of 7,846 items in 69 vols. Collection no. 1424. Transcripts and copies of mss by French officers are primarily in Boxes 38 to 42.

²⁶ Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA, Accession no. 4976.

²⁷ General Manuscripts Bound, 2nd Series. Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, call no. C0938 (no. 469). This 25-page ms is identified on the cover as "19ieme liasse", i.e. the 19th installment; none of the other notebooks have (yet) been found.

Sources that I have not been able to use for this study are the complete “Journal de la campagne de l’armée française... 1783” by Jean-Baptiste-Elzéar, *chevalier* de Coriolis (1754-1811), a lieutenant in the Bourbonnois Regiment in Rochambeau’s army. This 153-page long journal is held by the Bibliothèque centrale des musées nationaux in the Louvre in Paris under the call no. LA 38 145.²⁸ Also unavailable were the journal of Xavier de Bertrand, a lieutenant in the Royal Deux-Ponts,²⁹ and the journal kept by Jean-Baptiste Dupleix de Cadignan of the Agenois Regiment.³⁰ Still unknown are the locations of the journals by officers such as Miollis, Ollonne, Menonville or the brothers Rosel, some of which Warrington Dawson had seen and/or excerpted in the 1930s.³¹

These discoveries bring the total of known French sources to over 70, many of which have never been used before, but their value for the project varies greatly. Three items listed by them are collections of maps drawn by engineers for the march and/or for the siege of Yorktown. Other primary sources such as the letters by the Armand de la Croix *comte* de Charlus³² or Gabriel-Gaspard baron de Gallatin, a *sous-lieutenant* in the Royal Deux-Ponts,³³ are often only collections of letters written during different stages of the campaign. Though valuable for the information they contain, most of them say little or nothing about the march, viz. the

²⁸ The library also holds the “Manuscrit en partie autographe. Histoire de l’origine, de la source et des progrès de la guerre d’Amérique entre la Grande-Bretagne et ses colonies ... 1776, 1777.” 11 cahiers, 285 pages. Extracts of the journal covering the shipwreck of La Bourgogne off the coast of Venezuela on 3 February 1783 were published by Maurice La Chesnais, “Un Officier français au Vénézuéla, par le Chevalier de Coriolis” *La Revue du Mois* vol. 7, (January-June 1909) and “Lettres d’un officier de l’Armée de Rochambeau: le chevalier de Coriolis” *Le correspondant* no. 326, (March 25, 1932), pp. 807-828.

²⁹ The journal is quoted in Régis d’Oléon, “L’Esprit de Corps dans l’Ancienne Armée” *Carnet de la Sabretache* 5th series (1958), pp. 488-496. Régis d’Oléon is a descendant of Bertrand. Its current location is unknown.

³⁰ The Agenois Regiment formed part of the infantry that sailed on Admiral de Grasse’ fleet to the Chesapeake. His manuscript *Journal des différentes campagnes que j’ai fait soit par terre ou par mer, depuis que je suis entré au service, ainsi que des principaux événements qui se sont passés dans les différents climats que j’ai parcouru...*, 1784-1785; 2 volumes of 285 and 141 pages resp., is therefore only of limited value for this study. It was sold at auction in Paris in November 2009. I have been unable to identify and/or locate the buyer.

³¹ See the list in Warrington Dawson, « Les 2112 français morts aux Etats-Unis de 1777 à 1783. » *Journal de la Société des américanistes* New Series vol. 28 (1936), pp. 1-12, pp. 9-11.

³² 24-year-old Armand de la Croix *comte* de Charlus was second in command of the Saintonge. The last known letter he wrote from America is dated 16 August 1781. The eight letters written by Charlus to his father are preserved in the collections of the Service Historique de la Défense in Vincennes, series A13732, Nos. 59, 65, 66, 68, 72, 73, 81, 82.

³³ Warrington Dawson, “Un Garde suisse de Louis XVI au service de l’Amérique” *Le correspondant* vol. 324, Nr. 1655, (September 10, 1931), pp. 672-692, pp. 683-688.

journals kept by Brisout de Barneville (ends on 5 December 1781),³⁴ Cromot du Bourg,³⁵ William de Deux-Ponts,³⁶ Amblard or the anonymous grenadier in the Bourbonnois record not much more than a tabulation of miles marched and the names of locations passed. Many more end with the siege of Yorktown, e.g., William de Deux-Ponts and Cromot du Bourg, while others again, i.e., those of Ségur³⁷ or Broglie³⁸ begin only in 1782 when their authors arrived in America, though they contain detailed accounts of their encounter with British naval forces in the Delaware Bay. Of those officers who participated in the marches some, such as Blanchard, either marched ahead of the main army to check on hospitals or campsites³⁹ or, as in the case of Lauberdière, followed behind. Others such as the *chevalier* de Chastellux did not write a single word about the march,⁴⁰ neither did the *duc* de Lauzun,⁴¹ while the *Détails* of Hugau do not begin until after the siege of Yorktown. Desandrouins had the misfortune of losing his journal in the wreck of the *Duc de Bourgogne* in the spring of 1783. His description of the march to Yorktown consists of 10 lines; those of the return march are four pages long.⁴² The usefulness of the majority of journals for the return march to Boston is impacted by the fact that virtually all officers who made the march to Yorktown kept their comments on the return march very short: Clermont-Crèvecœur's journal, an excellent source for 1781, devotes but 20 lines to the return march a year later. Only Verger, who had sailed with the siege artillery to Yorktown in August 1780, fills some of that void.⁴³

³⁴ "Journal de Guerre de Brissout de Barneville. Mai 1780-Octobre 1781" *The French-American Review* vol. 3, no. 4, (October 1950), pp. 217-278.

³⁵ Marie-François Baron Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer, 1781" *Magazine of American History* vol. 4, (June 1880), pp. 205-214, p. 214.

³⁶ William de Deux-Ponts, *My Campaigns in America* Samuel A. Green, ed., (Boston, 1868).

³⁷ Louis-Philippe comte de Ségur, "Extraits de Lettres écrites d'Amérique par le comte de Ségur colonel en second du Régiment de Soissonnois à la comtesse de Ségur, Dame de Madame Victoire 1782-1783" in: *Mélanges publiés par la Société des Bibliophiles Français (Deuxième Partie)* (Paris, 1903), pp. 159-205.

³⁸ "Journal du Voyage du Prince de Broglie colonel-en-second du Régiment de Saintonge aux États-Unis d'Amérique et dans l'Amérique du Sud 1782-1783" in: *Mélanges publiés par la Société des Bibliophiles Français (Deuxième Partie)* (Paris, 1903), pp. 15-148.

³⁹ *The Journal of Claude Blanchard, Commissary of the French Auxiliary Army sent to the United States during the American Revolution* Thomas Balch, ed., (Albany, 1876).

⁴⁰ Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782*. Howard C. Rice, Jr., ed., 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1963). Chastellux did not become a *marquis* until the death of his eldest brother in early 1784.

⁴¹ *Mémoires de Armand-Louis de Gontaut, duc de Lauzun*, Edmond Pilon, ed., (Paris, 1928).

⁴² Fragments of his diary which survived his shipwreck in February 1783 are published in Charles Nicholas, *Le Maréchal de Camp Desandrouins* (Verdun, 1887), pp. 341-368.

⁴³ Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger, a Swiss officer, had entered the Royal Deux-Ponts as a 17-year-old *cadet-gentilhomme* in February 1780. His journal is published in *The American*

Indispensable for biographical research on the 1,034 French officers serving in d'Estaing's, Rochambeau's, and St. Simon's forces as well as on the French officers in the Continental Army is Gilbert Bodinier, *Dictionnaire des officiers de l'armée royale qui ont combattu aux États-Unis pendant la guerre d'Indépendance 1776-1783* 3rd edition, (Chailland, 2001). Indispensable is also Bodinier's magisterial *Les officiers de l'armée royale combattants de la guerre d'Indépendance des États-Unis de Yorktown à l'an II* (Château de Vincennes, 1983). Enlistment records or *contrôles* of enlisted personnel in Rochambeau's corps, indispensable for statistical data on his troops are preserved by the Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre in the Château de Vincennes; only those of Lauzun's Legion are in the Archives Nationales in Paris.⁴⁴ Here Samuel F. Scott in his *From Yorktown to Valmy: The Transformation of the French Army in an Age of Revolution* (Niwot, CO, 1998) has produced an equally superb parallel volume to Bodinier's research on French and non-French officers. Detailed research into the more than 6,000 names recorded in these files goes beyond the scope of this study. Such research would provide information as to which and how many French soldiers died and where they were buried.

On the American side, the single most important private source is the Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers in the Connecticut Historical Society. Wadsworth was the chief supplier for the French forces in America, and his agents supplied Rochambeau's troops throughout their stay on the American mainland.⁴⁵ Besides these papers another important source which has only lately become easily accessible on fold3.com are the pension application records of Revolutionary War veterans compiled in the 1830s. The vast majority of these thousands of applications were submitted by Continental Army or militia veterans, but there are also a handful of

Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783 Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, eds. 2 vols., (Princeton and Providence, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 117-188.

⁴⁴ The Bourbonnois *contrôles* are catalogued under 1 Yc 188 (1776-1783 and 4 Feb 1784 to 1786), Soissonnois *contrôles* have the number 1 Yc 966 (1776-1783 and 4 Feb 1784 to 1786), the Saintonge *contrôles* are 1 Yc 932 (1776-1783 and 4 Feb 1784 to 1786), the Royal Deux-Ponts *côntrôles* are 1 Yc 869 (1776-1783 and 4 Feb 1784 to 1786). The *contrôles* of the Auxonne Artillery are listed as 10 Yc 1 (1776-1783 and 4 Feb 1784 to 1786). The Lauzun *contrôles* in the Archives Nationales have the catalogue number D 2c 32 (March 1780-1783) and 8 Yc 17 (beginning on 4 Feb 1784 to 1786).

⁴⁵ The vast majority of the papers of Jeremiah Wadsworth are preserved in the collections of the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford, Connecticut (CTHS), but some manuscripts can also be found in collections of the New-York Historical Society and other repositories such as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in Washington, DC where the Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application files, Film 27, Reel 2670 contain the Wadsworth and Carter Day Book 27 April 1781 to 13 November 1782. Since the beginning of this project the mss in CTHS have been re-catalogued, e.g. Box 155 is now Box 42 &c. Both cataloguing systems are used in this report.

applications by waggoners from Rhode Island and Connecticut which provide insights into this vital but frequently ignored aspect of the march to victory.⁴⁶

Taken all together, the historiographical situation in Rhode Island can be summed up thus: we have a large body of primary French sources, many of which remain unpublished, as well as the equally virtually untapped voluminous correspondence between Wadsworth and his purchasing agents which allows the reconstruction of the economic side of the French presence in the state. There is no single major body of materials in Rhode Island, no "French War Papers" file or the papers of one or a few important men that tell the story of the French presence. Though every effort was made to look at all pertinent files in these archives, the many treasures deposited in the archives of the Newport Historical Society, the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence and the Rhode Island State Archives also in Providence, especially account books and day ledgers, still contain much untapped material for the business relationships on the micro-economic level in a yet to be written book-length study of the French presence in Rhode Island. These sources form the basis for this survey, which is not meant as the place to retell in a different format once again the story of the balls and dances in Newport, of the infatuations of French officers with the beautiful Wanton daughters of Newport, or the grand funeral of Admiral de Ternay. Their translated and published stories are readily available to the interested reader in the journals of Baron Closen,⁴⁷ of Clermont-Crèvecœur,⁴⁸ of the *vicomte* de Rochambeau, and other titles listed in the bibliography. Desirable as such a project might be, this architectural and historical site survey and resource inventory is not a history of "Rochambeau in Newport." It is focused on troop movements within the state rather than those of naval vessels off Rhode Island's coast, which only recently have been treated expertly by noted Naval historian John B. Hattendorf.⁴⁹ Following the pattern established in the surveys for other states along the route in view of Goals 1) and 2), it is intended to give suggestions for future research. It focuses on unknown and unpublished primary sources rather than what is already readily available elsewhere in print, and places these events within the historical context of the Yorktown campaign of 1781.

⁴⁶ The pension applications in NARA are accessible on-line as part of the fold3 collection of primary sources. They are searchable by name and keyword.

⁴⁷ Acomb, Evelyn, ed., *The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen, 1780-1783* (Chapel Hill, 1958).

⁴⁸ Jean François Louis *comte* de Clermont-Crèvecœur had entered the Auxonne Artillery in 1769. His account of the American campaigns is published in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783* Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, eds. 2 vols., (Princeton and Providence, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 15-100.

⁴⁹ *Newport, the French Navy, and American Independence* (Newport, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

6.1 Criteria for Selection: How Sites Were Chosen for Inclusion

Since this survey is conducted with a view toward the study currently conducted by the NPS regarding the eligibility of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route to be designated a National Historic Trail, the criteria for selection in this Rhode Island resource inventory are those of the National Trails System Act [(Public Law 90-543) (16 U.S.C. 1241-1251) as amended through P. L. 106-509, November 13, 2000]. Of particular importance for the Rhode Island inventory is Section. 3. [16USC1242] (a) (3), NTSA, which states that "National historic trails shall have as their purpose the identification and protection of the historic route and its historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment." Point (4) includes "Connecting or side trails, established as provided in section 6 of this Act, which will provide additional points of public access to national recreation, national scenic or national historic trails or which will provide connections between such trails" as potential components of a NHT.

This historical and architectural survey was also conducted in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Identification and Evaluation* (NPS, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1983). A discussion of the general methodology to be utilized can be found in *Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning. National Register Bulletin 24* (Derry, Jandl, Shull, and Thorman, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, 1977; Parker, rev. 1985).

The criteria used for the evaluation of properties were based on those of the National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Recognition of these resources is intended to contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the nation.

The National Register's criteria for evaluating the significance of properties, which were developed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who made a contribution to the country's history and heritage, state the following:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and

objects that possess integrity in location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, association and:

that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Previous studies conducted along the W3R as well as for the NPS identified resources along the route in the following categories:

Campsites and Bivouacs

Buildings and Building Sites

Plaques, tablets, and markers placed by federal, state and local authorities, by patriotic organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Society of the Cincinnati, or local historical societies

Tombstones and/or Grave Markers and other emblems

Archeological Sites: terrestrial and underwater

Natural Landscape Features

Paintings and Murals

Water Routes and River Crossings

Historic Road Segments

State and National Parks

Using these criteria the writer inspected and inventoried on site all resources listed in this report. These resources fall into five different categories and groups:

Campsites and bivouacs

Buildings and building sites

Plaques, tablets, and markers

Monuments

Water Routes and River Crossings

6.2 The Form

Inventory Number. Each inventoried property is assigned an inventory number, which appears on the form. Site profiles and inventoried properties within the city of Newport are arranged based on the LIST OF QUARTERS OCCUPIED IN THE TOWN OF NEWPORT BY THE ARMY UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU, DURING THE WINTER QUARTERS OF 1780-81, published by Alan and Mary M. Simpson in "A New Look at How Rochambeau quartered his Army in Newport (1780-1781)." *Newport History* (Spring 1983), pp. 30-67.

Resources outside Newport are first listed geographically within a given area in the sequence in which they were visited rather than in a strictly chronological sequence which would have necessitated beginning the inventory with University Hall in Providence rather than the landing sites in Newport.

Historic Name. The historic name serves as a shorthand for indicating the site's significance. In the case of commercial buildings, churches, and public buildings, the historic name is straightforward and represents the buildings earliest known use. With houses, the historic name is usually the name of the family that built it or who lived there for many years.

Date. Dates of construction are based on architectural evidence, information from primary and secondary sources (see bibliography), research files maintained by the Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Office, original research in primary sources, and other historical documentation. The forms generally indicate the reason for ascribing a specific date to a building or site. Where possible a primary source mentioning the resource is listed with each site.

Condition. Without extensive analysis, it was not possible to assess professionally the structural condition of any building.

6.3 Other Parts of the Survey Report

In addition to the inventory forms and site profiles this report includes an overview of the French army of the *ancien régime*, of Franco-American conceptions and misconceptions, and of the winter quarters of French forces in Rhode Island America before their marches through Rhode Island to the southward in June 1781 and their return in November 1782.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE

When Forbes and Cadman published their *France and New England* in 1925, they indicated that an "effort has been made to get the State Park Commission of Connecticut to mark all the nineteen camp sites in that State and it is hoped that some time this will be done."⁵⁰ Thirty years later, the sites were still not marked and it was only in response to the establishment of an Interstate Rochambeau Commission that the General Assembly took up the issue again in 1956.

That commission was the brainchild of Charles Parmer, who took it upon himself to resurrect the memory of French participation, and to identify the route taken by French troops. In the spring of 1951, Parmer began prodding state governments and patriotic societies for funds.⁵¹ In 1952, the Colonial Dames of Virginia endorsed his proposal for a uniform marking of the route and on 16 January 1953, Virginia Governor John S. Battle appointed Parmer to head a *Rochambeau Commission*. Its purpose was "to arrange with other States for the uniform marking of the route taken in 1781 by General Rochambeau and his French forces (... and) to arrange for a joint celebration of the anniversary of the Rochambeau Victory March."⁵²

On 16 April 1953, Parmer called for a meeting of interested parties at Mount Vernon. The event was widely reported in the press; even President Dwight D. Eisenhower and French Foreign minister Georges Bidault sent congratulatory telegrams. Parmer was elected *General Chairman of the Interstate Rochambeau Commission of the United States* and by the fall of 1953, "Rhode Island, Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut had appointed Commissions or Representatives to work with Virginia." New York, New Jersey, and Maryland had "leaders of patriotic groups making plans to do the marking with State permission."⁵³ But interest in the project seems to have waned as fast as it had arisen. Parmer's Commission was continued until 1958, but only Connecticut seems to have carried out the task of identifying and marking the route. In its January 1957 session, the Connecticut

⁵⁰ Allan Forbes and Paul F. Cadman, *France and New England* 3 vols., (Boston, 1925) vol. 1, p. 131.

⁵¹ The writer is very grateful to Albert D. McJoynt of Alexandria, Virginia, for providing copies of correspondence and newspaper clippings he had acquired from Parmer's widow.

⁵² The origins of Parmer's activities are outlined in his *Report of the Rochambeau Commission to the Governor and the general Assembly of Virginia* Senate Document no. 19 (Richmond, 1953).

⁵³ Parmer apparently never contacted Massachusetts for cooperation. The list of states involved is taken from his *Report of the Rochambeau Commission*, p. 10.

General Assembly passed House Bill No. 2005, "An Act concerning erecting Markers to designate the Sites of Camps occupied by the French troops under Rochambeau." Approved on 4 June 1957, it appropriated \$ 1,500 and instructed the State Highway Commissioner to "erect roadside signs" in cooperation with Parmer's "Interstate Rochambeau Commission" and "local historical societies or fraternal community groups." Pursuant to this legislation, the State Highway Commission placed 27 signs at or near known campsites of Rochambeau's army across the state.⁵⁴

Parmer died in 1958 shortly after the dedication of the Fourteenth Street Bridge (I-395 between the Jefferson Memorial and the Pentagon) over the Potomac in Washington, DC, as the Rochambeau Memorial Bridge in October 1958.⁵⁵ With him the project also died.⁵⁶

Nineteen years later, in 1972, Anne S. K. Brown and Howard C. Rice, Jr., published the authoritative and groundbreaking study *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783*. Volume 2 of the work contains 204 pages of itineraries and texts followed by 177 contemporary maps, charts, and views of the routes taken by Rochambeau's army on the American mainland as well as in the Caribbean. These maps identified and definitely established the route of the main body of the French forces.

During preparations for the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, Representative Hamilton Fish of New York introduced on 16 April 1975, House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution 225. It called upon federal, state, county, and local governments to recognize the route taken by Rochambeau's forces as identified in the Brown and Rice work as "The Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Route." On 14 November 1975, the United States Department of the Interior as the supervisory body of the National Park Service (NPS) informed Representative James A. Haley, Chair of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, that the department had no objections to the resolution. It recommended, however, that the word "National" not be used since the route was neither part of the NPS nor met the criteria of integrity required by the NPS.

⁵⁴ See Robert A. Selig, *Rochambeau in Connecticut: Tracing his Journey. Historic and Architectural Survey. Connecticut Historical Commission* (Hartford: State of Connecticut, 1999), 1957), p. 17.

⁵⁵ United States 85th Congress, 1st Session, House Resolution H.R. 572, January 3, 1957, and Senate Bill S. 768, January 22 (legislative day, January 3), 1957.

⁵⁶ In September 1973, Mrs. Parmer was still asking French government officials to forward her the insignia of *Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur* which her husband had been awarded posthumously in May 1959.

The Sub-Committee on National Parks and Recreation held hearings on the resolution and the correspondence from the Department of the Interior dated 17 November 1975, and sent a favorable report to Haley, whose committee took up the resolution on 27 January 1976. In its report to the full House, Haley's committee recommended passage of the resolution creating the "Washington-Rochambeau Historic Route" albeit outside the National Park System. On 17 February 1976, the resolution declaring the recognition of the route "as one of the more useful and enduring educational patriotic accomplishments to come from the bicentennial of the American War for Independence" passed without objection as amended, and was referred to the United States Senate the following day.

More than five months later, on 21 July 1976, the Department of the Interior informed Senator Henry M. Jackson, chair of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, that it had no objection to House Concurrent Resolution 225. Following a hearing by the Senate's Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation on 2 August 1976, Jackson's committee recommended on 5 August that the Senate pass the resolution as well.⁵⁷ The Senate passed the resolution on 25 August 1976.

Joint House-Senate Resolution 225 had asked that the states "through appropriate signing, call attention to the route," but failed to appropriate funds to pay for signs beyond the boundaries of Colonial National Historical Park in Yorktown, Virginia. Due to this lack of federal funds, a private "Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Route Committee" established itself in Yorktown, New York, and set up its own signs. Few of these signs seem to have survived.⁵⁸ But even without federal funds or markers, however, hundreds of re-enactors traced the route from Newport to Yorktown from 9-16 October 1981, to commemorate the bicentennial of the siege.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See United States. Congress. House. Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. 94th Congress, 2nd Session, Report no. 94-799, *Recognizing the Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Route*, and United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, Report no. 94-1145, *The Washington-Rochambeau Historic Route* (Washington, DC, 1976).

⁵⁸ The author has been unable to identify or make contact with any member of that committee, which seems to have disbanded at an unknown date though its markers in Connecticut are still maintained.

⁵⁹ The "Rochambeau. A Reenactment of His Historic March from Newport to Yorktown" project was sponsored by the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations and directed by the Office of the Adjutant General of the state. The writer is grateful to Roy P. Najecki for sharing his folder of press releases and marching orders relative to that march. There also

Concurrently a "Committee of the Bicentennial 1776-1976" was established by the French government. One of its tasks was the erection of markers along the "Washington-Rochambeau Route" in the State of Virginia (?) between Mount Vernon and Yorktown where this writer has seen them at three locations.⁶⁰ At the current stage of research it is unknown whether markers were erected by the French government in other states as well; there are none in Rhode Island.

Almost twenty years passed before another effort to identify, mark, and protect the route began in Connecticut. In 1995, the Inter-Community Historic Resources Committee began its work of identifying and classifying known campsites according to their state of preservation and the danger of potentially destructive development. The Committee set itself the goal in October 1995 of having Rochambeau's route, already recognized as the "Washington-Rochambeau Historic Route" by the United States Congress, listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the "Revolutionary Road." Concurrently it asked State Representative Pamela Z. Sawyer to introduce legislation in the General Assembly to allocate the funds for the historical, archeological, and architectural research required for that registration. After three years, and with the help of 26 co-signers, the state legislature in the spring of 1998 appropriated \$ 30,000 for the first of three annual phases to document the route through Connecticut as the first step toward having the entire route from Newport to Yorktown listed in the National Register.

Concurrently in June 1998, a commemorative initiative of the National Park Service began as an effort of Revolutionary War-related parks in its Northeast and Southeast regions to use the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution to enhance public understanding of events from 1775 to 1783. In collaboration with, but organizationally separate from, this initiative almost 50 local and regional historians and historically interested individuals from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut met at Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, New York, on 16 December 1999, to organize a Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route committee.. Chaired by retired Yale University Professor Dr. Jacques Bossiere, the organization, whose title was shortened to W3R at the suggestion of Christian Bickert, was to function as a working committee that was part of a broader initiative to commemorate the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution. Its goals were, and are, the identification and preservation of the route itself and of historic sites

seems to have been some support in France for such a project: see the attached page from the *Revue economique française* vol. 104, no. 2, (1982).

⁶⁰ Images are available at <http://xenophongroup.com/mcjoynt/vawrrmrk.htm>

along the route on a state level, and the creation of a National Historic Trail to promote inter-state heritage preservation.

The W3R Committee was soon successful in its lobbying efforts for funding for the national effort. On 3 July 2000, on the doorsteps of the Dean-Webb-Stevens Museum in Wethersfield, CT, site of the historic May 1781 meeting between Washington and Rochambeau, Representative John B. Larson announced that he had introduced on 29 June 2000, what has become the *Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000*. That same day, his bill, entitled "A Bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to complete a resource study of the 600 mile route through Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia, used by George Washington and General Rochambeau during the American Revolutionary War," was referred to the House Committee on Resources. Referred to the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands on 14 August with an executive comment requested from the Department of the Interior, the bill, which by now had attracted 42 co-sponsors, was back on the floor of the House on 23 October where it passed under suspended rules by voice vote at 3:17 p.m.

Received in the Senate on 24 October 2000, where Senators Joseph Lieberman, Christopher Dodd, and eight co-sponsors had introduced an almost identical Senate Resolution 3209 on 17 October 2000, and read twice, it passed without amendment and by Unanimous Consent on 27 October 2000. A message on this Senate action was sent to the House the following day; the bill was presented to President Bill Clinton on 2 November, who signed it on 9 November 2000.⁶¹ President Clinton's signature created Public Law No. 106-473, an "Act to require the Secretary of the Interior to complete a resource study of the 600-mile route through Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia, used by George Washington and General Rochambeau during the American Revolutionary War." Unlike previous legislation, this bill allocated federal funds to the NPS to carry out a feasibility study that began in late 2001.

That study was completed and became available to the public on the internet at <http://www.nps.gov/boso/w-r/> on 18 October 2006, just in time for the 225th anniversary of the victory at Yorktown. Preceding the completion of the federally mandated resource study by nearly three months, Representative Maurice D.

⁶¹ Concurrently First Lady and Senator-elect Hilary Rodham Clinton designated the W3R a *Millennium Trail*, making properties along the route eligible for federal TEA-21 funds through each state's Department of Transportation.

Hinchey of New York and seven co-sponsors, incl. Rep. Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania, on 26 July 2006, introduced H. R. 5895 "To amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail." Concurrently Senator Joseph I. Lieberman and six co-sponsors (Warner, Biden, Reed, Menendez, Dodd, and Chafee) introduced companion bill S 3737 in the U.S. Senate. The 109th Congress expired in December 2006 without taking action on those bills.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 27, 2006

The Honorable Frances P. Mainella
Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Room 3200
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Mainella,

We are writing to request that the National Park Service help our offices draft a bill to authorize the establishment of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route (W3R) National Historic Trail. The W3R National Historic Trail would trace the 650-mile route that French troops under the command of General Jean-Baptiste de Rochambeau took from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia in 1781. American troops under the command of Commander-in-Chief George Washington joined the French force outside New York City. On October 17 of that year, the combined armies defeated the British army with the help of a French fleet commanded by Admiral de Grasse. General Cornwallis' surrender that day at Yorktown ended major hostilities in the American Revolutionary War.

Given that the 225th anniversary of Cornwallis will occur in October 2006, we would very much appreciate it if the draft legislation could be provided to our offices by no later than May 22, 2006. If you have questions, please contact Kit Batten (Senator Lieberman's staff) at 202-228-3093 or Conrad Schatte (Senator Warner's staff) at 202-224-8130. Your attention to this matter is appreciated, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Senator Joseph Lieberman
Senator John Warner

On 26 February 2007, Senator Joseph Lieberman with Senator John Warner as a co-sponsor introduced Senate Resolution 686, "To amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Washington - Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail". On 1 March 2007, Representative Maurice Hinchey with Rep. James P. Moran as a co-sponsor introduced an identical bill as House Resolution 1286. Since only the Senate Resolution emerged from committee and was placed on the legislative calendar no other legislative action was taken on the legislation by the 110th Congress.

Following Congressional hearings, the United States House of Representatives on 25 March 2009 passed H.R. 146, "[T]o designate certain land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes." Following minor changes in the text, the United States Senate on 26 March 2009, "At 1:03 p.m.," received" a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, [which] announced that the House agreed to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 146) entitled "An Act to establish a battlefield acquisition grant program for the acquisition and protection of nationally significant battlefields and associated sites of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, and for other purposes." House Speaker Representative Nancy Pelosi signed the bill on Monday, 30 March 2009. Later that day President Barack Obama signed HR 146, the "Omnibus Public Land Management Act" into Public Law No. 111-11. Section 5204 of this law establishes the "Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail" as the 29th National Historic Trail within the National Park System:

SEC. 5204. WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.

Section 5(a) of the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1244(a)) (as amended by section 5202(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

(29) WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL-

(A) IN GENERAL - The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail, a corridor of approximately 600 miles following the route taken by the armies of General George Washington and Count Rochambeau between Newport, Rhode Island, and Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781 and 1782, as generally depicted on the map entitled 'WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL', numbered T01/80,001, and dated June 2007.

(B) MAP- The map referred to in subparagraph (A) shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(C) ADMINISTRATION- The trail shall be administered by the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with--

- (i) other Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local agencies; and
- (ii) the private sector.

(D) LAND ACQUISITION- The United States shall not acquire for the trail any land or interest in land outside the exterior boundary of any federally-managed area without the consent of the owner of the land or interest in land.'

The appointment of Joseph DiBello as Superintendent of the W3R-NHT, WaRo in NPS parlance, in the summer of 2009 concluded this phase of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail project. The next phase will focus on developing national criteria for inclusion in the actual trail system, i.e. is every land and water section traveled by Washington and/or Rochambeau by definition part of the W3R-NHT, how many troops have to have used a certain trail &c and the development of a management plan based on these criteria.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

From Yorktown's ruins, ranked and still,
Two lines stretch far o'er vale and hill:
Who curbs his steed at head of one?
Hark! The low murmur: WASHINGTON!
Who bends his keen approving glance
Where down the gorgeous line of France
Shine knightly star and plume of snow?
Thou too art victor, ROCHAMBEAU!
John Greenleaf Whittier

8.1 France and Great Britain on the Eve of American Independence

On 6 February 1778, His Most Christian Majesty Louis XVI, By the Grace of God, King of France and Navarre, absolutist ruler *par excellence*, whose right to rule rested on his position as representative of God on earth and whose theory of government knew but subjects, not citizens, entered into an alliance with the self-proclaimed United States of America, an entity that was in a state of rebellion against fellow monarch George III, By the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland. Absolutist France backed and bankrolled a government that justified its existence by claiming to "derive[d] its just powers from the consent of the governed," which proclaimed the seditious idea that "all men are created equal," and which endeavored to turn subjects into citizens and endow them with "certain unalienable rights" such as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

In retrospect it is hard to imagine two allies more diverse than France and the United States in 1778 when France came to the assistance of a bankrupt, reluctant ally, and in the very treaty creating the alliance renounced all territorial gain in the New World. What formed the basis of their alliance, and what held it together, were not shared ideologies and ideals, nor common territorial or financial interests. The decision had little to do with any sympathies for the ideology of the revolutionaries.⁶² In March 1776, the King told Vergennes how much he "disliked the precedent of one monarchy giving support to a republican insurrection against a

⁶² American elites were under no illusion as to why France and Spain entered war. In a letter to Silas Deane of November 1781, Jeremiah Wadsworth told Deane "You seem to have supposed that France and Spain shou'd have entered into the War from no motives but to obtain justice for America—I had never such an Idea, Nations have other motives for making War than releveing the oppressed; and when France & Spain engaged in the present War, they intended to humble a haughty insolent and envious Neighbour, to do this effectually they will, if wise, continue the War so as to keep America interested in every event to its close." Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Box 132, CTHS.

legitimate monarchy".⁶³ Only after Vergennes had convinced him that the goal was "not so much to terminate the war between America and England" and to create a republic in America "as to sustain and keep it [i.e., the war] alive to the detriment of the English, our natural and pronounced enemies" did he agree to release funds. Then why did France enter into that war? A 1783 Memorandum "Motifs de la Guerre" in the Rochambeau papers with annotations in the hand of Naval Minister the *duc* de Castries lists three reasons for French involvement in the war.⁶⁴ "L'Amérique, en prenant les armes, a voulu acquérir l'indépendance: la France a fait la guerre pour l'assurer cette indépendance pour assurer la Liberté des mers, et pour parvenir affaiblir la puissance angloise - taking up arms, America wanted to achieve independence: France fought the war to assure that independence, to assure the liberty of the seas, and to attain the weakening of English power." The "weakening of English power" and a concurrent increase of power of other European nations, particularly of France, a balancing of powers, was not an end in itself but at the core of the centuries-old principles underlying French foreign policy.

French foreign policy was guided by a set of long-standing principles of international relations. One of them postulated that peace in Europe, and around the world, was best preserved by a more or less equitable balance of the great (European) powers both in Europe as well as around the globe. The eighteenth-century world was a European-centric, multi-polar world, based on the principle of the balance of powers. The Peace of Paris in 1763 had altered that balance of powers in favor of Britain which emerged as the world's sole super power. Due to her colonial empire as well as her geographic position as an island and her seafaring history and traditions, she was less interested in Continental Europe than any other European power. That posed a problem for France as well as for most other European powers, whose diplomatic system depended on Britain playing a vital role in the balance of powers on the continent, a role she seemed to have abrogated.

In order to restore the balance of powers and to refocus Britain eastward onto the continent French foreign policy after 1763 set itself four goals. First she had to isolate Great Britain on the continent: that would allow France to focus her war on Britain. This task was made easier by Russia's war with the Sultan in Constantinople from 1768 to 1774, by Austria's continued attempts throughout the 1770s to trade

⁶³ Quoted in General Fonteneau, "La période française de la guerre d'Indépendance (1776-1780)" *Revue historique des armées* vol. 3, no. 4, (1976), pp. 47-77, p. 48.

⁶⁴ Rochambeau Papers, GEN MSS 308, Box 1, folder 39, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

A book published by the *Association des Amis du Musée de la Marine* on the occasion of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution even carries one of these goals in its title. See Jacques Vichot, *La guerre pour la liberté des mers, 1778-1783* (Paris, 1976).

Bavaria from the Wittelsbachs for the Netherlands, and by Prussia's considerable animosity with Great Britain for abandoning her in 1761, after Britain had achieved her war aims overseas. The second task had to be the strengthening of King Carlos III on the throne of Spain and of the 1761 Bourbon Family Pact between the ruling houses in Paris and Madrid. As collateral, Paris needed to keep colonial tensions between Madrid and London simmering, especially over Florida, which Britain had acquired in 1763. In February 1762, a full year before the (First) Treaty of Paris was signed, Choiseul declared that after the end of that war, he would pursue "only one foreign policy, a fraternal union with Spain; only one policy for war, and that is England."⁶⁵ Thirdly she had to avoid all continental entanglements that could infringe upon her ability to wage war against the House of Hanover whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. And lastly she had to detach Britain from her North American colonies. British policy versus European powers as well as versus these colonies, combined with the free hand in the New World that France had gained with the cession of Canada, provided France the opportunity to achieve her goals.⁶⁶

France's chief ministers from César Gabriel de Choiseul-Chevigny, *duc de Praslin* (Foreign Minister 1761 to 1766) to Charles Gravier *comte de Vergennes*, who became foreign minister in July 1774, were convinced that the most effective way to re-focus Britain onto the Continent was to confront Britain in her American colonies. Choiseul as well as his successor Vergennes were members of the *secret du roi*, the "Secret of the King", a group of primarily east-ward looking foreign policy advisors (including Vergennes since 1755) established by King Louis XV in 1745, which saw an expansive Russia as Europe's greatest threat. Vergennes, who had served as French ambassador to Constantinople from 1755 to 1768, argued that once Britain was detached from her colonies she would focus her attention again on Europe and assist France in her policy of containment of Russia through the strengthening the Baltic States, Poland, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire: make Britain a "European" power looking "East" rather than "West". After 1763, France could count on the benevolent neutrality if not tacit support of her European neighbors for such a foreign policy. They too wanted to see British preponderance diminished even if they would never consent to the equally undesirable prospect of crippling Britain to a degree where she would no longer be able to play her part in the European-centered concert of states. It was for this goal that France spent over 1 billion livres

⁶⁵ Ibid. See also John Singh, "Plans de Guerre français 1763-1770". *Revue historique des Armées* vol. 3 no. 4 (1976), pp. 7-22. In a 1765 *Mémoire sur les forces de mer et de terre de la France et l'usage qu'en pouvait en faire en cas d'une guerre avec l'Angleterre* for Louis XV, Choiseul described the purpose of the war as "de se venger de l'Angleterre." Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁶ The best introduction can be found in W.J. Eccles, *France in America* (New York, 1972).

between 1775 and 1783, it was for this goal that the *fleurs-de-lis* flew on the ramparts of Yorktown, and it was for this goal that His Most Christian Majesty threw all ideological considerations overboard, and provided the United States with the military and financial support she needed to win her independence.

Being involved on the Continent was of vital importance to Britain too, but in the aftermath of the victory of 1763 she had forgotten that maxim. Britain had forgotten that involvement in Continental European affairs had been crucial for success around the world and paid a huge price for it in 1783 when she lost her American colonies. In 1775/76, Britain realized too late that she needed a "sword on the continent" such as Prussia during the Seven Years' War to keep France occupied on the Old Continent if she wanted to be successful in the rest of the world. In 1775/76, Britain found herself isolated in Europe, partly intentionally and partly by default, but certainly not due to French policies, even if Vergennes had taken full advantage of the foreign policy opportunities available to him. With France not having to worry about Prussia breathing down her neck and none of the other states willing to assist Britain, France could focus on the war in North America, the Caribbean and in India. This was a unique foreign-policy constellation during the eighteenth century: it is worth remembering that under any other configuration the victory at Saratoga would have made little difference for the future activities of France!

In other words: there was posturing behind France's ostentatious anger at the First Peace of Paris when France lost virtually all her possessions in India and in the New World, where Canada became British and Louisiana was given to Spain. All that was left of France's erstwhile globe-circling empire were the sugar islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe and the fever-infested swamps of Cayenne and French Guyana. Much as it may have hurt French pride, Étienne François, *duc de Choiseul-Stainville*, her chief minister during negotiations in 1762, had almost insisted that Canada be given to Britain. Despite the misgivings of many of his colleagues and popular opinion at home, which clamored for the retention of Canada, Choiseul realized that giving up the colony would free his foreign policy in the New World. His adversary Lord Bedford, the chief British negotiator, anticipated Choiseul's fondest dreams when he saw an alarming mirage emerge across the Atlantic. He wondered "whether the neighborhood of the French to our North American colonies was not the greatest security for their dependence on the mother country, which I feel will be slighted by them when their apprehension of the French is removed." ⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Quoted in W. J. Eccles, "The French Alliance and the American Victory" in: *The World Turned Upside Down. The American Victory in the War of Independence* John Ferling, ed., (Westport, 1976), pp. 147-163, p. 148.

Bedford's worst fears and Choiseul's fondest hopes soon became reality. When London reminded the colonists once too often of their obligations to, and dependence on, the mother country they responded with a *Declaration of Independence* on 4 July 1776 that stressed the differences with Britain rather than the commonalities.

Detaching themselves from their dependence on Britain, becoming an independent nation, was also the goal of hundreds of thousands of Americans represented in Congress in Philadelphia and it was at that point that French and American war aims met and coalesced. Britain on the other hand did not want to be detached from her colonies which is why American and French and later Spanish forces fought Great Britain in the four corners of the universe between 1775 and 1783. Only that this time Britain stood alone as France watched as British policies created just the political climate on America's Eastern seashore she hoped for.

In the years after 1763 The Seven Years' War had not only brought huge territorial gains for Great Britain; it had also resulted in some £137 million of debt. Interest on the debt amounted to £5 million annually, more than half the governmental revenues of some £8 million. Parliament in London wanted the colonies to help pay for these debts and asked them to defray one third of the cost of maintaining 10,000 redcoats in the New World. In 1764, Prime Minister Sir George Grenville received the House of Commons's approval to place import duties on lumber, foodstuffs, molasses, and rum in the colonies. The Sugar Act of 1764 was immensely unpopular in the New World and hostility increased even more when the Quartering Act of 1765 required colonists to provide food and quarters for British troops. Hard on its heels came the 1765 Stamp Act, probably the most hated law concerning the colonies ever passed by a British Parliament. Vehement opposition forced the repeal of the act in March 1766. To make up for the lost revenue, the Townshend Acts of 1767 levied new taxes on glass, painter's lead, paper, and tea.

Relations with the motherland had barely been smoothed over when long-standing military-civilian tensions in Boston erupted on 5 March 1770, when British troops fired into a mob.⁶⁸ The infamous *Boston Massacre* killed five people, including Crispus Attucks. On 9 June 1772, the British revenue schooner *Gaspée* ran aground off Warwick in the shallow waters on the northwestern side of Narragansett Bay while chasing the packet boat *Hannah*. That night members of the Providence "chapter" of the Sons of Liberty under the leadership of Joseph Bucklin rowed out to

⁶⁸ See Douglas Edward Leach, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763* (Chapel Hill, 1986). For the period following see John Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton, 1965).

the Gaspée and burned her to the waterline the next day.⁶⁹ The threat of charging the Sons with treason and sending them to England for trial galvanized opposition to British rule not only in New England but all over the colonies. In the fall of 1773 tensions flared up again in Boston and along the coast when East India Company tea ships were turned back at Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. A cargo ship was burned at Annapolis on 14 October 1773, while at least one of the three ships bringing tea to Boston was vandalized and had its cargo thrown overboard in Boston at the *Boston Tea Party* on 16 December 1773, to protest the new tax on tea. Parliament responded with what the colonists called the "Intolerable Acts" of 1774, which curtailed Massachusetts' self-rule and barred the use of Boston harbor until the tea was paid for.

Of equal, if not greater importance for the rapid deterioration of British-Colonial relations was the Quebec Act of 1774. This act not only granted Roman Catholics in Canada the freedom to practice their religion, more importantly, it placed all lands between the Great Lakes and the Ohio River under the administration of the governor of formerly French Quebec. With that decision, the House of Commons seemed to have closed off forever all chances of continued westward expansion. Until ten years earlier, the French had stood in the way of land-hungry colonists, now Parliament in London had assumed that role. When the First Continental Congress convened, after ten years of conflict with the crown, in Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia on 5 September 1774, Great Britain had become the antagonist for expansion-minded colonists, who in ever larger numbers saw independence as a potentially viable option.

When it came on 4 July 1776, that Declaration of Independence was addressed not so much to the American people – South Carolina's constitution establishing an Independent Government was signed on 26 March 1776, Rhode Island declared her independence on 4 May, North Carolina voted for independence on 12 April, Virginia on 15 May &c - or to King George III, who did not need to be informed of the fact that his colonies wanted to break away, but rather was "submitted to a candid world" in general and to France (and to a lesser degree to Spain) in particular. The colonists had started their fight with Britain penniless, without arms or many of the supplies and equipment needed to sustain that fight. Rebel leaders were well aware of both their need for outside assistance and of the only place where that assistance could come from: the two Bourbon kings Louis XVI of France and Carlos III of Spain.

⁶⁹ This was not the first run-in Rhode Islanders had had with the Royal Navy: in 1764 they attacked HMS St. John and in 1769 they burned the customs ship HMS Liberty on Goat Island in the harbor of Newport.

A Declaration of Independence was a first indispensable step toward acquiring that support – the rebels could only obtain the aid of France and Spain if they succeeded in portraying themselves as an independent nation fighting a common foe, by turning their civil war into a war between independent nations. In January 1776, Thomas Paine had written in *Common Sense* that “Every thing that is right or natural pleads for separation. ‘TIS TIME TO PART”, and added that “Nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration for independence.... [neither] France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, while we profess ourselves the subjects of Britain. The custom of all courts is against us, and will be so, until, by an independence, we take rank with other nations.”⁷⁰

A few months later on 2 June 1776, Richard Henry Lee wrote to his fellow Virginian Landon Carter that “our enemies are determined upon the absolute conquest and subduction of N. America. It is not choice then, but necessity that calls for Independence, as the only means by which foreign Alliance can be obtained”.⁷¹ Even John Adams, who was privately convinced that Catholics, esp. the French kind, had horns and cloven feet, admitted the need for outside assistance.⁷² In his autobiography he wrote of his fear – or hope? - following the departure of Richard Penn from Philadelphia in July 1775 to London with what is known as the Olive Branch Petition “That We should be driven to the Necessity of Declaring ourselves independent States, and that We ought now to be employed in preparing a Plan of Confederation (sic) for the Colonies, and Treaties to be proposed to foreign Powers particularly to France and Spain, that all these Measures ought to be maturely considered, and carefully prepared, together with a declaration of Independence. That these three Measures, Independence, Confederation and Negotiations with foreign Powers, particularly France, ought to go hand in hand, and be adopted all together.” Why? Mostly because “we are distressed for want of artillery, arms, ammunition, clothing”.⁷³ On 8 May 1776, fellow Bostonian James Warren wrote to Adams in a similar vein: “I am not fond of English or French tyranny, tho’ if I must have one, I should prefer the last. I don’t want a French army here, but I want to

⁷⁰ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America* (Philadelphia, 1776), p. 24.

⁷¹ James C. Ballagh, ed., *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee* (New York, 1911), vol. 1, p. 198.

⁷² John Adams took a more benevolent approach toward American Catholics. “[L]ed by curiosity,” Adams accompanied by Washington on 9 October 1774, attended a Catholic service at St. Mary’s Church in Philadelphia. In a letter to his wife, Abigail, he described the service as “most awful and affecting; the poor wretches fingering their beads, chanting Latin, not a word of which they understood . . . everything [designed] to charm and bewitch the simple and ignorant.” Charles Francis Adams, *Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail, during the Revolution* (New York, 1876), p. 46.

⁷³ John Adams autobiography, part 1, “John Adams,” through 1776, sheet 22 of 53 [electr. edition]. *Adams Family Papers* at <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

have one employed against Britain, and I doubt whether that will be done, till you make a more explicit declaration of independence than is in your privateering resolves, or those for opening the ports. You will never be thought in earnest, and fully determined yourselves, and to be depended on by others, till you go further.”⁷⁴

8.2 French Aid Prior to the Alliance of 1778

The war Choiseul had foreseen was about to break out. France was prepared militarily and politically. Ever since the Peace of Paris, Choiseul and his successor Charles Gravier, the *comte* de Vergennes, who replaced Choiseul as foreign minister in 1774, had embarked on an ambitious naval build-up. It called for a fleet of 80 ships of the line and 47 frigates, almost twice the 47 ships of the line in French service in 1763. Helped by an enthusiastic response from provincial estates and the generosity of municipalities such as Paris, the French navy grew to 64 ships of the line, mostly of 74 guns, plus 50 frigates in 1770.⁷⁵ In 1765, Choiseul issued the first major new navy regulations since 1689, retired numerous incompetent officers, emphasized training, and in 1766 re-established the navy as an independent service in France's armed forces. Gabriel de Sartines, Choiseul's successor as navy minister (1774-1780), continued these programs. When France entered the war in 1778, her order of battle listed 52 ships of the line of at least 50 guns (plus 60 frigates) with total crew strength of about 1,250 officers and 75,000 men. They were arrayed against Britain's 66 ships of the line, and there was hope that Spain would join in the fight, adding another 58 fighting ships to the French side of the equation. Parity with Great Britain had been achieved; since she had to keep some 20 ships of the line close to home to counter the threat of French raids, naval superiority in select theatres of war, viz at Yorktown in 1781, had become a possibility.⁷⁶

The defeats of the Seven Years' War, particularly at Rossbach in 1757, had also laid painfully bare the inefficiency of the French army, which was "still basically

⁷⁴ *Warren-Adams Letters, Being chiefly a correspondence among John Adams, Samuel Adams, and James Warren* vol. 1: 1743-1777 (Boston, 1917), p. 241.

⁷⁵ On Vergennes' goal of fighting the war against England overseas see Jean-François Labourdette, "Vergennes et la Cour." *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* vol. 101 Nos. 3-4 (1987), pp. 289-321; Orville T. Murphy, "The View From Versailles. Charles Gravier Comte de Vergennes' Perceptions of the American Revolution". In: Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds. *Diplomacy and Revolution. The Franco-American Alliance of 1778*. (Charlottesville, 1978), pp. 107-149, and the still useful article by René Pinon, "Louis XVI, Vergennes et la Grande Lutte contre l'Angleterre". *Revue d'histoire diplomatique* vol. 43 (1929), pp. 37-64.

⁷⁶ By far the best account of the French navy is Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787* (Princeton, 1975); annual lists of capital ships on pp. 351-378.

functioning as in the days of Louis XIV."⁷⁷ Beginning in 1762, Choiseul's ministry carried out long-overdue reforms. At long last all infantry regiments were organized in a single pattern, equipment and training were standardized and recruiting was centralized. The *Maréchal* de Saxe's dream of the 1740s that some day the French army would march in step was coming true. The artillery was re-organized along the ideas of Jean Baptiste de Gribeauval, and the cavalry got its first riding school.

Reforms were pushed further in 1774, when Louis XVI succeeded to the throne of France. The *comte* de Saint-Germain, Louis XVI's Minister of War, forbade the sale of officers' commissions, retired some 865 of over 900 colonels in the army and eventually abolished the King's Guards, including the Horse Grenadiers and the famous Musketeers, as too expensive. In March/April of 1776, all but a handful of regiments were reduced to two battalions; regiments with four battalions saw their 2nd and 4th battalions transformed into new regiments. The most famous of these newly created units is undoubtedly the *Gâtinois*, created from the *Auvergne*, whose grenadiers and chasseurs stormed Redoubt No. 9 before Yorktown in 1781. Concurrently St. Germain reduced the number of companies per battalion from nine to six and used the savings in officers' salaries to add personnel to each company.

The concept of a regiment consisting of two battalions of five companies each, as set up in the *ordonnance* of 25 March 1776 was further clarified on 1 June 1776. It set the strength of each regiment at two battalions of five companies each and an auxiliary company of variable strength. Each regiment had one grenadier company consisting of 6 officers, 14 non-commissioned officers, 1 *cadet gentilhomme*, 1 surgeon's assistant, 84 grenadiers and 2 drummers for a total of 6 officers and 102 men. Besides the grenadiers stood one of the newly created *chasseur* or light infantry companies and four companies of fusiliers. The authorized strength of those companies stood at 6 officers, 17 NCOs, 1 *cadet gentilhomme*, 1 surgeon's assistant, 116 *chasseurs* (or fusiliers) and 2 drummers for a total of 6 officers and 137 men. A regimental staff of twelve, i.e. the Colonel, the Second Colonel, 1 Lieutenant Colonel, 1 Major, 1 Quarter-Master Treasurer, 2 Ensigns, 1 Adjutant, 1 Surgeon-Major, 1 Chaplain, 1 Drum-Major, and 1 Armourer. By the Spring of 1780, subsequent *ordonnances* had set the authorized strength of a regiment at 67 officers

⁷⁷ René Chartrand and Francis Back, *The French Army in the American War of Independence* (London, 1991), pp. 6-14; the quote is taken from page 6, the regimental organization from p. 9. Additional information is in Samuel F. Scott, *The Response of the Royal Army to the French Revolution. The Role and Development of the Line Army 1787-93* (Oxford, 1978).

and 1,148 men (excl. the auxiliary company), which for book-keeping purposes was set at 1,003 men for French, and 1,004 men for foreign, infantry.⁷⁸

When France decided to provide aid to the American colonies in 1775, the paper strength of her land forces amounted to some 140,000 men, though the actual strength was probably 8,000-10,000 men below that number. Of these, some 77,500 served in one of the 79 French line regiments, about 12,000 in one of the eight German, three Irish, the *Royal Corse* and the *Royal Italien* regiments, and 12,000 served in one of the eleven regiments of Swiss infantry.⁷⁹ The royal household troops, including one regiment each of French and Swiss Guards, were authorized at almost 9,000 men. Almost 6,000 served in the artillery; the cavalry added about 22,000 men and the Light Troops about 3,500. The Ministry of the Navy had its own establishment of about 100 companies of Marines, six regiments of Colonial infantry, and several battalions of Sepoys in India. About 50,000 militia and another 41,000 men in the Coast Guard provided a reserve that could be mobilized for the defense of the kingdom in France proper.⁸⁰

During these same years, the army budget increased from 91.9 million livres in 1766, to 93.5 million in 1775. The relatively small increase in expenditures hides the real significance of the changes that took place within the French army during those years. The armed forces of 1775 had been thoroughly streamlined, and the funds available were spent much more efficiently. Through the reduction in strength of unreliable, but costly, elements such as the militia, detached companies, and separate recruit units, the paper strength of the armed forces had declined from roughly 290,000 to 240,000 men. Within the regular army, the guards had remained virtually unchanged and the foot contingent declined by 5,000 through the abolition of units such as the *Grenadiers de France* in 1771. A decrease in the number of foreign infantry, which cost the crown 368 livres per year as opposed to 230 livres for a French soldier, freed additional funds which were used to increase the number of French infantry, of mounted units from 25,000 to nearly 46,000, and

⁷⁸ Including the two *portes-drapeaux* (flag-bearers) and the *quartier-maître trésorier* (pay/quarter master). The strength of a regiment is given by Kennett, *French forces*, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Scott, *Response*, pp. 217-222. The British army worldwide numbered 45,000 officers and men in 1775, 8,500 of whom were stationed in North America. See Dull, *French navy*, p. 346. Michel Pétard, "Les Étrangers au service de la France (1786)" *Tradition* vol. 32, (September 1989), pp. 21-29.

⁸⁰ Claude C. Sturgill, "Money for the Bourbon Army in the Eighteenth Century: The State within the State" *War and Society* vol. 4, no. 2, (September 1986), pp. 17-30, p. 29, sets the total budgeted strength of the French army at 239,473 officers and men in 1775. This number does not include naval troops.

of light troops.⁸¹ The introduction of the Model 1777 *Charleville* musket, a .69 caliber weapon lighter, stronger and more reliable than the .75 caliber Land Pattern muskets known as "Brown Bess" used by the British, completed these reforms.⁸²

The same holds true for the artillery. After 1765, it consisted of seven regiments named after the community in which they were stationed. In November 1776, each regiment was divided into two battalions of ten companies each: fourteen of gunners, four bombardiers, and two sappers. Each company consisted of four officers and 71 other ranks. Unattached were nine companies of sappers and six companies of miners for a total of 909 officers and 11,805 men authorized strength in the Royal Artillery, well above its actual strength of almost 6,000 men. However, though technically most advanced branch of the French military, the artillery always had problems keeping its ranks filled. But what it lacked in numbers it made up in quality: contemporaries considered the French artillery of the system introduced by Lieutenant General Jean Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval (1715-1789) second to none, a well-deserved reputation as Lord Cornwallis discovered at Yorktown.

These reforms, necessary as they were, brought St. Germain numerous and powerful enemies in the officer corps, but it was the introduction of a new and universally hated Prussian-style uniform in 1776, that caused his downfall in 1777, and replacement by the Prince de Montbarey (minister until 1780).⁸³ By then, the French navy, infantry, cavalry, and artillery had been transformed into well-trained, efficient, and well-equipped organizations ready to take on the British foe once again. The fleet that Admiral de Grasse arrayed at the mouth of the York River in September 1781, and the troops that General Rochambeau would take to America and to victory at Yorktown, had little in common with the French army that had suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of Frederick the Great and the British between 1756 and 1763.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 22. In the 1740s a French soldier had cost 122 livres per year to maintain, a soldier in one of the Foreign regiments between 160 and 170 livres.

⁸² On French arms manufacture see the excellent article by Jean Langlet, "Les Ingénieurs de l'École Royale du Génie de Mézières et les Armes de la Manufacture de Charleville dans la Guerre d'Indépendance Américaine". *Revue historique Ardennaise* vol. 34 (1999-2000), pp. 197-217.

⁸³ The Prussian-style uniform of 1776 was not officially replaced until February 1779. Since uniforms were replaced in three-years cycles with one third of a regiment receiving new uniforms each year, and since many units ignored the changes and kept using non-regulation equipment, Rochambeau's troops, wore a mix of at least two, if not three, different uniform patterns, e.g. the *ordonnance* of 1776 had abolished the beloved bear-skin miters of the grenadiers but the order was widely ignored: in 1781, the grenadiers of the Saintonge are reported to have worn their miters as they marched through Philadelphia.

While politicians and administrators in Versailles were preparing for the impending war, they also kept a close watch on American developments. As early as 1767, Choiseul had dispatched the German-born and self-styled Baron Major-General Jean de Kalb on a secret fact-finding mission to the British colonies and his successor Vergennes followed this policy. Throughout the late 1760s and early 1770s, the French crown repeatedly sent agents to British America in order to keep informed of developments in the lower thirteen colonies.

Vergennes was well aware of the tense situation along America's eastern seashore when the First Continental Congress adjourned in October 1774, with an appeal to King George III to help restore harmony between Britain and the colonies.⁸⁴ They also knew that the Congress had called on the colonies to boycott trade with Britain. As the tense winter months of 1774-1775, turned to spring, it became only a question of time until civil disobedience would erupt into open violence. That moment arrived on 19 April 1775, when patriots alerted by Paul Revere, William Dawes, and Samuel Prescott attacked British troops at Lexington and Concord. On 10 May, the day the Second Continental Congress opened its debates, Colonels Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold captured Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York. Next colonials headed for Bunker Hill where they repulsed British redcoats under Sir William Howe twice before retreating on 17 June 1775. Two days earlier Congress had appointed George Washington Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army.

The colonies were at war, and France stepped in to aid the rebellious colonies against the British motherland. From mid-March to early April 1775, a secret plan to aid the Americans was drawn up in Versailles. When news of Lexington and Concord reached Paris the government of His Most Christian Majesty became the first foreign power to provide aid and support to the fledgling United States. In December 1775, Vergennes' emissary Julien-Alexandre Achard de Bonvouloir arrived in Philadelphia carrying instructions to establish semi-official relations and to sound out the mood in the colonies and of Congress. His report of 28 December 1775 detailing his conversations with the Secret Committee of Correspondence

⁸⁴ Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven, 1985), pp. 63. On Kalb see A. E. Sucker, *General de Kale, Lafayette's Mentor* (Chapel Hill, 1966), pp. 59-79. Some of his reports are in *Collection de Manuscrits contenant Lettres, Mémoires, et Autres Documents historiques relatifs a la Nouvelle France* (Quebec, 1885), vol. 4, pp. 315-334.

reached Vergennes on 27 February 1776.⁸⁵ In it Bonvouloir assured the French minister in the most glowing terms that "Their affairs are in a good state ... their ardor and determination are incredible ... Everybody here is a soldier" and that "They are more powerful than is supposed. You can not imagine it, and it would surprise you. They are afraid of nothing - depend on that." Through Bonvouloir the Committee posed three questions to Vergennes:

1. Can he inform us what the disposition of the Court of France is toward the Colonies of North America; whether it is favorable, and in what way we can be reliably assured of this?
2. Can we obtain from France two skillful, faithful, well-recommended engineers, and what steps must be taken to procure them?
3. Can we have arms and other war supplies direct from France in exchange for the products of our country, and be allowed free entrance and exit to French harbors?

Bonvouloir's report brought a major shift in French policy which became obvious in a Council of State meeting on 12 March 1776, when Vergennes argued for providing arms to the Americans. Over Turgot's opposition he had outlined in a memorandum of 6 April 1776, the king decided on 22 April 1776, to provide funding to the Americans and to increase the naval budget as well to enable the navy to counter any hostile reaction to France's support for the rebels.

To supplement Deane's work but also in an effort to hide France's involvement in the American rebellion, Vergennes co-opted the playwright Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, author of *The Barber of Seville*, into his service.⁸⁶ As early as the Fall of 1775, Beaumarchais had approached Vergennes with a plan to support the American rebels. In January 1776, Vergennes submitted the proposal to King Louis XVI, informing him that the plan was "not so much to terminate the war between America and England, as to sustain and keep it alive to the detriment of the English, our natural and pronounce enemies."⁸⁷ After some hesitation the king eventually

⁸⁵ The text of Bonvouloir's correspondence is printed in *New Materials for the History of the American Revolution*. John Durand, transl. and ed., (New York, 1889), pp. 1-16.

⁸⁶ Claude Van Tyne, "French Aid before the Alliance of 1778" *American Historical Review* vol. 31, (1925), pp. 20-40.

⁸⁷ Quoted in "Beaumarchais, Pierre-Augustin Caron de (1732-1799)" in: *The American Revolution 1775-1783. An Encyclopedia* Richard L. Blanco, ed., 2 vols., (New York, 1993), vol. 1, p. 107.

agreed to let Beaumarchais act as the secret agent of the crown.⁸⁸ Following the Council meeting of 22 April 1776, military supplies were made available to Beaumarchais, who set up the trading company of Roderigue Hortalez & Co. as a front to channel aid to the Americans.⁸⁹ On 2 May 1776, the crown released 1,000,000 livres to Beaumarchais to purchase supplies for the rebels and Spain matched the amount.⁹⁰ With this covert backing and financial support of the Spanish and French governments, Beaumarchais' ships carried much-needed supplies to the Americans, frequently via the Dutch island of St. Eustatius in the Caribbean.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Quoted in General Fonteneau, "La période française de la guerre d'Indépendance (1776-1780)" *Revue historique des armées* vol. 3, no. 4, (1976), pp. 47-77, p. 48.

⁸⁹ See Robert D. Harris, "French Finances and the American War, 1777-1783" *Journal of Modern History* vol. 48, (June 1976), pp. 233-258, and Claude C. Sturgill, "Observations of the French War Budget 1781-1790" *Military Affairs* vol. 48, (October 1984), pp. 180-187.

⁹⁰ Dull, *French Navy*, p. 52-53. See also Buchanan Parker Thomson, *Spain: Forgotten Ally of the American Revolution* (North Quincy, 1976) with an overview of Spanish expenditures on pp. 241-248, and Thomas A. Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States. An Intrinsic Gift* (Albuquerque, 2002).

⁹¹ See J. Franklin Jameson, "St. Eustatius in the American Revolution" *American Historical Review* vol. 8, no. 3, (July 1903), pp. 683-708. All warring parties benefitted from the status of the Netherlands as a neutral power, be that whether in Europe, where access to the capital market in Amsterdam was important for France, or in the Caribbean, where the island of St. Eustatius, which had become the first free port/free trade zone in the world in 1754, supplied crucial war materials, naval stores, and food supplies to all sides. At the height of the American war in 1779, 3,551 vessels entered (and presumably also cleared) St. Eustatius for a total of 7,102; in London in 1777, only 627 entered and 342 cleared the port for a total of 969; in Providence, Rhode Island, the total was 1,661 vessels in 1773. Even if the numbers for St. Eustatius were inflated by the war, they were still multiples of any other harbor in the Western world. R. G. Gilmore, "St. Eustatius: The Nexus for Colonial Caribbean Capitalism," in: *The Archaeology of Interdependence: European Involvement in the Development of a Sovereign United States*, Douglas Comer, ed., (New York, 2013), pp. 41-60, p. 44. It was only when Britain felt she it had no other choice that she it declared war on the Netherlands in December 1780. When Admiral Sir George Brydges Rodney (1718-1792) captured the island on 3 February 1781, the total known value of loot was over £7 million.

To put this into perspective: the British budget for 1780 was £22 million. The prize was enough to cover Britain's whole non-military budget for the year, at over 170 million livres, it was three and a half times the 48 million livres pricetag for the almost three-year-long stay of Rochambeau's army in the New World. On the re-capture of the island see my "The French Capture of St. Eustatius, 26 November 1781" *The Journal of Caribbean History* vol. 27, no. 2, (1993), pp. 129-143.

An excellent recent discussion of the pivotal role of the "Golden Rock" in the survival of the Caribbean slave economies is Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of Empire* (New Haven, CT, 2013), pp. 297-308.

By that time Britain's American Colonies were in open revolt and preparing to declare independence. Congress, aware of the need for military supplies and counting on France's willingness to provide them, drew up a list of what it needed. In its conversations with Bonvouloir the Committee had wondered whether they could "have arms and other war supplies direct from France"? Its 3 March 1776 instructions for Silas Deane, about to depart for France, were much more precise: "That the supply we at present want, is clothing and arms for twenty-five thousand men with a suitable quantity of ammunition and one hundred field pieces."⁹² Having landed in Bordeaux in mid-June, Deane arrived in Paris on Saturday, 6 July 1776.⁹³ By the time he arrived in Paris and met foreign minister Vergennes on 11 July, France had already acted in support of the American rebels. Aware of the 1,000,000 livres loan, Dr. Jacques Barbeau-Dubourg, a close friend of Benjamin Franklin and one of the three men Deane had been instructed to meet with, had gone to see Gribeauval in the morning of 19 June 1776, i.e., before Deane arrived in Paris, to discuss ways in which France could assist the American rebels.⁹⁴ Later that day Barbeau-Dubourg informed *Vergennes* that Gribeauval had told him "[qu'] il avait dans les arsenaux du roi en canons du calibre 4, qui étaient les plus nécessaires dans leur position, plus de 3 a 400 pieces de nul usage actuel pour le service de l'Etat ... there are in the arsenals of the King 4-lb canons which are most necessary in their position, more than 3 or 400 pieces of no use in the service of the State." Gribeauval suggested that the fleurs-de-lis and other identifying marks could be erased and the guns sold to Spain which could ship them to Havana where the Americans could pick them up. France had enough officers to service these cannon and Gribeauval was already authorized to grant leave to those officers who requested it.⁹⁵

France had correctly anticipated Congress' needs well before Deane arrived in Paris with his requests for "one hundred Field Pieces". Still, it could not have come at a better time for Inspector General of Artillery Jean Baptiste Vaquette de Gribeauval who at once sent inquiries to France's 18 military districts and the arsenals and fortresses in them requesting a report of the number of 4-lb guns, gun carriages and limbers stored there. The reports came back during late August and

⁹² Congress' instructions to Deane of 3 March 1776 are at <http://franklinpapers.org/>, vol. 22, 23 March 1775 to 27 October 1776.

⁹³ Jared Sparks, *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* vol. 1, (Boston, 1829), pp. 9-10. Deane described his travels in a letter to the Committee of Secret Correspondence from Paris dated 18 August 1776.

⁹⁴ The other two were the British spy Dr. Edward Bancroft and Jean-Baptiste Le Roy.

⁹⁵ The letter is printed in Henri Doniol, *Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des États-Unis d'Amérique. Correspondance diplomatique et documents* 5 vols., (Paris, 1886-1892), vol. 1, p. 507.

early September and showed that Gribeauval had indeed hundreds of 4-lb guns of the type Vallière -- 27 M1732 long and 173 M1740, M1755 and M1759 *à la suédoise* cannon - in his arsenals. He did not have the 300 to 400 cannon that Barbeau-Dubourg had reported (he was, after all trying to convince Vergennes as well as War Minister St. Germain that France had more than enough cannon and could easily spare a few), but 173 Light 4-lb cannon *à la suédoise* and 27 Long M1732 4-lb cannon still added up to 200 guns, twice the number the Americans requested. Gribeauval was determined to dispose of them all - tubes, carriages and limbers.

By 14 September 1776, St. Germain had provided Philippe Jean-Baptiste Tronson du Coudray, with a list of the arsenals, forts and depots and the cannon, carriages and limbers available there and orders to inspect them. The order was briefly rescinded on 20 September but a few days later Du Coudray was on his way.⁹⁶ Following inspection, he was to send these "vieilles armes réformées sept ou huit ans plus tôt par Bellegards et pas encore livrées à Montieu ... these old weapons decommissioned seven or eight years ago by Bellegarde but not yet delivered to Montieu" to Dunkerque, Havre, Nantes and Bordeaux for shipment to the American rebels.⁹⁷ Between 20 April and 1 December 1777, eight of the nine vessels sent out by Beaumarchais arrived safely in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.⁹⁸

Congress repeated the request in its instructions to Arthur Lee and Benjamin Franklin in September 1776, who were about to join Deane in France. "As the Scarcity of Arms, Artillery and other military Stores is so considerable in the United States, you will solicit the Court of France for on immediate Supply of twenty or thirty thousand Muskets and Bayonets, and a large Supply of Ammunition and brass Field Pieces, to be sent under Convoy by France. The United States will engage for the Payment of the Arms, Artillery and Ammunition, and to indemnify France for the Expense of the Convoy." If possible, they were to "Engage a few good Engineers in

⁹⁶ Doniol, *Histoire*, p. 56.

⁹⁷ Nardin, *Gribeauval*, p. 291. Deane had promised Du Coudray, a gifted, but by all accounts exceedingly vain artillery major, a commission as major general and command of artillery and engineers in the Continental Army: Henry Knox' and Presle du Portail's positions! Coudray's death by drowning at the Schuylkill Ferry in September 1777, saved Congress from this embarrassment, and caused Lafayette to comment that "the loss of this quarrelsome spirit was probably a fortunate accident." Bodinier, *Dictionnaire*; the Lafayette quote on p. 464.

⁹⁸ On her way from Martinique to Portsmouth the *Seine* became "the only ship of Beaumarchais's to be seized, and even then much of her military cargo was saved", i.e., because she had been unloaded in Martinique. Brian N. Morton and Donald C. Spinelli, *Beaumarchais and the American Revolution* (Lexington Books, 2003), p. 127.

the Service of the United States".⁹⁹ France met America's requests and by December 1777, had dispatched clothing for 30,000 men, 4,000 tents, 30,000 muskets with bayonets, over 100 tons of gunpowder, 194 4-pound cannons and gun carriages, 27 mortars, almost 13,000 shells and 50,000 round shot.¹⁰⁰

The last sentence in Lee's and Franklin's 1776 instructions points to another deficiency in the American military establishment: the Continental Army was desperately short of experts to work some of the sophisticated material provided by France, though there was no lack of applicants from all over Europe! As soon as Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris in late December 1776, he soon found himself flooded with requests for employment in the Continental Army.¹⁰¹ Deane had already entered into contracts with some twenty-seven (mostly French) officers, among them the *marquis* de Lafayette and fourteen additional officers, including the Baron de Kalb, who accompanied LaFayette to America on the *Victoire*. But he had also granted to Philippe Jean-Baptiste Tronson du Coudray, gifted, but exceedingly vain artillery major, permission to recruit forty more officers on his own. The pressing need for experts, inexperience, and difficulties of communication led to numerous embarrassments. Deane had promised Coudray a commission as major general and command of artillery and engineers in the Continental Army: Henry Knox' and Presle du Portail's positions! Coudray's death by drowning at the Schuylkill Ferry in September 1777, saved Congress from this embarrassment, and caused Lafayette to comment that "the loss of this quarrelsome spirit was probably a fortunate accident."¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Franklin left Philadelphia on 26 October and arrived in Quiberon after a 30-day journey on 29 November. He arrived in Paris on 21 December 1776. Congress' instructions for Franklin of 24 September 1776, are published in William B. Willcox, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin. Volume 22 March 23, 1775, through October 27, 1776* (New Haven and London, 1982), pp. 625-630, the quote is on pages 627-628.

¹⁰⁰ Du Coudray rejected six of the 27 Long 4-lb guns as unserviceable. See Neil L. York, "Clandestine Aid and the American Revolutionary War Effort: A Re-Examination." *Military Affairs* vol. 43 no. 1 (February 1979), pp. 26-30. Jean Langlet, "Les ingenieurs de l'Ecole Royale de Génie de Mezières et les armes de la Manufacture de Charleville dans la guerre d'Indépendance américaine." *Revue historique Ardennais* vol. 34 (1999-2000), pp. 197-218, p. 200, estimates that over 100,000 muskets and pistols were sent to America.

¹⁰¹ Before the war was over, Franklin received 415 applications for employment in the Continental Army; 312 applicants were French, the remainder came from all across Europe. See Catherine M. Prelinger, "Less Lucky than LaFayette: A Note on the French Applicants to Benjamin Franklin for Commissions in the American Army, 1776-1785" *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* vol. 4, (1976), pp. 263-270, p. 263.

¹⁰² Biographies in Blanco, *Encyclopedia*, passim; Coudray in vol. 1, pp. 405-406.

Congress had a lot to learn, but it learned quickly. Once those start-up problems were overcome, Franco-American relations proceeded considerably more smoothly. The vast majority of the almost 100 foreign volunteers either hired by Deane, Lee, or Franklin with the tacit consent of the French crown for the express purpose of serving in America, whether they traveled on ships owned by Beaumarchais or whether they came on their own, whether they were French like the *marquis de Lafayette*, Presle du Portail or Pierre l'Enfant, Polish like Tadeusz Kosciuszko or Casimir Pulaski or German-speaking like Barons Steuben or de Kalb all brought much-needed expertise to the Continental Army, served faithfully and sometimes even laid down their lives for America's freedom.

When news of the disaster at Long Island and the occupation of New York by troops under Sir William Howe in September reached Europe in late 1776 shortly after the arrival of Benjamin Franklin, Versailles feared that Britain might succeed in snuffing out the rebellion. France and Spain stepped up their support. A royal order forwarded by Jose de Galvez, Minister of the Indies, to Luis de Unzaga, Spanish Governor of Louisiana, of 24 December 1776, informed Unzaga that he would soon "be receiving through the Havana and other means that may be possible, the weapons, munitions, clothes and quinine which the English colonists (i.e., Americans) ask and the most sagacious and secretive means will be established by you in order that you may supply these secretly with the appearance of selling them to private merchants." Concurrently Galvez informed Diego Jose Navarro, governor of Cuba, that he would soon "receive various items, weapons and other supplies" which he was to forward to Unzaga together with "the surplus powder available" in Havana and "whatever muskets might be in that same Plaza in the certainty that they will be quickly replaced."

The Continental Army put Beaumarchais' supplies to good use. The defeat of General Johnny Burgoyne and his army on 17 October 1777, by General Horatio Gates at Saratoga, was a major turning point in the American Revolutionary War. It was won by American soldiers, even if 90 per cent of the gunpowder used had been supplied by and paid for by France, and was used in the French model of 1763-1766 pattern muskets, which had become standard in the Continental Army. The victory at Saratoga proved to the French that the American rebellion could be sustained with a possibility of success. News of Burgoyne's capitulation reached Paris in the evening of 4 December 1777; on 17 December 1777, Vergennes promised to recognize the independence of the Thirteen Colonies, with or without Spanish support. Vergennes decision reflects the two sides of the American victory at Saratoga: Burgoyne's surrender worried Vergennes as much as it pleased him. The rebellion was alive, French material support had not been wasted, but France was

not quite ready to openly enter the war - he would have liked some more time to prepare the navy and to convince Spain to openly join France in an alliance against Britain. He quickly found out, however, that he would neither get the open support of Spain nor the time to finish his preparations. Why? Upon hearing news of the surrender at Saratoga Lord North asked the House of Commons to repeal the Tea Act and the Massachusetts Government Act, the last of the Coercive Acts, and announced the dispatch of a Peace Commission, the so-called the Carlisle Commission, to America to offer the colonies/United States a large degree of self-rule. That was exactly what Vergennes had feared - what if the colonists would accept the proposal? In that case France would have to face the wrath of Britain alone and without allies. Convinced that he needed to be pro-active, Louis XVI on 30 January 1778 (more than eight weeks after the news of Saratoga had reached Versailles on 4 December 1777) instructed Conrad Alexandre Gerard to sign a Treaty of Amity and Commerce and a secret Treaty of Military Alliance with Deane, Franklin and Lee. The signing took place on 6 February, on 15 March the Court of St. James recalled its ambassador from Versailles. The rest is history, as they say. Yes, Saratoga sent an important message to Americans and to France, but the decision to acknowledge the independence of the US had as much or more to do with the British reaction to Saratoga as with the American victory as such.

On 30 January 1778, the king authorized the *Secrétaire du Conseil d'Etat* Conrad Alexandre Gérard to sign the Treaty of Amity and Commerce and a secret Treaty of Alliance on his behalf. On 6 February 1778, Gérard carried out the order and Deane, Franklin, and Lee signed for the United States. By these treaties, France offered "to maintain ... the liberty, sovereignty, and independence" of the United States in case of war between her and Great Britain. France promised to fight on until the independence of the United States was guaranteed in a peace treaty. The United States promised not to "conclude either truce or peace with Great Britain without the formal consent of the other first obtained".¹⁰³ On 13 March 1778, His Most Christian Majesty officially informed the Court of St. James of this decision. A week later, the three Americans were introduced to the king as *Ambassadors of the Thirteen United Provinces*, while Gérard in turn was appointed French resident at Congress in Philadelphia. Copies of the treaties reached Congress in early May, which ratified them unanimously and without debate and ordered them published without waiting for the French government to ratify the treaties as well.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Ruth Strong Hudson, "The French Treaty of Alliance, Signed on February 6, 1778" *The American Society Legion of Honor Magazine* vol. 49, no. 2, (1978), pp. 121-136.

¹⁰⁴ Alexander DeConde, "The French Alliance in Historical Speculation" in: *Diplomacy and Revolution. The Franco-American Alliance of 1778* Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds.,

A treaty of military alliance is not a declaration of war: but both sides understood it as such. Upon hearing the news, the Court of St. James on 15 March 1778 recalled its ambassador from France, which in turn expelled the British commissioners at Dunquerque. In early June, British ships chased the French frigate *Belle Poule* off the coast of Normandy. The *Belle Poule* held her ground and limped, badly damaged and with half of her crew dead or wounded, into Brest. Louis XVI responded by ordering his navy on 10 July 1778 to give chase to Royal Navy vessels.

8.3 The Failed Invasion of 1779 and the Decision to send Troops to America

The war France had expected since 1763 was on.¹⁰⁵ Choiseul had always wanted to fight it overseas, and Vergennes continued this policy. Even before the *Belle-Poule* affair, Vergennes had sent Admiral d'Estaing with 17 ships of the line, 6,200 naval personnel and 4,000 infantry to the Caribbean, where they arrived in July 1778. But the first two years of military cooperation did not go well. The siege of Newport in August 1778 ended in failure. So did the siege of Savannah in September and October 1779, which had been taken by British troops under Henry Clinton in December 1778. Once d'Estaing had raised the siege, British troops began the invasion of South Carolina where Charleston fell in May 1780.

The apparent inability of French forces "to make a difference" in the war severely strained the alliance. But the criticism was quite undeserved: without massive French aid the Continental Army would probably not have continued to exist. France had been active in Europe as well. In February 1778, already, she had begun to concentrate troops on the Channel coast for a possible invasion of the British Isles. By 30 June, 28 battalions of infantry, some 14,000 officers and men, 10 escadrons of cavalry and 25 companies of artillery were concentrated in the Le Havre, Cherbourg, Brest and coastal areas. By the end of the year, the numbers had almost tripled to 71 battalions, and more troops were arriving daily. By late Spring 1779, 2,608 officers, 31,963 men, 4,918 *domestiques*, 1,818 horses plus large

(Charlottesville, 1981), pp. 1-38. Accompanied by Deane, Gerard reached Philadelphia in July 1778. From Rehoboth, William Vernon of Newport enthusiastically welcome the alliance and wrote to Samuel Vernon on 21 May 1778, "The News from France is grand, more then we cou'd expect, beyond our most sanguine expectations and hope we shall improve the present moment." Newport Historical Society, Vernon Papers, Box 49, folder 5.

¹⁰⁵ Spain entered the war against Great Britain in April 1779 in the Convention of Aranjuez, while Great Britain declared war on the Netherlands in November 1780. An *Acte Royale* of 5 April 1779 set 17 June 1778 the official date for the beginning of Franco-British hostilities.

amounts of artillery, one quarter of France's armed might, was waiting near Le Havre to board almost 500 transports to take them to the Isle of Wight.¹⁰⁶

The interests of Spain, which had entered the war in April 1779, and whose interests lay in fighting Britain in Europe, Gibraltar, Minorca, and Portugal, not overseas, had largely dictated this policy. But Spain was not ready for war against Britain. French naval forces under 69-year-old Admiral d'Orvilliers spent valuable weeks in June and July cruising at the southern entrance of the British Channel, waiting for the Spanish fleet to arrive. The rendezvous for the two fleets had been set for 15 May. When the French and Spanish fleets finally joined up in the last days of July, smallpox was sweeping through the French fleet. D'Orvilliers had already lost 140 sailors, some 600 were in Spanish hospitals, and another 1,800 sick were on board his ships. On 15 August the combined fleets turned into the Channel only to be driven out by a violent storm. The next day d'Orvilliers received instructions that the place of attack for French land forces had been changed to the coast of Cornwall. First, however, he had to find and defeat the Royal Navy to gain control of the channel. On 25 August his lookouts reported the British fleet: 34 ships of the line, 8 frigates, and 20 smaller vessels carrying 26,000 sailors and 3,260 cannon commanded by Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy. The combined Franco-Spanish fleet consisted of 66 ships of the line, 12 frigates, and 16 smaller vessels. D'Orvilliers wanted to give battle out on the Atlantic, but Hardy stayed close to his homeports. Dangerously low on supplies, d'Orvilliers in the first days of September received with relief the order to return to Brest where he disembarked some 8,000 sick sailors. The campaign of 1779 was over. It had cost France the lives of hundreds of sailors and millions of livres with nothing to show for it. In October Montbary called off the campaign. In November the army moved into winter quarters.¹⁰⁷

Though they believed that there was a possibility of success, neither Louis XVI nor Vergennes had placed all their hopes on the successful invasion of Britain. The project went against decades of planning that had always assumed that the war would be fought in America. Now that the project had failed, the voices in favor of fighting England in her colonies grew stronger again. The first suggestions of such an operation had surfaced in late 1777 as France was contemplating the recognition of the United States. That proposal had not been pursued, but now an important voice was clamoring for just such an expedition: that of the marquis de Lafayette,

¹⁰⁶ See also Marcus de la Poer Beresford, "Ireland in French Strategy during the American War of Independence 1776-1783" *The Irish Sword* vol. 12, (1976), pp. 285-297 and vol. 13, (1977), pp. 20-29.

¹⁰⁷ All numbers from Fonteneau, "La période française", pp. 79-85.

who had returned to France in the Spring of 1779. It may well have been at Lafayette's urging that Franklin addressed a memorandum to Vergennes in February 1779, suggesting the dispatch of a corps of 4,000 soldiers to America.¹⁰⁸ In July, Vergennes asked Lafayette for a detailed study on the feasibility of such an expedition, and ordered an internal study. When Admiral d'Estaing limped into Brest with his battered flagship the *Languedoc* in early December, the matter took on additional urgency. Louis XVI and his ministers feared that unless the year 1780 brought at least one case of successful Franco-American cooperation, the colonists might make peace with Britain, leaving France to continue the war by herself.

8.4 Rochambeau and the Troops of the *expédition particulière*

The decisive shift in favor of sending troops to America came in January 1780. The possibility of sending ground forces across the Atlantic for stationing on the American mainland had been discussed and rejected as impracticable even before these treaties were signed. Both sides were all too well aware of the historical and cultural obstacles that had grown up during decades of hostilities to assume an unqualified welcoming of French forces in the United States. France had hoped for a short war, but Sir Henry Clinton's successful foray into Georgia and South Carolina, combined with the failed sieges of Newport and Savannah in 1778 and 1779, had dashed all hopes of a quick victory for the Franco-American alliance. In the Fall of 1779, France and America needed a new strategy. The decision in January 1780 to dispatch ground forces formed the core of the new strategy.¹⁰⁹

Once again Britain's success had worked against her. Up until the summer of 1779, even Washington had had reservations about French ground forces in America. But on 16 September 1779, the *chevalier* de la Luzerne, French minister to the United States, met with Washington at West Point to discuss strategy for 1780. With an eye toward the deteriorating military situation in the South he wondered "whether in case The Court of France should find it convenient to send directly from France a Squadron and a few Regiments attached to it, to act in conjunction with us in this quarter, it would be agreeable to The United States." Washington's reply as recorded by Alexander Hamilton indicated that "The General thought it would be

¹⁰⁸ See Lee Kennett, *The French Forces in America, 1780-1783* (Westport, 1977), pp. 3-17.

¹⁰⁹ A brief but concise analysis of the context of the decision to send Rochambeau to America is Jonathan R. Dull, "Lafayette, Franklin, And the Coming of Rochambeau's Army". This lecture which Dull presented to the Washington Association in Morristown in 1980 is available electronically at <http://xenophongroup.com/mcjoynt/dulltlk.htm>

very advancive of the common Cause."¹¹⁰ Washington repeated his views in a letter to the *marquis* de Lafayette of 30 September 1779. In it he informed the *marquis* of his hopes that Lafayette would soon return to America either in his capacity of Major General in the Continental Army or as "an Officer at the head of a Corps of gallant French (if circumstances should require this)".¹¹¹ Based on Luzerne's report of the 16 September meeting, and an excerpt of Washington's letter, which Lafayette had sent him on 25 January 1780, Vergennes decided that the time had come when French ground forces would be welcome in the New World.

Following Vergennes' recommendation, the king on 2 February approved the plan code-named *expédition particulière*, the transportation across the ocean of a force large enough to decide the outcome of the rebellion in America. Naval forces in the Caribbean would be strengthened and put in a position to support the expeditionary force. In Europe, military action would be confined to diversionary actions, such as the siege of Gibraltar, aimed at binding British forces.

Once the decision to send troops was made, the next question was 1) who would go, and 2) who would command? Vergennes and his colleagues agreed that the command did not call for brilliance, but for level-headedness, the ability to compromise and willingness to cooperate. Harmonious relations with the American ally as well as within the French force were of paramount importance. If the former pointed toward the appointment of the 23-year-old Lafayette, the latter all but ruled it out.¹¹² Lafayette's recent promotion to colonel in the French army had already ruffled some few feathers, and numerous officers made it clear that they would not serve under the young *marquis*. In early February, the cabinet appointed Charles Louis d'Arsac *chevalier* de Ternay, a *chef d'escadre* with 40 years experience, to command the naval forces. For the land forces the choice fell on 55-year-old Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, *comte* de Rochambeau, a professional soldier with 37 years of experience who was more comfortable in an army camp than in the ballrooms of Versailles, and who had already been selected to command the advance guard in the invasion of Britain. On 1 March 1780, Louis XVI promoted Rochambeau to lieutenant general and put him in charge of the expedition.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ The letter is on the web at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html>.

¹¹¹ The letter is on the web at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html>.

¹¹² Lafayette returned to the US shortly after the appointment of Rochambeau in March with Commissary Dominique Louis Ethis de Corny who was to make arrangements for the arrival of Rochambeau's troops. Congress commissioned Corny a lieutenant colonel in the Continental Army on 5 June 1780.

¹¹³ A new and very readable biography of Rochambeau is Jini Jones Vail, *Rochambeau: Washington's Ideal Lieutenant* (Tarentum, 2011).

Both men wasted little time to get ready for the expedition. Ternay had been ordered to find shipping for 6,000 men. Rochambeau spent much of March at Versailles trying to have his force increased, but only succeeded in adding the 2nd battalion of the Auxonne artillery, some 500 men, a few dozen engineers and mineurs,¹¹⁴ and 600 men from the *Légion de Lauzun* as a light force to the four regiments of infantry, some 4,000 men, he would be able to take. A Quartermaster staff under Pierre François de Bévillie, a medical department of about 100 under Jean-François Coste,¹¹⁵ a commissary department under Claude Blanchard,¹¹⁶ a provost department headed by Pierre Barthélémy Revoux de Ronchamp with a hangman and two *schlagueurs*, i.e., corporals tasked with meting out corporal punishment,¹¹⁷ not to mention the dozens of *domestiques*, i.e., servants for the officers, brought what was supposed to be the first division of the *expédition particulière* to about 6,000 officers and men. Everyone else would form part of a second division that Rochambeau hoped would join him in 1781.

8.5 The Officer Corps

These were only some of Rochambeau's problems. Once the numbers had been agreed upon, the decision as to which units to take was to be Rochambeau's. He chose them from among the forces quartered along the coast for the aborted invasion of England. Lee Kennett's description of Rochambeau's decision-making process, i.e., that the regiments selected "were neither the oldest nor the most prestigious regiments, in the army, but (Rochambeau) judged them to be well-officered and disciplined ... and at full strength" is only part of the story.¹¹⁸ Outside considerations may have played a role in their selection as well. The upper echelons

¹¹⁴ The engineers were commanded by Colonel Jean Nicolas Desandrouins. Fragments of his diary which survived his shipwreck in February 1783 are published in Charles Nicholas, *Le Maréchal de Camp Desandrouins* (Verdun, 1887), pp. 341-368. The *mineurs* stood under Joseph Dieudonné de Chazelles. See Ambassade de France, *French Engineers and the American War of Independence* (New York, 1975).

¹¹⁵ See Louis Trenard, "Un défenseur des hôpitaux militaires: Jean-François Coste" *Revue du Nord* vol. 75, Nr. 299, (January 1993), pp. 149-180, and Raymond Bolzinger, "A propos du bicentenaire de la guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis 1775-1783: Le service de santé de l'armée Rochambeau et ses participants messins" *Mémoires de l'Académie Nationale de Metz* vol. 4/5, (1979), pp. 259-284.

¹¹⁶ Besides the *Journal of Claude Blanchard* see also Jean des Cilleuls, "Le service de l'intendance à l'armée de Rochambeau" *Revue historique de l'Armée* no. 2, (1957), pp. 43-61.

¹¹⁷ Corporal punishment was not the norm in the French military: the term used in the original documents, *schlagueurs*, is derived from the German word *schlagen*, to hit someone.

¹¹⁸ Kennett, *French forces*, p. 22.

of the officer corps belonged to the top of aristocratic society whom Rochambeau could not afford to alienate. For the members of the *noblesse de race*, the wealthy and influential court nobility, promotion to high rank and participation in prestigious enterprises at an early age was a birthright. They alone had the influence and the money, 25,000 to 75,000 livres, needed to purchase a line regiment. Nobles such as François Jean, *chevalier* de Beauvoir de Chastellux, a member of the *Académie Française* since 1775, were too influential to be ignored once they expressed interest in the expedition. Lastly, the *duc* de Lauzun opined that he was "too much in fashion not to be employed in some brilliant manner".¹¹⁹

From among the French regiments Rochambeau picked the Bourbonnois, commanded by Anne Alexandre, *marquis* de Montmorency-Laval, who had become colonel of the Toraine regiment at age 23. He was all of 28 when he took over the Bourbonnois in 1775. The fact that Rochambeau's son, 25-year-old Donatien Marie was *mestre-de-camp-en-second*, i.e., second in command of the regiment, may well have influenced this decision. When Donatien became colonel of the Saintonge in November 1782, Charles Louis De Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, a grandson of the famous philosopher, took his place. Soissonnois' *mestre de camp* Jean-Baptiste Félix d'Ollière, *comte* de Saint Maisme was all of 19 1/2 years old when he took over that unit in June 1775. St. Maisme's second in command, 24-year-old Louis Marie, *vicomte* de Noailles, a son of the *duc* de Mouchy, was not only a member of the highest nobility, but also Lafayette's brother-in-law. He received his new position on 8 March 1780. When Noailles became colonel of the *Roi-Dragons* in January 1782, he was replaced by Louis Philippe *comte* de Ségur, the 29-year-old son of the minister of war. Though he had started his military career at the age of 5 (!) and become colonel of the Custine Dragoons at age 22, Adam Philippe, *comte* de Custine, the 38-year-old colonel of the Saintonge, was by far the oldest (and most difficult) of these regimental commanders. Since his second in command, 24-year-old *comte* de Charlus, appointed to the position in March 1780, was the son of the Navy minister, the decision to take the regiment not have been Rochambeau's alone.¹²⁰

One stipulation imposed upon Rochambeau by the *marquis* de Jaucourt, who was in charge of the operational planning of the *expédition*, was that one-third of the force consist of German-speaking soldiers. Jaucourt argued, overly optimistic as it turned out, that recruiting deserters from Britain's German auxiliaries could make

¹¹⁹ *Mémoires de Armand-Louis de Gontaut, duc de Lauzun*, Edmond Pilon, ed., (Paris, 1928), p. 242.

¹²⁰ A scathing analysis by an anonymous officer in Bernard Faÿ, "L'Armée de Rochambeau jugée par un Français." *Franco-American Review* vol. 2, (Fall 1937), pp. 114-120.

up losses in such units.¹²¹ Politics may very well have decided the selection of the Royal Deux-Ponts. The Royal Deux-Ponts was 'suggested' to Rochambeau by Marie Camasse, Countess Forbach, a former dancer andmorganatic wife of its founder and first *colonel propriétaire* Duke Christian IV of Zweibrücken.¹²² Their eldest son Christian de Deux-Ponts, who had been two months short of his 20th birthday when he was given the Royal Deux-Ponts in 1772, had income from estates in Germany and France amounting to over 7,200 livres annually. He also enjoyed an annuity of 14,400 livres, 9,000 livres pay as colonel of his regiment, doubled to 18,000 livres for the American campaign, plus financial support from his mother, which brought his annual income for the American campaign to well over 40,000 livres!¹²³ Second in command was his younger brother William, who distinguished himself during the storming of Redoubt No. 9 before Yorktown, and received his own regiment, the Deux-Ponts Dragoons, in January 1782.

The ships that left Brest in May 1780 were not necessarily carrying the "flower of the French nobility," but Rochambeau's staff was certainly rather heavily laced with court nobility. Competition for these positions was fierce. The slow pace of peacetime advancement in an army where promotion was strictly based on seniority left many officers hoping for an opportunity to "make a name for themselves" as the only way for faster advancement. War alone gave that opportunity. With Europe at peace and the fever-infested Caribbean an undesirable destination, the American campaign seemed to hold out hope for both distinction and survival. Rochambeau had been given blank commissions to fill these positions and subsequently spend much of his time trying to refuse sons, nephews, and favorites pressed upon him by members of the court.

¹²¹ Kennett, *French forces*, p. 23. On 25 July 1780, only two weeks after Rochambeau's arrival, Joseph Reed, President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, informed the *chevalier* de la Luzerne in response to his letter of the same date inquiring about the possibility of recruiting Hessian deserters, that there was no legal obstacle to French recruitment of these men. The next day, 26 July, Luzerne informed Rochambeau of the availability of these men and of their desire to serve either in Lauzun's Legion or the Royal Deux-Ponts regiment and suggested that he send recruiting officers to Philadelphia. Luzerne to Rochambeau with insert of Reed's letter is located in Rochambeau Family Papers, Gen Mss 146, Box 2, no. 123, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

¹²² His brother Charles II August in 1776 succeeded Christian to the throne. Yet the regiment was qualified to participate for the campaign. On 27 March 1780, Rochambeau characterized it "comme aussi solide par sa composition qu'aucun régiment français et dans le meilleur état." Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 1, # 3733. Camasse presented Franklin a walking cane upon his departure from France; Franklin in turn willed the cane to George Washington; today it can be seen in the Smithsonian Institution.

¹²³ These figures are based on the *Nachlass Christian Graf von Forbach, Freiherr von Zweibrücken* (Signatur N 73) in the Pfälzische Landesbibliothek Speyer, Germany.

The most famous among these is probably 26-year-old Axel von Fersen, son of the former Swedish ambassador to France and favorite of Queen Marie Antoinette. Men such as Fersen belonged to a group just below the very rich. In a letter of January 1780 to his father, Fersen stated his fixed monthly expenses for, among others, room and board, three domestics, three horses, and a dog at 1,102 livres, though he promised he would try and economize in the future.¹²⁴ Fersen became an aide-de-camp to Rochambeau. Antoine Charles du Houx *baron* de Vioménil, Rochambeau's second in command, not only secured appointments for about a dozen of his friends from the Polish campaigns, he also brought along his brother, a cousin, a son-in-law, and two nephews, as well as his eldest son, 13-year-old Charles Gabriel, who served as aide-de-camp to his father. Rochambeau took his son, *mestre de camp en second* of the Bourbonnois Regiment, as his *aide-major général de logis*. Custine's kinsman Jean Robert Gaspar de Custine became a *sous-lieutenant* in the Royal Deux-Ponts on 4 April 1780, three days after his 16th birthday. Quarter-Master General de Béville took his two sons as members of his staff as well. It was not just Frenchmen who wanted to see America with Rochambeau. Friedrich Reinhard Burkard Graf von Rechteren, a Dutch nobleman with 15 years service in the Dutch military, used his descent from Charlotte de Bourbon, his great-great-great-great-great-grandmother who had married William of Orange in 1574, to get himself appointed *cadet-gentilhomme* in the Royal Deux-Ponts on 11 March 1780.¹²⁵ One of Rochambeau's nephews, the *comte* de Lauberdière, served as one of six aides-de-camp, another, George Henry Collot, as aide for quartermaster-general affairs.¹²⁶ When Claude Gabriel *marquis* de Choisy appeared in Brest on 17 April 1780, with five officers who

¹²⁴ *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen a son père pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance d'amérique* F. U.Wrangel, ed., (Paris, 1929), p. 46. English translations of some letters were published in "Letters of Axel de Fersen, Aide-de-Camp to Rochambeau written to his Father in Sweden 1780-1782" *Magazine of American History* vol. 3, no. 5, (May 1879), pp. 300-309, no. 6, (June 1879), pp. 369-376, and no. 7, (July 1879), pp. 437-448. Eight letters from America to his sister were published in *The Letters of Marie Antoinette, Fersen and Barnave* O.-G. de Heidenstam, ed., (New York, 1929), pp. 6-13.

¹²⁵ Rochambeau made Rechteren a captain *à la suite*, lending credence to Ternay's claim that the army contained "too many useless mouths". Kennett, *French forces*, p. 21. By 14 August 1780, Rechteren was sightseeing in Philadelphia; he returned to Europe as soon as Yorktown had fallen. His personnel file is in Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Vincennes, France, Yb 346.

¹²⁶ Kennett, *French forces*, p. 21. See also Robert A. Selig, "America the Ungrateful: The Not-So-Fond Remembrances of Louis François Dupont d'Aubevoye, Comte de Lauberdière" *American Heritage* vol. 48, no. 1, (February 1997), pp. 101-106, and "Lauberdière's Journal. The Revolutionary War Journal of Louis François Bertrand d'Aubevoye, Comte de Lauberdière" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 18, no. 1, (Autumn 1995), pp. 33-37.

wanted to sail to America, Rochambeau refused to take them. Choisy and his entourage, which by now had grown to ten officers, left Brest on the *Sybilie* for Santo Domingo on 25 June 1780. There they found passage on *La Gentille* and sailed into Newport on 29 September 1780.

Rochambeau was also under siege by numerous French volunteers who had returned to Europe upon news of the treaties of 1778. They assumed that it would be better for their careers to serve out the war in the French rather than the American Army. Rochambeau realized that he needed not only their expertise, but since neither he nor many of his officers spoke English, their language skills as well. These appointments were much resented. When Rochambeau chose Du Bouchet as an aide, Charlus wrote scathingly in his diary that du Bouchet was but "a brave man who has been to America, [and] who has no other talent than to get himself killed with more grace than most other people".¹²⁷ Another beneficiary of Rochambeau's need for "American" experts was the much-decorated de Fleury, who volunteered to serve as a common soldier when he could not find a position as an officer. Rochambeau appointed him major in Saintonge, which caused considerable grumbling among Fleury's new comrades.¹²⁸ Men such as Fleury belonged to the lower nobility who provided about 90 per cent of the company-grade officers. They could hardly aspire to retiring as more than a major, and formed the vast majority of the officers in Rochambeau's army.¹²⁹ Though well paid in comparison to common soldiers, a *capitaine en seconde* in the French infantry earned 2,400 livres per year in America, they were caught between their limited financial resources and the obligations required by rank and status.¹³⁰

These statistics do not tell us much about the lives of these men. A series of ten letters written by Count Wilhelm von Schwerin, a twenty-six-year-old sub-

¹²⁷ Quoted in Vicomte de Noailles, *Marins et Soldats Français en Amérique pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis* (Paris, 1903), p. 161.

¹²⁸ Gilbert Bodinier, "Les officiers du corps expéditionnaire de Rochambeau et la Revolution française" *Revue historique des armées* vol. 3, no. 4, (1976) pp. 139-164, p. 140.

¹²⁹ Four hundred fifty-nine officers accompanied Rochambeau from Brest, 20 joined him between July 1780 and November 1783. Samuel F. Scott, "The Army of the Comte de Rochambeau between the American and French Revolutions" *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* vol. 15, (1988), pp. 143-153, p. 144. Twelve non-commissioned officers were promoted to officer rank during the campaign. Samuel F. Scott, "Rochambeau's Veterans: A Case Study in the Transformation of the French Army." *Proceedings, the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850* (Athens, 1979), pp. 155-163, p. 157.

¹³⁰ All pay information is taken from *Ordonnance du Roi, Pour régler le traitement des Troupes destinées à une expédition particulière. Du 20 Mars 1780* (Paris, 1780).

lieutenant of grenadiers of the Royal Deux-Ponts, partly in German, partly in French, between August 1780 and December 1781, to his uncle Graf Reingard zu Wied, fills some of this void. They provide a rare glimpse into the life -- and the precarious finances -- of a company-grade officer in America. In a letter of 16 March 1780, Schwerin laid bare his finances. His base salary was 60 livres per month; stoppages included 8 livres for his uniform and 2 livres to help pay the debts of a retired officer. His share to pay the salary of Georg Friedrich Dentzel, the Lutheran minister of the regiment, amounted to 9 sols per month.¹³¹ That left him 49 livres 11 sols per month or 594 livres 12 sols annually. Anticipating the high cost of living in the New World, officer's salaries were doubled in March of 1780, raising Schwerin's net annual income to 1,309 livres 4 sols. His uncle added 48 livres per month, 576 livres per year, for a total of 1,885 livres 4 sols or 157 livres 2 sols per month.

In preparation for the expedition, the king had ordered that the officers be paid three months in advance plus 50 livres to buy tents, hammocks, shirts etc. For Schwerin that meant an additional 200 livres, but not much of it was spent on travel preparations. Some older officers retired rather than accompany the regiment to the New World. That meant that Schwerin had to pay the expenses arising from the *concordat* among the officers of the Royal Deux-Ponts. The *concordat* was an agreement stipulating that every time an officer left the regiment, each officer below him in rank, who would thereby advance in seniority, if not in rank, was to pay that officer the equivalent of two months of his own wages if that officer retired without pension, one month if he retired with a pension. Count Wilhelm's *concordat* in the

¹³¹ The minister had a remarkable career made possible by the French Revolution. Georg Friedrich Dentzel was born on July 16, 1755, in Bad Dürkheim as the son of a baker. From 1774 to 1786 he served as the Lutheran preacher in Royal Deux-Ponts. As senior of the Protestant clergy in Landau from 1786-1794, he was the founder and first president of the local Jacobin Club. In 1792, he was elected a member of *Assemblée Nationale* in Paris and commanded the defense of Landau in the Fall of 1793. Arrested and imprisoned in Paris he was released after the fall of Robespierre. By 1813 he was a brigadier in Napoleon's army and *Baron de l'Empire*. Retired as full general in 1824, he died in Versailles in 1828. He is the grandfather of Prefect Hausmann, the architect responsible for the reconstruction of Paris in the 1850s and 1860s.

Paul de St. Pierre, the Catholic priest of the Royal Deux-Ponts, lived an exciting life as well. Born Michael Joseph Plattner in 1746 in Dettelbach near Würzburg, he was back in the United States by late 1784 and living in Baltimore. St. Pierre became a missionary to the Indians and died in 1826 in Iberville, Louisiana. See John Rothensteiner, "Paul de Saint Pierre. The First German-American Priest of the West." *Catholic Historical Review* vol. 5 (1920), pp. 195-222, and John M. Lenhart, "Notes on the biography of Paul de Saint Pierre." *Ibid.*, vol. 21 (1935-1936), pp. 322-329, and Franz-Bernard Lickteig, "Paul of St. Peter O.C.D., Revolutionary War Chaplain and Mississippi River Missionary (1746-1826)." *The Sword* vol. 36 no. 2 (1976), pp. 17- 25 and pp. 35-37.

spring of 1780 amounted to at least 288 livres, the equivalent of 6 months wages. To make up for the four officers who could not pay their share of the *concordat* since they "already sit in prison because of other debts," each lieutenant of the regiment had to pay an additional 24 livres 11 sols 6 deniers.¹³²

Upon arrival in America, Schwerin had additional expenses that put a severe drain on his budget as well. The servant, whom he was required to keep, cost him 15 livres in cash wages and 35 livres for food each month plus 3 livres clothing allowance. His lunch alone cost him 80 livres per month in Newport, which left him with maybe 24 livres per month from his 157 livres income. In the evenings he ate "but a piece of bread" and lots of potatoes, as he ruefully informed his uncle, but at 22 sols for a pound of bread or 4 to 6 sols for a pound of potatoes even that was an expensive meal. Shoemakers in Newport charged 40 livres for a pair of boots, and just the material for a shirt was 9 florin or 18 livres 15 sols. A good horse, estimated by Fersen to cost about 50 louis d'or, or 1,200 livres in Newport, was simply out of reach for two-thirds of the officers in Rochambeau's army. Schwerin was always borrowing money--in the spring of 1781, he borrowed 1,200 livres from his colonel to equip himself for the campaign, which included hiring a second servant and purchasing a horse for 300 livres.¹³³ No wonder he concluded one of his letters by telling his uncle that those who had remained in Europe "would not believe how everyone is fed up with waging war in this country here. The reason is quite simple in that one is obliged to buy one's forage with one's own money, and no one gives you your ration that is your due in times of war." After Schwerin had returned to France, a compilation of his debts on 25 September 1783 totaled 5,571 livres, the equivalent of nine annual peacetime incomes!¹³⁴

¹³² Schwerin's original correspondence was sold to an American collector in the early 1960s; it is now (winter 2014/15) owned by Dr. Cliff J. Scheiner of Brooklyn, New York.

All quotes are from copies made for the Library of Congress in 1930. See my "'*Mon très cher oncle*': Count William de Schwerin reports from Virginia." in the *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 22 no. 2 (Summer 2000), pp. 48-54, and "Eyewitness to Yorktown." *Military History* vol. 19 no. 6 (February 2003), pp. 58-64. Actual expenses may have been over 500 livres. The concordat of 23 July 1784 is in Régis d'Oléon, "L'Esprit de Corps dans l'Ancienne Armée" *Carnet de la Sabretache* 5th series (1958), pp. 488-496, pp. 493-495.

¹³³ Brisout de Barneville, aide to *baron* de Vioménil, largely confirms Schwerin's prices. "Journal de Guerre de Brissout de Barneville. Mai 1780-Octobre 1781" *The French-American Review* vol. 3, no. 4, (October 1950), pp. 217-278, p. 245-46.

¹³⁴ I am grateful to Dr. Hans-Jürgen Krüger of the Fürstlich Wiedische Rentkammer for this information taken from an entry in the *Korrespondenz Findbuch* of the archives in Neuwied.

A final question to be asked here is: How much did the French officers reflect upon the reasons for fighting in this war? Did they know, or care, about the causes, and consequences, of their involvement in the American Revolution? To put it briefly, very few of them knew or cared. The war, wrote young *comte de Lauberdrière*, had been caused by the "violent means employed by the ministry in England" to raise taxes "in violation of the natural and civil rights of her colonies". France came to the aid of the colonies, though one usually looks in vain for an explanation as to what these "rights" consisted of. In their journals individual officers more often talked of glory, honor, the opportunity to make a name for oneself, a chance to escape boredom, creditors, or girlfriends as the recurrent theme for their joining the fight in America rather than the restoration of the balance of powers as the impetus for Franco-American co-operation.

8.6 The Rank and File

Unlike their officers, the rank and file of the *expédition particulière*, the non-commissioned officers and enlisted men, have remained largely a faceless mass of people. Thanks to the meticulous research of Samuel F. Scott, we know at least how many there were: Rochambeau took with him almost 5,300 soldiers. In June 1781, 660 re-enforcements were sent from France, 160 men were recruited in the US (all but one European-born) for a total of 6,038 men who served under Rochambeau. Non-commissioned officers promoted to their ranks after long years of service formed the backbone of the French army. Following the army reforms of 1776, a fusilier or chasseur company had 15 NCOs, five sergeants and ten corporals, while the smaller grenadier company had four sergeants and eight corporals. The sergeants formed the elite of a company's non-commissioned officers. Based on an analysis of the careers of over 20,000 men, Samuel F. Scott found that in 1789 more than half of all sergeants were under 35 years of age despite the often ten or more years of service it took to reach that rank. Every one of the eight to ten corporals too had reached his rank based on seniority after long years of service. According to Scott, "[c]orporals fell into three general categories: a minority of apparently talented soldiers who were promoted after four to six years' service, soldiers who followed a more common career pattern and were promoted around the time of their completion of their first eight-year-enlistment (sometimes as an inducement to re-enlist); and soldiers with long service, over ten years, who were promoted on this basis." More than three-fourths of these men were under 35 years old.

Below them was the rank and file. The French army was a *young* army.¹³⁵ In 1789, almost exactly 50 per cent of all enlisted men were between 18 and 25 years old, another 5 per cent were even younger.¹³⁶ About 12 per cent had less than one year of service, but 60 per cent had been with the colors between four and ten years, another 20 per cent had served for over ten years. These data are confirmed in the troops of the *expédition particulière*. In the Royal Deux-Ponts we find that the regiment sailed from Brest in April 1780, with 1,013 men. The regiments La Marck and Anhalt provided 113 reinforcements in June 1781, another 67 men were recruited in America between August 1780 and November 1782, for a total of 1,193 men who served with the Regiment. If well over 90 per cent of all soldiers in the French regiments were French-speaking subjects of the King of France, the treaty of March 1776 between Duke Charles and Louis XVI had stipulated that of the 150 recruits needed each year to maintain the strength of the unit, 112 (75 %) were to come from the Duchy of Deux-Ponts and surrounding areas. The remainder was to be drawn from German-speaking subjects of the King of France in Alsace and Lorraine, since the language of command in the regiment would remain German. A look at the age of the soldiers shows that 584 men (48.9 %) of the rank and file had been born between 1753 and 1759. Almost half of the men were between 21 and 27 years old by the time the regiment left for the United States. Some 736 soldiers (61.7%) of the rank and file had signed up between 1773 and 1779, had up to eight years of service. Enlisted men could join at a very young age: the *enfants de troupe*, sons of soldiers or officers, were usually admitted at half pay at the age of six and served as drummers until the age of 16, when they could enlist as regular soldiers. The youngest drummer-boys in the regiment were but nine years old. Comparative data for the Bourbonnois confirm these findings. Most of its men were in their early 20s, the average age being 27; the youngest soldier was 12, the oldest 64.¹³⁷

The biggest difference between the Royal Deux-Ponts and French units was in the religious affiliation of the soldiers.¹³⁸ The French regiments were almost 100 % Catholic while the Royal Deux-Ponts was almost 40 % Protestant.

¹³⁵ Scott, *Response*, p. 8.

¹³⁶ Rochambeau's corps had at least one black soldier in its ranks: Jean Pandoua, "un fils d'amour" according to his enlistment record, who had joined the Bourbonnois regiment as a musician in 1777; after five years of service he deserted on 27 October 1782 in Connecticut.

¹³⁷ Kennett, *French forces*, p. 23. The Touraine regiment of infantry, which Admiral de Grasse brought to Yorktown, kept an 80-year-old on its payroll.

¹³⁸ Of twelve soldiers the religion is unknown.

| | | |
|-----------|-----|--------|
| Catholic: | 732 | 62.0 % |
| Lutheran: | 269 | 22.8 % |
| Reformed: | 180 | 15.2 % |

| | | |
|-------|------|---------|
| ----- | | |
| | 1181 | 100.0 % |

There is a general conception that the soldiers in the armies of the eighteenth century were the dregs of society, released from prison if not from the gallows in exchange for military service. Research on the French army and the troops of Rochambeau has proved this wrong. As a rule, these men did not come from well-established middle-class families, but rather from the un- and under-employed lower classes. Of over 17,000 people holding a city-issued license to beg within the city limits of Paris between 1764 and 1773, only 88 entered the army!¹³⁹ The most detailed report on any regiment, that on the Royal Deux-Ponts compiled on 1 October 1788, a few years after its return from America, shows, not surprisingly for a pre-industrial society, that 875 (76.4 %) of its 1,146 men were peasants and "autres travailleurs de la campagne." The next largest group, 59 men (5 %), were tailors, 48 gave shoemaker as their profession, and 46 were masons. The rest were carpenters (24), butchers (22), wheelwrights (21) and a variety of other trades.

If officers in Rochambeau's corps did not reflect much upon the causes of the war and the reasons for France's involvement, our knowledge of how enlisted men felt is even sketchier. It was only a few years ago that three journals of enlisted men came to light. One is the *Journal militaire* of an anonymous grenadier in the Bourbonnois, which focuses almost exclusively on military events and contains little for the purposes of this study.¹⁴⁰ Neither does the journal of André Amblard of the Soissonnois, even though it does contain more observations about America and the Americans he met with than the grenadier *journal*. Only Georg Daniel Flohr of the Royal Deux-Ponts, expressed his views, unreflective as they were, about the American war in his *Account of the travels in America undertaken by the praiseworthy regiment von Zweibrücken on water and on land from the year 1780 until 1784*.¹⁴¹ The only child of Johann Paul Flohr, a butcher and small farmer, and

¹³⁹ Quoted in Scott, *Response*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ Milton S. Latham Journal MMC 1907, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁴¹ All personal data are taken from his enlistment record 1 Yc 869 (1776-1783) in the Service historique de l'armée de Terre, Château de Vincennes, France.

His *Reisen Beschreibung von America welche das Hochlöbliche Regiment von Zweybrücken hat gemacht zu Wasser und zu Land vom Jahr 1780 bis 84* is located in the Bibliothèque Municipale, Strasbourg, France. I am currently preparing an English language edition of the journal. See my "Private Flohr's America. From Newport to Yorktown and the Battle that won the War: A German Foot Soldier who fought for American Independence tells all about

his second wife, Susanne, Georg Daniel was born on 27 August 1756, and baptized on 31 August 1756, in Sarnstall, a community of some twenty families, and a suburb of Annweiler in the duchy of Pfalz-Zweibrücken. Orphaned at the age of five by the death of his father, Georg Daniel and the five children from his father's first marriage were raised in the German Reformed Church by their mother. Nothing is known about his schooling or the trade he learned. On 7 June 1776, just before his twentieth birthday, Flohr volunteered for an eight-year-term in the Royal Deux-Ponts. Flohr was not asked whether he wanted to fight in the American War and says very little about the American cause or the reasons for his being in America. If he had heard about the ideas of independence, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, he neither mentions them nor does he apply them to himself, at least not during this phase of his life. Flohr and the French troops had come to America to put an end to the British "wreaking havoc on this beautiful country". Nevertheless, Flohr liked this "beautiful country" well enough to return to the United States in circa 1798, where he ended his days as a Lutheran minister in Wytheville, VA, in 1826.

it in a newly discovered Memoir" *American Heritage* vol. 43, no. 8, (December 1992), pp. 64-71; "A German Soldier in New England During the Revolutionary War: The Account of Georg Daniel Flohr" *Newport History* vol. 65, Part 2, no. 223, (Fall 1993), pp. 48-65; "A German Soldier in America, 1780-1783: The Journal of Georg Daniel Flohr" *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 50, no. 3, (July 1993), pp. 575-590, "Georg Daniel Flohr's Journal: A New Perspective" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 15, no. 4, (Summer 1993), pp. 47-53. "Private Flohr's Other Life: The young German fought for American Independence, went home, and returned as a man of peace" *American Heritage* vol. 45, no. 6, (October 1994), pp. 94-95.

THE *EXPÉDITION PARTICULIÈRE* IN RHODE ISLAND, 11 JULY 1780 TO 10 JUNE 1781

9.1 The Transatlantic Journey

To put an end to the British "wreaking havoc on this beautiful country" was indeed the goal of the *expédition particulière* assembled in Brest in March 1780. By 6 April, the troops were embarked; Rochambeau boarded the *Duc de Bourgogne*, one of only five 80-gun vessels in the French navy, on 17 April. Everything was ready, but for days the fleet had to wait in the rain for the wind to change. The first attempt to clear the coast failed, but on 2 May the convoy of 32 transports and cargo ships protected by seven ships of the line, four frigates, four flutes, a cutter and a schooner finally left Brest. Besides their crews of about 7,000 sailors, his ships carried the troops of the *expédition particulière*, about 450 officers and 5,300 men commanded by Rochambeau.¹⁴² Conditions on board ship were less than comfortable.

Baron Ludwig von Closen, an *aide-de-camp* to Rochambeau as well as a captain in the Royal Deux-Ponts was traveling with two servants on the *Comtesse de Noailles*. The *Comtesse* was a 300-ton ship of about 95 feet length on the lower deck, a width of 30 feet and a depth of 12 feet in the hold. For the next 70 days, she was home to 12 naval and 10 army officers and their domestics, of crew of 45, and 350 enlisted men from the Royal Deux-Ponts. Given the limited space available, even officers had to sleep ten to a cabin. At mealtime, 22 people squeezed into a chamber 15 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 4 1/2 feet high.¹⁴³ Closen complained that odors from "men as much as from dogs," not to mention cows sheep and chickens, "the perpetual annoyance from the close proximity" of fellow officers, and "the idea of being shut up in a very narrow little old ship, as in a state prison," made for a "vexatious existence of an army officer ... on these old tubs, so heartily detested by all who are not professional sailors." Closen would have liked it better on the *Duc de Bourgogne*. In order to provide Rochambeau and his officers with the foodstuffs they were

¹⁴² The naval aspects have recently been analyzed in John B. Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy, and American Independence* (Newport, 2005), pp. 58-68; the numbers are from pp. 53-56. The frigates *Bellone* accompanied the fleet to Ushant before returning to Brest. The *Gentille* left Brest on 26 June and arrived in Newport via Martinique on 30 September 1780.

¹⁴³ Closen, *Journal*, pp. 6-8. Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger, a Swiss officer, had entered the Royal Deux-Ponts as a 17-year-old *cadet-gentilhomme* in February 1780; he also traveled on the 550-tons *Comtesse de Noailles* carrying 250 soldiers. His journal of the American campaigns is published in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783* Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown, eds. 2 vols., (Princeton and Providence, 1972), vol. 1, pp. 117-188.

accustomed to, she even carried an oven to bake fresh bread! "There is nothing more ingenious," so the anonymous Bourbonnois grenadier, "than to have in such a place an oven for 50 to 52 loafs of bread of three pounds each! There is a master baker, a butcher, a cook for the officers and a scullion for the sailors and soldiers."

For enlisted men, conditions were much worse. War Commissary Claude Blanchard traveling on the *Conquerant*, a 74-gun ship of the line that drew 22 feet of water at the bow, had to share her with 959 men.¹⁴⁴ The anonymous grenadier of the Bourbonnois embarked on the *Duc de Bourgogne* claimed to have counted 1,432 persons incl. the companies of the Bourbonnois embarked on her at the time of departure, though the ship manifest recorded only 1,089.¹⁴⁵ Either way, conditions were unimaginably crowded. Private Flohr, lodged on the *Comtesse de Noailles*, describes the first day of the journey thus: "Around 2 o'clock after the noon hour we had already left the French coast behind and lost sight of the land. Now we saw nothing but sky and water and realized the omnipotence of God, into which we commended ourselves. Soon the majority among us wished that they had never in their lives chosen the life of a soldier and cursed the first recruiter who had engaged them. But this was just the beginning; the really miserable life was yet to begin." Soldiers slept in linen hammocks, which were attached to spars on the four corners and described by Flohr as "not very comfortable." Since two men had to share a hammock, "the majority always had to lie on the bare floor." Flohr concluded by saying: "He who wanted to lie well had better stayed home."¹⁴⁶

Provisions on troop transports have always had a bad reputation, and the food served by the French navy was no exception. According to Flohr "these foodstuffs consisted daily of 36 loth *Zwieback* (=hardtack) which was distributed in three installments: at 7 in the morning, at 12 at noon and at 6 at night. Concerning meat we received daily 16 loth, either salted smoked ham or beef and was prepared for lunch. This meat however was salted so much that thirst was always greater than

¹⁴⁴ See the *Journal of Claude Blanchard*, pp. 5-8.

¹⁴⁵ A ship the size of the *Duc de Bourgogne* with a displacement of around 1,800 tons (190 feet long, a 46 foot beam with a hold of 22 feet and a somewhat smaller draft) carried a regular crew of some 940 men. Most of them were needed to man its 80 cannons (30 36-pound guns, 32 18-pound guns, 18 8-pound guns): it took 15 men to work one of the 36-pounders during battle. All numbers from Jean Boudriot, "The French Fleet during the American War of Independence" *Nautical Research Journal* vol. 25, no. 2, (1979), pp. 79-86.

¹⁴⁶ On the transatlantic journey as seen by an enlisted man see my "Nothing but Sky and Water: Descriptions of Transatlantic Travel from the Journal of Georg Daniel Flohr, Grenadier, Royal Deux-Ponts, 1780-1783" *Naval History* vol. 13 no. 5, (September/October 1999), pp. 29-34.

hunger. In the evening we had to make do with a bad soup flavored with oil and consisting of soybeans and similar ingredients. Anyone who has not yet seen our grimy cook should just take a look at him and he would immediately lose all appetite." Since starvation was their only alternative, the soldiers forced the food down, living proof for Flohr of the proverb that "Hunger is a good cook." The soup was cooked in a huge copper kettle large enough to feed 800 to 1,200, sometimes up to 1,400 men at a time! These were huge kettles indeed: if everyone on board ship received 2 cups of soup per meal, it took 150 gallons of soup for 1,200 men. If we add another 20 per cent space for cooking to prevent boiling and spilling over, the kettles would have held a minimum of 180 gallons!

A common complaint on all transatlantic passages was the poor quality and the small quantity of drink available. According to Flohr, each man received 1 and 1/2 *Schoppen* of "good red wine" distributed in three installments at morning, noon, and night with the meal. If they received *Branntwein* i.e., liquor, instead, he received 1/8 of a *Schoppen*. Of water they received "very little, most of the time only 1/2 *Schoppen* per day."¹⁴⁷ This poor diet lacking in vitamins and minerals soon started to claim its victims, and Flohr witnessed "daily our fellow brothers thrown into the depths of the ocean. No one was surprised though, since all our foodstuffs were rough and bad enough to destroy us."¹⁴⁸

9.2 The Old World Meets the New World: An Overview

Arrival in Newport was anxiously awaited, and joy was universal when the convoy sailed into Narragansett Bay on 11 July 1780. By July 15, 1780, Barneville reported that "les boulangers," i.e., the bakers, and "les bouchers," i.e., the butchers, "sont établis au camp." In late July 1780, Lafayette wrote to Washington that in Newport "Chicken (sic) and pigs walk Between the tents without being disturb'd."¹⁴⁹ But Lafayette's pastoral landscape of the French camp in Newport is deceiving. Though invited by Congress and Washington, His Most Christian Majesty had taken a considerable risk by sending troops to the New World: it was by far not certain that they would be welcome! In New England French forces entered a difficult

¹⁴⁷ 1 *Schoppen* = about 1/2 pint or 1/4 liter. 1 *Loth* = about 16 Gramm; 36 *Loth* = 576 Gramm or 1.3 lbs US; 256 Gramm = 0.56 lbs US.

¹⁴⁸ A detailed account of the embarkation in Brest and the transatlantic journey lie outside the scope of this study. Very few officers were informed of their destination; William de Deux-Ponts records that even the colonels of the regiments were not told until 3 June 1780.

¹⁴⁹ Lafayette to Washington, 31 July 1780. *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution. Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1700* Stanley J. Idzerda, ed., 5 vols., (Ithaca, 1979), vol. 3, p. 119.

cultural environment and it speaks most highly of the diplomatic skills of Rochambeau and his staff that very few incidents of American-French hostilities are known to have occurred. Before Rochambeau's troops set foot on American soil only a small minority of Americans had ever met a Frenchman off the battlefield. Even Lafayette felt compelled to give General Heath in a "Confidential letter" on 11 June 1780 "some previous hints about the people who are Coming, and Communicate to you, such ideas as derive from my thorough knowledge of theyr Manners, prejudices &c. &c."¹⁵⁰ For their part Frenchmen knew Americans only as members of the British Empire, as enemies, not allies, and fifteen years of uneasy friendship before the alliance of 1778 had not been long enough to wipe out old prejudices. More positive concepts of America as a continent inhabited by noble savages and English settlers forming lone outposts of European civilization in the American wilderness were mere ideals formed in the minds of *philosophes* rather than by reality.¹⁵¹ "In the eyes of their American hosts," as Samuel F. Scott has pointed out, "most Frenchmen remained alien, objects of suspicion and potential hostility." Many Americans saw the French as "the adherents of a despicable and superstitious religion, as the slavish subjects of a despotic and ambitious prince, as frivolous dandies lacking in manly virtues, as physical and moral inferiors whose very dress and eating habits evidenced this inferiority."¹⁵² They were not afraid to express their feelings, before, and even more so, after, the failed sieges of Newport and Savannah. Throughout its existence, the Franco-American alliance was under severe strains. That the military cooperation achieved any results at all provides the greatest testimony to the leadership capabilities of Rochambeau and Washington.

¹⁵⁰ Idzerda, *Lafayette*, vol. 3, p. 53.

¹⁵¹ Durand Echeverria, "Mirage in the West: French *Philosophes* rediscover America" in: *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité: The American Revolution and the European Response* Charles W. Toth, ed., (Troy, 1989), pp. 35-47. Most insightful analyses can be found in Jean-Jacques Fiechter, "L'aventure américaine des officiers de Rochambeau vue à travers leurs journaux" in: *Images of America in Revolutionary France* Michèle R. Morris, ed., (Washington, DC, 1990), pp. 65-82, and François Furet, "De l'homme sauvage à l'homme historique: l'expérience américaine dans la culture française" in: *La Révolution Américaine et l'Europe*, pp. 91-108. See also Pierre Aubéry, "Des Stéréotypes ethniques dans l'Amérique du dix-huitième siècle" *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* vol. 6, (1977), pp. 35-58.

¹⁵² Samuel F. Scott, "Foreign Mercenaries, Revolutionary War, and Citizen Soldiers in the Late Eighteenth Century" *War and Society* vol. 2 (September 1984), pp. 42-58, pp. 42/45. For American attempts at counter-acting these images see William C. Stinchcombe, *The American Revolution and the French Alliance* (Syracuse, 1969), Chapter VIII: "The Press and the Alliance," pp. 104-117, and Chapter IX, "French Propaganda in the United States," pp. 118-132. The French side of the Atlantic is covered in Peter Ascoli, "American Propaganda in the French Language Press during the American Revolution" in: *La Révolution Américaine et l'Europe* pp. 291-308. For Connecticut see Charles L. Cutler, *Connecticut's Revolutionary Press* Connecticut Bicentennial Series XIV (Hartford, 1975).

Samuel Breck's remembrances of life in Boston in the 1770s could almost be used to describe William Hogarth's anti-French caricature:



William Hogarth, *Soup Maigre et la Sabot Royale* (1756) ¹⁵³

The poem under the cartoon reads:

With lantern jaws and croaking gut,
See how the half-star'd Frenchmen strut,
And call us English dogs:
But soon we'll teach these bragging foes
That beef and beer give heavier blows
Than soup and roasted frogs.

The priests, inflam'd with righteous hopes,
Prepare their axes, wheels, and ropes,
To bend the stiff-neck'd sinner;
But should they sink in coming over,
Old Nick may fish 'twixt France and Dover,
And catch a glorious dinner.

¹⁵³ http://cle.ens-lyon.fr/anglais/william-hogarth-france-97974.kjsp?RH=CDL_ANG110201

Breck wrote:

*Before the Revolution the colonists had little or no communication with France, so that Frenchmen were known to them only through the prejudiced medium of England. Every vulgar story told by John Bull about Frenchmen living on salad and frogs was implicitly believed by Brother Jonathan, even by men of education and first standing in society. When, therefore, the first French squadron arrived in Boston, the whole town, most of whom had never seen a Frenchman, ran to the wharves to catch a peep at the gaunt, half-starved, soup-maigre crews. How much were my good townsmen astonished when they beheld plump, portly officers and strong, vigorous sailors! They could scarcely credit the thing, apparent as it was. Did these hearty-looking people belong to the lantern-jawed, spindle-shank race of mounseers?*¹⁵⁴

While many of the prejudices can be explained by simple ignorance and lack of contact, they need to be understood within their broader historical, religious, and cultural context. For decades, the French had been the traditional enemy for New Englanders.¹⁵⁵ Throughout the eighteenth century, ministers from Maine to Massachusetts had encouraged repatriated prisoners of the Franco-Indian wars to record their experiences and read them from the pulpits of their churches. Their accounts were invariably anti-French and anti-Catholic, and "confirmed the longstanding Protestant tradition that linked the Catholic Church with violence, tyranny, immorality, and theological error."¹⁵⁶ This practice had reached new heights during the French and Indian War and had been re-enforced as late as 1774. On 22 June of that year, Parliament had passed the Québec Act, thereby extending the Province of Quebec south to the Ohio River and west to the Mississippi; its

¹⁵⁴ H.E. Scudder, *Recollections of Samuel Breck with Passages from his Note-Books (1771-1862)* (Philadelphia, 1877), pp. 24/25.

¹⁵⁵ The English tradition of French-bashing also played a role. Reflecting on a journey to England in the 1750s, Louis Charles Fougere de Monbron wrote in his *Préservatif contre l'Anglomanie* (à Minorque, 1757), p. 52 : "Nous sommes la seule nation de l'Univers que les Anglois ne méprisent pas. En revanche ils nous font l'honneur de nous haïr avec toute la cordialité possible. Leur aversion pour nous est un sentiment qu'on leur inculque dès le berceau. Avant de savoir qu'il y a un Dieu à servir, ils savent qu'il y a des François à détester, & les premières paroles qu'ils peuvent bégayer, ce sont des imprécations contre nous, le Prétendant & le Pape. Une chose qui doit nous flatter, c'est que tout étranger à Londres, est toujours un *French dog*, lorsqu'il se fait remarquer par sa bonne mine & ses ajustements."

¹⁵⁶ Gayle K. Brown, "'Into the Hands of Papists': New England Captives in French Canada and the English Anti-Catholic Tradition, 1689-1763" *Maryland Historian* vol. 21, (1990), pp. 1-11, p. 9.

repeal became a major demand of colonists. The act not only ignored western land claims of Virginia, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, but also guaranteed the traditional language, civil law, and the Roman Catholic faith of its new French subjects. New Englanders were irate and began celebrating anti-Pope Day on 5 November (derived from the English Guy Fawkes Day, a Catholic who had tried to assassinate King James I on 5 November 1605) with a vengeance. In Rhode Island, every single issue of the *Newport Mercury* from 2 October 1774 to 20 March 1775 contained "at least one invidious reference to the Catholic religion of the Canadians"¹⁵⁷ and the anti-Pope Day in Newport saw not just one but two popes burned in effigy.¹⁵⁸ On 5 November 1775, Washington forbade "the observance of that ridiculous and childish Custom of burning the Effigy of the pope—He cannot help expressing his surprise that there should be Officers and Soldiers, in this army so void of common sense, as not to see the impropriety of such a step at this Juncture; at a Time when we are solliciting, and have really obtain'd, the friendship & alliance of the people of Canada, whom we ought to consider as Brethren embarked in the same Cause. The defence of the general Liberty of America: At such a juncture, and in such Circumstances, to be insulting their Religion, is so monstrous, as not to be suffered, or excused; indeed instead of offering the most remote insult, it is our duty to address public thanks to these our Brethren, as to them we are so much indebted for every late happy Success over the common Enemy in Canada."¹⁵⁹

Another telling example of the inter-dependence of Catholicism and oppressive government, i.e. France, as seen by New Englanders was provided by James Dana, pastor of the First Church of Wallingford, Connecticut, in "A Sermon Preached before the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut at Hartford on the Day of the Anniversary Election, May 13, 1779." In this sermon, delivered more than a year after the signing of the Franco-American alliance, Dana reminded the legislators that "the preservation of our religion depends on the continuance of a free government.

¹⁵⁷ Charles H. Metzger, *Catholics and the American Revolution: A Study in Religious Climate* (Chicago, 1962), p. 33.

¹⁵⁸ "The Pennsylvania Gazette said the legislation would now allow 'these dogs of Hell' to 'erect their Heads and triumph within our Borders.' *The Boston Evening Post* reported that the step was 'for the execution of this hellish plan' to organize 4,000 Canadian Catholics for an attack on America. [...] Rev. John Lathrop of the Second Church in Boston said Catholics 'had disgraced humanity' and 'crimsoned a great part of the world with innocent blood.' Rev. Samuel West of Dartmouth declared the pope to be 'the second beast' of Revelation". Steven Waldman, *Founding Faith: How our Founding Fathers Forged a Radical New Approach to Religious Liberty* (New York, 2009), p. 50.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted from the on-line edition of the Washington Papers at the Library of Congress at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw040073\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw040073)))

Let our allies have their eyes open on the blessings of such a government, and they will at once renounce their superstition. On the other hand, should we lose our freedom this will prepare the way to the introduction of popery."¹⁶⁰ Enough members of the Connecticut legislature remembered this warning in their spring 1780 session and refused to vote funds to supply the French even though their fellow Connecticutian Jeremiah Wadsworth had been hired by the French as their purchasing agent.¹⁶¹ Despairingly Jedediah Huntington wrote to Wadsworth on 5 May 1780, of his fears that the French aid might not materialize at all: "I assure you I have apprehensions that our good Allies will [only] stay long enou' to cast upon us a look of chagrin and pity and turn upon their heels."¹⁶²

What worried some of the legislators was the very idea of a military establishment. Even a century and a half after Oliver Cromwell and the Republic, the watchword of "No Standing Army!" still was an integral part of American political culture and had indeed been one of the rallying cries of 1776. In the Declaration of Independence the revolutionaries accused King George of having "kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies, without the consent of our legislatures." For many Americans, a standing army was a potential instrument of tyranny. That included their own Continental Army, reduced to a single regiment of 1,000 men as soon as the war was over!

In 1765, Baron de Kalb had reported that the Americans would not welcome a French army. In early 1778, Vergennes had sent agents across the ocean to probe American sentiments concerning the dispatch of an expeditionary force. Their reports were not encouraging. A year later, an agent recorded Americans not at all disposed toward supporting foreign troops on their soil: "It seems to me that in this regard the Americans harbor an extreme suspicion." Other officers reported that

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Stinchcombe, *American Revolution* Chapter VII: Pulpit and Alliance, p. 96. In *A SERMON, PREACHED BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COLONY OF CONNECTICUT, AT HARTFORD, ON THE DAY OF THEIR ANNIVERSARY ELECTION, May 11, 1775*, Joseph Perry, Pastor of the first Church of Christ in East Windsor, had warned the legislators of the impending danger of "absolute despotism, and as the certain consequence, cruel tyranny, and the total slavery of all America" that had originated in "an act of a late parliament, commonly known among us by the name of the *Quebec Bill*." Unless they kept up the fight that had begun three weeks earlier at Lexington and Concord they would soon need to swap 'the best religion in the world' for "all the barbarity, trumpery and superstition of popery; or burn at the stake, or submit to the tortures of the inquisition." The sermon can be found at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N11371.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

¹⁶¹ Richard Buel Jr., *Dear Liberty. Connecticut's Mobilization for the Revolutionary War* (Middletown, 1980), p. 226. Journals for this legislative session "have disappeared."

¹⁶² "The Huntington Papers" *Connecticut Historical Society Collections* vol. 20 (1923), p. 150.

they too had taken up the issue with the Continental Congress though without much success. "The most enlightened members of Congress, though convinced of the necessity of this course of action, have not dared to propose it for fear of alarming the people by the introduction of a foreign army."¹⁶³ From Philadelphia, French Resident Gérard had warned Vergennes that "the manners of the two peoples are not compatible at all. ... Should there be too close contact between the French soldier and the American colonists ... there can be no other result but bloody conflict."¹⁶⁴ Fears of bloodshed are also expressed in the diary of the Rev. Christian Bader of Hebron Moravian Church in Lebanon, Pennsylvania. On 22 March 1779, he recorded the rumor that "on the first of April the French fleet is to arrive at Philadelphia. Then all without exception are to swear allegiance to the king of France and, whoever does not, will be handed over to the French and stabbed to death."¹⁶⁵ The French of course had no intention of doing any such thing.

If there were tensions, they were caused more often by a clash of cultures based upon the social status and expectations of those involved rather than by ill will. Not surprisingly it was the court nobility that had the most difficulty adjusting to the New World. The "simple necessities of life" with which Americans made do were quaint and fun to watch in others, but for a member of the high aristocracy such a life-style betrayed a serious lack of culture. Cromot du Bourg thought it "impossible to dance with less grace or to be worse dressed" than the women of Boston.¹⁶⁶ The *till*, a dance in this "still somewhat wild country," was "a sad piece of stupidity."¹⁶⁷ Many French officers, such as Clermont-Crèvecœur, thought the girls "pretty, even beautiful [but] frigid." Unless you "assume the burden of conversation, animating it with your French gaiety, [all] will be lost," and summed up his judgment by declaring that "one may reasonably state that the character of this nation is little adapted to society" -- at least not society as defined by the standards of Versailles and French court aristocracy.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Kennett, "L'expédition Rochambeau-Ternay," p. 92. See Lee Kennett, "Charleston in 1778: A French Intelligence Report" *South Carolina Historical Magazine* vol. 66, (1965), pp. 109-111, for reports of anti-French riots, and Scott, "Strains," pp. 80-100.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Kennett, "Rochambeau-Ternay," p. 100.

¹⁶⁵ John W. Heisey, "Extracts from the Diary of the Moravian Pastors of the Hebron Church, Lebanon, 1755-1814." *Pennsylvania History* vol. 34 no. 1, (1967), pp. 44-63, p. 57.

¹⁶⁶ Marie-François Baron Cromot du Bourg, "Diary of a French Officer, 1781" *Magazine of American History* vol. 4, (June 1880), pp. 205-214, p. 214.

¹⁶⁷ "Letters of a French Officer, written at Easton, Penna., in 1777-78" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 35, (1911), pp. 90-102, p. 96.

As far as these men were concerned, the concept of *noblesse oblige* went beyond the intellectual horizon of the average American, who seemed "rather like their neighbors the savages." Their accounts are filled with complaints about the poor quality of American bread and monotonous dinners of vast amounts of meat washed down with innumerable toasts. In-between they drank either "very weak coffee,"¹⁶⁸ Blanchard thought that "four or five cups are not equal to one of ours," or "vast amounts" of strong tea with milk. Eating seemed to be the major occupation for Americans, "who are almost always at the table; and as they have little to occupy them, as they go out little in winter and spend whole days along side of their fires and their wives, without reading and without doing anything, going so often to table is a relief and a preventive of *ennui*."¹⁶⁹ After dinner "each person wipes himself on the table-cloth, which must be very soiled as a result."¹⁷⁰ Looking back, such misunderstandings appear humorous, but one can only wonder about the hurt feelings of the host in Marion, CT in June 1781, when an officer, invited to tea, pointed to some sprigs on the table with the comment that "one do give dis de horse in my country." Another "felt insulted that his dog should be suspected of drinking" his milk from the "cracked bowl" that Tavern Keeper Asa Barnes had poured it in.¹⁷¹ And all prejudices of the people of Windham, Connecticut, were confirmed when French soldiers, hardly encamped, came down upon the frogs in the town pond and feasted on them during that memorable night of 20 June 1781.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Clermont-Crèveœur, "Journal," p. 20

¹⁶⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 78.

¹⁷⁰ Closen, *Journal*, p. 51.

¹⁷¹ H. R. Timlow, *Ecclesiastical and other Sketches of Southington*, (Hartford, 1875), p. 53.

¹⁷² Forbes, "Marches," pp. 271/72. A few weeks earlier, French officers had been served real frogs by Nathaniel Tracy, owner of today's Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters in Cambridge. The occasion had been the arrival of Admiral Barras in Boston on 8 May 1781 aboard *La Concorde* who replaced Admiral Ternay who had died in December 1780. The dinner is described by Samuel Breck (1771-1862), who was 10 years old at the time.

"Mr. Nathaniel Tracy, who lived in a beautiful villa at Cambridge – right here - made a great feast for the admiral – Barras - and his officers. Everything was furnished that could be had in the country to ornament and give variety to the entertainment. My father was one of the guests, and told me often after that two large tureens of soup were placed at the ends of the table. The admiral sat on the right of Tracy, and Monsieur de l'Etombe on the left. L'Etombe was consul of France, resident at Boston. Tracy filled a plate with soup, which went to the admiral, and the next was handed to the consul. As soon as L'Etombe put his spoon into his plate he fished up a large frog, just as green and perfect as if he had hopped from the pond into the tureen. Not knowing at first what it was, he seized it by one of its hind legs, and, holding it up in view of the whole company, discovered that it was a full-grown frog. As soon as he had thoroughly inspected it, and made himself sure of the matter, he exclaimed, "Ah! mon Dieu! un grenouille!" then, turning to the gentleman next to him, gave him the frog. He received it, and passed it round the table. Thus the poor *crapaud* made

Some disagreements laid bare the acute cultural differences between the allies. In November 1778, Admiral d'Estaing informed the Navy Minister: "One must also fawn, to the height of insipidity, over every little republican who regards flattery as his sovereign right, ... hold command over captains who are not good enough company to be permitted to eat with their general officers (one must be at least a major to enjoy that prerogative), and have some colonels who are innkeepers at the same time." Much to his credit, however, d'Estaing continued "It is his knowing how to turn all that to advantage, to put it in its place and remain in his own that has most impressed me in the difficulties that M. le Marquis de Lafayette has overcome."¹⁷³ Compared to eighteenth-century France, New England society was a society composed largely of equals. In 1782, French traveler Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur observed that in America "the rich and poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe." He defined an American as someone who had left "behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners," who saw no reason to defer to someone because he wore epaulettes or had a title of nobility.¹⁷⁴ Commoners in France had no right to question a nobleman's actions, yet the constable of Crompond (modern-day Yorktown Heights, New York) arrested Rochambeau for damage done by his soldiers.¹⁷⁵ The *chevalier* de Coriolis explained the strange rules of warfare in America thus: "Here it is not like it is in Europe, where when the troops are on the march you can take horses, you can take wagons, you can issue billets for lodging, and with the aid of a gendarme overcome the difficulties the inhabitant might make; but in America the people say they are free and, if a proprietor who doesn't like the look of your face tells you he doesn't want to lodge

the tour from hand to hand until it reached the admiral. The company, convulsed with laughter, examined the soup-plates as the servants brought them, and in each was to be found a frog. The uproar was universal. Meantime Tracy kept his ladle going, wondering what his outlandish guests meant by such extravagant merriment. "What's the matter?" asked he, and, raising his head, surveyed the frogs dangling by a leg in all directions. "Why don't they eat them?" he exclaimed. "If they knew the confounded trouble I had to catch them in order to treat them to a dish of their own country, they would find that with me, at least, it was no joking matter." Thus was poor Tracy deceived by vulgar prejudice and common report. He had caused all the swamps of Cambridge to be searched in order to furnish them with a generous supply of what he believed to be in France a standing national dish." *Recollections of Samuel Breck*, pp. 25-27.

¹⁷³ D'Estaing is also pointing out one of the discrepancies of revolutionary ideology and political reality. In the French army, the colonel was expected to keep an open table for any officer of his regiment, no matter what rank he held. The letter from d'Estaing to Navy Minister Sartine of 5 November 1778, in Idzerda, *Lafayette*, vol. 2, pp. 202/03.

¹⁷⁴ Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York, 1957), p. 36.

¹⁷⁵ The story is told by Rochambeau's son in Jean-Edmond Weelen, *Rochambeau. Father and Son. A life of the Maréchal de Rochambeau and the Journal of the Vicomte de Rochambeau* (New York, 1936), pp. 259/60 in and Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 168.

you, you must go seek a lodging elsewhere. Thus the words: 'I don't want to' end the business, and there is no means of appeal."¹⁷⁶ The *vicomte* de Tresson, a captain in the Saintonge whose father had commanded the regiment until replaced by Adam Philippe, *comte* de Custine, put his finger squarely on the problem when he wrote his father: "Here they have more respect for a lout than they have for a duke in France."¹⁷⁷ Could it be that a colonist had pointed out to de Tresson that in America we "have no princes for whom we toil, starve and bleed"?¹⁷⁸ Such language was anathema in the ears of a nobility used to be accorded deference in Europe. They might find it amusing that the New England militia contained "shoemakers who are colonels," who asked their French counter-parts "what their trade is in France."¹⁷⁹

They might even chuckle as they told anecdotes such as this told by the *chevalier* de Pontgibaud:

One day I dismounted from my horse at the house of a farmer upon whom I had been billeted. I had hardly entered the good man's house when he said to me,

"I am very glad to have a Frenchman in the house."

I politely enquired the reason for this preference.

"Well," he said, "you see the barber lives a long way off, so you will be able to shave me."

"But I cannot even shave myself," I replied. "My servant shaves me, and he will shave you also if you like."

"That's very odd," said he. "I was told that all Frenchmen were barbers and fiddlers."

I think I never laughed so heartily. A few minutes later my rations arrived, and my host seeing a large piece of beef amongst them, said,

"You are lucky to be able to come over to America and get some beef to eat."

I assured him that we had beef in France, and excellent beef too.

"That is impossible," he replied, "or you wouldn't be so thin."

Such was, -- when Liberty was dawning over the land, -- the ignorance shown by the inhabitants of the United States Republic in regard to the French.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ "Lettres d'un officier de l'Armée de Rochambeau: le chevalier de Coriolis" *Le correspondant* no. 326, (March 25, 1932), pp. 807-828, p. 818.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Kennett, "Rochambeau-Ternay," p. 100.

¹⁷⁸ Crèvecoeur, *Letters*, p. 36.

¹⁷⁹ Cromot du Bourg, "Diary," p. 209.

¹⁸⁰ Pontgibaud served as *aide-de-camp* to Lafayette from September 1777 through the siege of Yorktown. Charles Albert *comte* de Moré, *chevalier* de Pontgibaud, *A French volunteer of the War of Independence* Robert B. Douglas, trans. and ed., (Paris, 1898), pp. 50/51.

But if the curiosity of Americans toward noble titles and aristocracy could be ascribed to ignorance, their strange foodstuffs to local customs, their provinciality to remoteness from European culture, their greed, seen as lack of devotion to the cause of American liberty, bordered on treason. In Europe, food and lodging for the army would simply be requisitioned, but here everything had to be paid for, and quite dearly at that. The French government had been aware that their allies lacked virtually everything, and that Rochambeau's forces would have to bring much of their supplies with them. When Rochambeau arrived in Newport, conditions were worse than expected. In July 1780, he already pleaded with the War Minister: "Send us troops, ships and money, but do not count upon these people or their means," adding the sober warning that "this is going to be an expensive war."¹⁸¹

What the French did not or could not bring they had to purchase at what was generally agreed were very high prices. Rochambeau felt himself "at the mercy of usurers."¹⁸² Axel von Fersen, who on 8 September had informed his father that the "most entire confidence exists between the two nations", wrote deeply disillusioned in January 1781 that "the spirit of patriotism only exists in the chief and principal men in the country, who are making very great sacrifices; the rest who make up the great mass think only of their personal interests. Money is the controlling idea in all their actions." They "overcharge us mercilessly ... and treat us more like enemies than friends. ... Their greed is unequalled, money is their God; virtue, honor, all count for nothing to them compared with the precious metal."¹⁸³ Count William de Schwerin, a 26-year-old sub-lieutenant in the Royal Deux-Ponts, like most diarists thought the inhabitants of Newport anxious to cheat them out of their money. Schwerin quoted 22 sols for a pound of better bread for officers and even Flohr complained that a 3-pound loaf of bread cost him 40 to 44 sols, when a common soldier received only about 150 sols cash per month! André Amblard, the enlisted man in the Soissonnois Regiment, also gave 22 sols as the price of bread while meat cost 12 sols per pound in the fall of 1780.

Out of these words speak as much frustration over the lack of activity as disappointment that the idealized French image of the self-sacrificing, virtuous American did not stand up to the test of reality. Upon arrival in Newport, the French, used to an economic system based on price and wage controls, received a lesson in

¹⁸¹ Quoted in Kennett, *French forces*, p. 72.

¹⁸² Quoted in Scott, "Strains," p. 91.

¹⁸³ Fersen, *Letters*, p. 371.

free market economy and the laws of supply and demand. Colonel Thomas Lloyd Halsey of Providence, one of Wadsworth's business partners, explained to Peter Colt, one of their agents, the high freight costs in his accounts thus: "I am sure they might have been lower had they even had asked a day before they wanted but they never would or did. They commonly sent to me at Sunsett to obtain what they wanted for the Morning, which is no way of taking the advantage of Business."¹⁸⁴ But trying to take "the advantage of Business" was a universal human trait, and Brisout de Barneville took the prices in stride when he declared that "The merchants sell to us just as dearly as ours did to the Spanish when they were in Brest last year."¹⁸⁵

Americans had long since lost faith in the paper money issued by their government and insisted that unlike their own army, the French pay in specie: gold or silver. Spend the French did, to the tune of millions, and much to the chagrin of the purchasing agents for the Continental Army, who found out that no farmer was willing to sell to them for worthless paper as long as Rochambeau's agents paid in livres or Pieces of Eight! Finance Minister Jacques Necker had arranged for a first-year credit of 7,674,280 livres in early March 1780, some 2.6 million of which Rochambeau took with him in cash. But when Rochambeau arrived in Newport he found out that his purchasing agent Ethis de Corny had already spent some 700,000 livres. In addition he needed a minimum of 375,000 livres each month to keep his army going, on top of almost 90,000 livres he needed to prepare winter quarters for his troops. By the time an emergency shipment of 1.5 million livres in specie arrived in Boston on the *l'Astree* on 28 February 1781 the navy, which had only brought half a million, was down to a mere 800 livres in cash. But Rochambeau had been feeling the pinch as well. On 20 February 1781, John Barker (Church) Carter had told his business partner Wadsworth from Newport that "The Intendant could not give me any hard Money, they have none, and have stopp'd the Pay of the Staff Officers."¹⁸⁶

In early May, Rochambeau's son brought another 6.6 million livres in cash and bills of exchange, but by the time the French and American armies joined forces at Philipsburg, they were almost gone too. When the frigate *Resolue* sailed into Boston on 25 August 1781, it carried 2.5 million livres, more than 400,000 écus worth 6 livres each. "Fourteen wagons hauled by fifty-six oxen and lead horses conveyed the

¹⁸⁴ Halsey to Colt, 23 October 1781, Wadsworth Papers, Correspondence July 1781 to February 1782, Box 132, CTHS. An autobiography of Colt, written in 1818 when he was living in Paterson, NJ is in Special Collections, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, Ac 652.

¹⁸⁵ Barneville, "Journal," p. 241.

¹⁸⁶ Wadsworth Papers Box 131, Correspondence December 1780 to June 1781, CTHS.

specie” across Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey to Philadelphia.¹⁸⁷ To replenish French coffers, Admiral de Grasse brought another 1.2 million livres from Cuba in August 1781. Altogether there were nine shipments of specie from France for a total of about 10 million livres, in both Spanish as well as French coin. The importance of the French bullion spent to maintain Rochambeau’s army for the American war-time economy cannot be overemphasized. Historian Timothy R. Walton estimates that “on the eve of the American Revolution, about half the coins used in the British North American Colonies, some 4 million Pieces of Eight [21 million livres], were pieces of eight from New Spain and Peru,”¹⁸⁸ while historian Lee Kennett estimated French forces may have spent more than the 20 million during their stay in the United States.¹⁸⁹ If loans arranged by private lenders, estimated at between 15 and 20 million livres, are added, the *expédition particulière* may have doubled the amount of specie circulating between Yorktown and Boston.



French *écu* of six livres or 120 sols

¹⁸⁷ Gregory D. Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), pp. 190–191.

¹⁸⁸ Timothy R. Walton. *The Spanish Treasure Fleets* (Sarasota, 1994), p. 183. Spanish milled dollars and French *écus* remained legal tender in the United States until 1857.

¹⁸⁹ Lee Kennett, *The French Forces in America, 1780–1783* (Westport, 1977), p. 68.

Unfortunately the military proficiency of New Englanders was vastly inferior, at least thus it appears in French journals, to their skills in "fleecing," to use Fersen's term, their allies. The French prided themselves in their expertise and derived great satisfaction from the high level of proficiency of the armed forces under their command. French officers, though impressed with the skill and even more so the devotion of the Continental Army, had little faith in the fighting abilities of the militia, an opinion shared by their American counterparts. They were not afraid of expressing their views, but few descriptions of that soldiery can match the pen of the *chevalier* de Pontgibaud describing Rhode Island and Connecticut militia gathering for the siege of Newport in 1778.

Hardly had the troops disembarked before the militia, -- to the number I believe, of about ten thousand men, horse and foot, -- arrived. I have never seen a more laughable spectacle; all the tailors and apothecaries in the country must have been called out, I should think; -- one could recognize them by their round wigs. They were mounted on bad nags, and looked like a flock of ducks in cross-belts. The infantry was no better than the cavalry, and appeared to be cut after the same pattern. I guessed that these warriors were more anxious to eat up our supplies than to make a close acquaintance with the enemy, and I was not mistaken, -- they soon disappeared.¹⁹⁰

Company grade and junior officers with limited financial resources, *sous-lieutenants* like Schwerin who were sitting in their rooms at night eating potatoes, learning English, counting the days until they might be invited to another evening event, men who turned each livre over twice before they spent it, were much less concerned with the niceties of dancing, the simplicity of the food, and the home-made dresses of their hosts. An enlisted man such as Flohr, not used to finer foods, had few problems adjusting to the diet in New England. Captain Oyré recorded that the only grain grown in Rhode Island was "maÿs [...] of which the inhabitants make a kind of poorly baked and heavy ("mal cuit et p sant") bread."¹⁹¹ Flohr thought the bread, even with the corn meal, "very good" though it "sold for a very high price."

¹⁹⁰ Pontigaud, *French volunteer*, p. 67. For other appraisals of the militia and the Continental Army see Orville T. Murphy, "The French Professional Soldier's Opinion of the American Militia in the War of the Revolution" *Military Affairs* vol. 33, (February 1969), pp. 191-198 and Durand Echeverria, "The American Revolutionary Army: A French Estimate in 1777" *Military Affairs* vol. 27, (1963), pp. 1-7 and pp. 153-62.

¹⁹¹ Oyr , "Notes", p. 8 of the typed copy in the Library of the Society of the Cincinnati, Washington, DC.

The "money of the inhabitants was made of paper, about the size of a playing card" and bearing "the seal of the province and the signature of the governor." It did not seem to have much buying power: one had "to add good words" i.e., plead, to get food if one tried to pay with these Continentals.

As they spent the winter of 1780/81 in Newport and began their march south in June of 1781, Rochambeau's troops marveled at a country where "all inhabitants are wealthy and well. One does not see a difference between rich and poor." Here "one does not see a difference between the Sunday clothes and their workday clothes," and women were "always dressed like ladies of the nobility." Many a time Flohr "wondered where their wealth came from since they don't work at all." Looking around he realized that this wealth was created by a relatively equal distribution and free owner-ship of land, where the absence of tenancy leveled social distinctions based on birthright and noble privilege. Americans were "not haughty at all. They talk to everybody, whether he be rich or poor," and common folk live "more ostentatiously than the nobility in Europe." That roles were reversed in America was driven home to Graf Schwerin in Philadelphia:

On the last day of our stay in Philadelphia I was surprised to see a one-horse-chaise stop before my tent. In it sat two women and a man, who drove it. They said they were from Dierdorf; I asked them to get out of the carriage and recognized the one to be the Henritz who was a servant at the (your) castle and the other to be her sister, who has already been married to a beer brewer in Philadelphia for 18 years and who is very rich. I had dinner with them; they have a perfectly furnished house. In the evening they introduced me to a man named Dichon who had been with you at Dierdorf. ... I had breakfast with him before our departure from Philadelphia. He has a superb house and lots of ready money, because he showed me a little chest full of Louis d'Ors.

The spirit of equality, freedom and opportunity, was not lost on members of the lower nobility in the officer ranks either: Lieutenant Colonel Esebeck thought that "no one could live more happily than here. There is a freedom here the like of which is found nowhere else."¹⁹²

¹⁹² John M. Lenhart, "Letter of an Officer of the Zweibrücken Regiment," *Central-Blatt and Social Justice*, vol. 28, (January 1936), pp. 321-322, and (February 1936), pp. 350-360, p. 322. The letters are dated Jamestown Island, (Virginia) 12 and 16 December 1781.

9.3 Arrival in Newport

News of the impending arrival of Rochambeau's forces came to America via the *marquis* de Lafayette on *l'Hermione*, who arrived in Marblehead on 27 April 1780 and stepped ashore in Boston in the afternoon of 28 April "in the midst of an immense crowd. They welcomed me with the roar of guns, the ringing of all the city's bells, the music of a band that marched ahead of us, and the huzzas of all the people that surrounded us. In this way I was led to the house that the council and the assembly of representatives of Boston had prepared for me. There was a deputation from these bodies to welcome me ... In the evening the people gathered in front of the my door and built a great bonfire with much cheering, which lasted until after midnight".¹⁹³ Lafayette was accompanied by Commissary Ethis de Corny, who had orders to make arrangements for the arrival of Rochambeau and his aides-de-camp Lieutenant-Colonels Jean Joseph de Gimat de Soubadère and Jean-Pierre du Rousseau de Fayolle. ¹⁹⁴ On 2 May 1780, Lafayette, accompanied by Gimat "and three of my servants"¹⁹⁵ departed via Brookfield, Waterbury, Newburgh and Pompton for Morristown, where they arrived in the morning of 10 May 1780.¹⁹⁶

Three days later, on 13 May, Lafayette, continued his journey to Philadelphia where he handed Vergennes instructions of 5 March 1780 to the *chevalier* de la Luzerne as well as to Congress two days later. On 17 May, Luzerne sent Samuel Huntington, President of the Continental Congress, his memorial of 16 May notifying Congress of French plans to send troops to America; Congress in turn on the same day established a special committee in charge of Franco-American cooperation.¹⁹⁷ The pending arrival of French forces caused Washington to resurrect his dream of

¹⁹³ Excerpts of the log of *l'Hermione* were published by Antoine Cathelineau in *Deux Voyages au temps de Louis XVI, 1777-1780. La mission du baron de Tott en Égypte 1777-1778 et le Journal de bord de l'Hermione en 1780* Jean-Pierre Bois, ed. (Rennes, 2005), pp. 99-252; Lafayette's arrival on pp. 151/52.

¹⁹⁴ Gabriel de Broglie, "Un compagnon peu connu de La Fayette: Ethis de Corny" *Histoire pour tous* no. 176 (1974), pp. 1-16.

¹⁹⁵ Idzerda, *Lafayette*, vol. 3, p. 7. The letter announcing the arrival of Rochambeau's forces is available at <http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/lafayette-to-george-washington-27-april-1780/>. Vergennes' letter is printed in Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 4, pp. 318-20.

¹⁹⁶ For a detailed analysis of Lafayette's route from Boston to Morristown see my *Resource Inventory and Historic Route and Site Survey for the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*. (forthcoming in 2015)

¹⁹⁷ Luzerne's memorial to Congress is available at http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:14:./temp/~ammem_130C:: its' response to Luzerne's letter of 16 May of the French decision to send troops to America for the 1780 campaign can be followed in the Papers of the Continental Congress, search by date beginning on 16 May 1780.

taking New York if at all possible still in 1780. Even as he sent Major Guillaume Galvan to Cape Henry to establish look-outs for de Ternay's fleet,¹⁹⁸ Washington informed Lafayette of this plans on 16 May and asked him to sound out Rochambeau and Ternay.¹⁹⁹ A few days later, on 23 May, he sent Lafayette's aide-de-camp Fayolle to Providence with dispatches for Rhode Island Governor William Greene, Rochambeau and de Ternay.²⁰⁰ In his letter to Greene of the same date he wrote that "a French fleet may be soon looked for on our coast. The place where they will arrive is not certainly known, but they may probably come to Rhode Island."²⁰¹

Corny arrived at headquarters in Morristown on 23 May; following discussions with Washington and Nathanael Greene he set out for Philadelphia on 25 May. Upon arrival in Philadelphia on 27 May he met immediately with Luzerne. On the top of his list stood funding: he had only 50,000 livres in specie but within three days Luzerne managed to gather another 600,000 livres in cash and loans drawn on France.²⁰² Armed with a letter of introduction by Congress, as well as a letter by Washington written from Springfield on 10 June 1780, Corny, commissioned brevet

¹⁹⁸ "A French Fleet being expected shortly upon this Coast, it will be necessary to have Officers stationed at different points to make them Signals upon their first arrival. You being appointed to go down to Cape Henry in Virginia, will be charged with dispatches and communications for the French Admiral and General and will be made acquainted with the signals of recognizance." Washington to Galvan, 16 May 1780, quoted from the on-line edition of the George Washington Papers in the Library of Congress at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw180430\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw180430)))

When de Ternay arrived off Cape Henry on 4 July he did not see any signal flags and proceeded north to Newport. Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, p. 58.

¹⁹⁹ A transcript of Washington's letter of 16 May 1780 outlining his plans is available in the on-line edition of the George Washington Papers in the Library of Congress at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw180426\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw180426)))::

²⁰⁰ Fayolle's diary is published as Jean-Pierre du Rousseau de Fayolle, "Journal d'une Campagne en Amérique (1777-1779)" *Bulletin et Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Quest*, 25 (1901), pp. 1-48; it ends with a description of the arrival in Boston on 28 May 1780 and the remark that on Monday, 5 June, « je me tirais d'une affaire malheureuse forte heureusement. » The reference is to a duel Fayolle had fought with Joseph de Valnais, French consul in Boston, mentioned in a letter by Washington to Lafayette of 16 May 1780. Fayolle did not accompany Lafayette to Morristown.

Fayolle arrived back in Newport on 30 May but was killed in the afternoon of 8 June as he was boarding *l'Hermione* just outside Newport harbor when the boat he was on collided with the frigate. Fayolle was struck hard on the forehead, fell back into the boat, died, and was buried in Trinity Churchyard in the evening of 9 June. The accident is described in the *Journal de bord de l'Hermione* pp. 173/74. Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, p. 45/46.

²⁰¹ Quoted from the on-line edition of the Washington Papers in the Library of Congress [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw180465\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw180465)))

²⁰² Lafayette had sent Luzerne a copy of Corny's instructions on 17 May; an extract is published in Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 5 pp. 317-18 and Idzerda, *Lafayette*, vol. 3, p. 47 fn 1.

lieutenant colonel of cavalry in the Continental Army on 5 June, set out for Rhode Island accompanied by a company of dragoons taken from Washington's Life Guard commanded by Lieutenant Philip Strubing of Geneva in Switzerland.²⁰³ Along the way he met with Jeremiah Wadsworth in Hartford on 21 June. Their meeting set in motion a series of events that festered until November.

Among the first tasks Corny was instructed to undertake following his return from Philadelphia was that of establishing a hospital in Providence. To support Corny in this endeavor, Washington on 24 May 1780 ordered Dr. James Craik, "assistant director-general of the hospitals of the Continental army", to Providence

to provide one or more convenient buildings for the reception of the sick belonging to the fleet and army which you will estimate at about twelve to fifteen hundred. They must have apartments sufficient to contain these without crowding them, and so as to admit a separate distribution and treatment of each particular disease. They must have an airy and salubrious situation; be contiguous to each other, if possible; have yards and gardens, admitting communication from one to the other, so as to unite and facilitate the service.

Independent of the apartments for the sick, there must be one or more kitchens; an apothecary's shop; a magazine for drugs and remedies; an oven; a bakery; a deposit for the provisions; lodgings for the director surgeons Physicians and others employed with them; a Magazine near for the effects of the Hospital and in short all the conveniences that may promote this interesting service.

You will have provided such a number of oxen sheep poultry and vegetables as you deem necessary for the first demands of the Hospital. I give you a letter for Governor Greene to furnish you with whatever aid

²⁰³ Strubing (1758-1831) was breveted a captain on 15 April 1784. Strubings papers are held by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Corny sent him back to Newburgh on 7 August 1780 when he wrote Washington that "I reserved, agreeable to your permission, the Detachment of the company of herr, untill the arrival of the french army. the dragons were employd in carrying the first accounts. the Count de Rochambeau requested Lieutenant Strubing to charge himself with the parquets of consequence wich it was necessary to send with safety to your excellency and Mr De La Luzerne." Corny's letter is quoted from the on-line edition of the Washington Papers at

http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mgw:16:/temp/~ammem_Gkfa::

*you may want; you will make him an estimate and inform him to what extent his assistance will be requisite.*²⁰⁴

Following his arrival in Providence, Craik on 5 June submitted to the Council of War his instructions "to prepare proper Buildings for a Hospital for the Reception of the Invalids which may be on board the fleet of his most Christian Majesty, sent to the Assistance of these United States" he met fierce opposition.²⁰⁵ The Council appointed John Innis Clark to assist Clark on 5 June and informed College President Rev. James Manning "that the College Edifice is most convenient in every respect for the purpose", neither the town nor the "The College in the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations", which had only begun to offer classes again on 10 May 1780 after having served as a hospital for Continental Army forces, were prepared to again provide space and locations for a hospital.²⁰⁶ Fearful of the diseases the soldiers and sailors might bring to Providence, a town meeting on 15 June resolved "to adopt legal and proper Measures to prevent the establishment of an Hospital in this Town for receiving the Sick on Board the fleet of his Most Christian Majesty daily expected to arrive in this State from Europe."²⁰⁷

Instead it tried to divert Craik "to Tiverton and Bristol & examine the Barracks in Tiverton and the Buildings on the Estate in Bristol late belonging to Mr. William Vassal and now improved by Mr. Nathaniel Fales Jr. under a charge from this State, and if in their opinion they should be suitable and Convenient for the purpose that they take possession of Part or all of said Buildings and Apply to the Deputy Quarter Master General to have them immediately fitted in the best possible manner for the Reception of said sick as aforesaid." To make the task more palatable to Fales, the Council of War "further Resolved that any necessary Damage which the above mentioned Mr. Fales may suffer in Consequence of the taking the Buildings aforesaid now in his possession for a Hospital shall be hereafter Considered and that he shall

²⁰⁴ Washington's instructions are quoted from the on-line edition of the Washington Papers at [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw180472\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw180472)))

²⁰⁵ *Proceedings of the Council of War* Rhode Island State Archives, Providence.

²⁰⁶ On 29 April 1780, the *Providence Gazette* announced the beginning of classes on 10 May. On 3 May 1780 the trustees had requested the Rhode Island Assembly to apply to Congress for compensation for the damages done while being used as a hospital, which had "render[ed] it total unfit for the purposes for which it was originally designed." *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England* 10 vols., John Russell Bartlett, ed., (Providence, 1856-1865), vol. 9: 1780-1783 (1864), p. 66. In 1800, the college collected all of \$2,779.13 in damages.

²⁰⁷ See Howard W. Preston, "Rochambeau and the French Troops in Providence in 1780-81-82." *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* vol. 17 no. 1 (January 1924), pp. 1-23, pp. 2-5.

have a reasonable compensation therefore."²⁰⁸ The William Vassall property rented by Fales was Point Pleasant in Bristol.²⁰⁹ Craik had little choice but to give his consent and on 12 June the General Assembly agreed to fulfill Washington's request of 25 May

*to provide hospitals and refreshments for the sick which may be on board His Most Christian Majesty's fleet, now expected in this state, [and] recommended to Ephraim Bowen Jr., Esp., deputy quartermaster general, to cause the buildings on the farm in Bristol, lately belonging to William Vassal, Esq., to be immediately put in proper repair for the said purpose [of receiving the sick sailors and soldiers] and that he cause such additional buildings to be erected on the said farm and on the school farm adjoining thereto, as shall, with the buildings first mentioned, to contain the numbers, and answer the purposes pointed out in the said instructions to Dr. Craig.*²¹⁰

In case additional housing were needed,

It is hereby recommended to the said Ephraim Bowen, Jr., to cause such barracks as may be at Tiverton, and at the north end of Rhode Island, to be removed to the said farms; and also to make use of a large frame in Tiverton, near Col. Pardon Gray's.

Corny, as it turned out, approved of the choice of Point Pleasant. On 6 July 1780 he informed Washington that he had

just arrived from Poppisquash, too much applause cannot be given to the Zeal and attention of Doctor Craig; the dispositions relative to this Establishment entitle him to every grateful Sentiment, and I shall be particularly carefull to acquaint the Count de Rochambeau how much we are obliged to him.

²⁰⁸ On the lease see *Records of Rhode Island*, vol. 9, p. 362.

²⁰⁹ Point Pleasant, built in 1690, stood just south of the border of the Poppasquash Farms Historic District. It burned in 1925. See Howard W. Preston, "Point Pleasant. William Vassall's Confiscated Estate." *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* vol. 18 no. 1 (January 1925), pp. 1-8; on the French hospital there see pp. 6/7.

²¹⁰ *Records of Rhode Island* vol. 9, pp. 86/87.

This Hospital will be exceeding useful for Summer, and for the Convalescents, the Salubrity of the Air is excellent, but it must be confess'd that it may be subject to the Attempts of the Enemy, if New Port is not Guarded, and if the Batteries at the Entrance of the Harbor remain unprovided with Cannon.

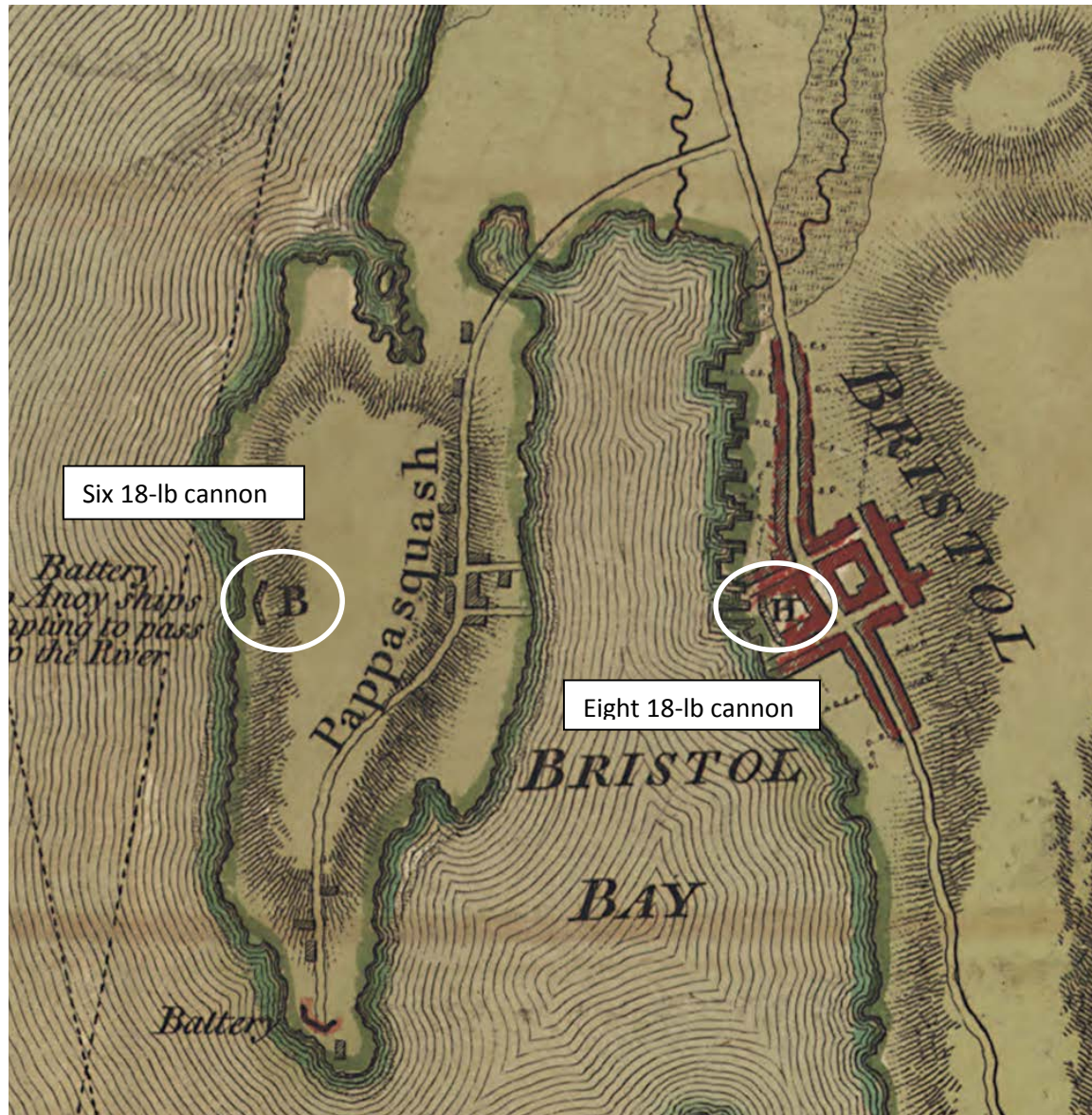
Doctor Craig had in vain requested the Colledge of this Town to be given up to him that the principal Hospital might be Established there, General Heath without doubt reluctantly approved the Objections of the Council of this State, which influenced them to reject the Doctors request. On my Arrival here, I took the liberty to represent in the most firm and pressing Manner, that this House was indispensably necessary; I represented my reasons, in the Requisition I made to the Council, who order'd the Colledge to be imediatly given up to me, and I lost no time in employing Workmen to put it in a proper Condition for the destin'd Service.²¹¹

Eventually a number of barracks were built on Fales property, but as Corny's letter to Washington shows, he clearly preferred the "Colledge" as a hospital. The opposition to Craik's and Corny's plan to use the college building was led by the Rev. Manning, who was also the minister of the First Baptist Church on North Main Street, as Corny informed Washington:

The difficulties encountered in this affair, arise principally from Mr Manning a Minister of this place; who endeavoured to inflame the people, to persuade them that the Town would be infected with a Contagious disorder, in Consequence of the Establishment; I was beyond measure astonished that the two Browns, the Brothers of Colo John Brown, publickly opposed it, they so far forgot themselves as to declare loudly, that they hoped the People would blow up the Hospital, and they threatened the Carpenters who were at work at The College with the loss of the Esteem and Custom of the townsmen and Actions of Damages at Law, if they continued to work; nor could the Workmen (who had left their Business) be prevailed upon to begin again, untill Bonds of Indemnification were given them [...] this Strange Conduct is totally opposite to those Sentiments that Unite the two Nations, and too full of

²¹¹ Corny's letter is quoted from the on-line edition of the Washington Papers at http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-in/ampage?collId=mgw4&fileName=gwpage067.db&recNum=947&tempFile=./temp/~ammem_svmt&filecode=mgw&next filecode=mgw&prev filecode=mgw&itemnum=7&ndocs=24

Sedition and disrespect to be tolerated at the Instant His Majesty is sending assistance to his Allies; and will not I trust be pass'd over with impunity.



Detail from Charles Blaskowitz, *A topographical Chart of the Bay of Narragansett* (London: Engraved & printed for Wm. Faden, 1777)

Washington's reply of 15 July showed the general "exceedingly chagrined at the account you give me of the trouble you have met with in the establishment of Hospitals. The conduct of the persons you mention was highly reprehensible and justly merits the censure of every friend of the Alliance: But I am convinced you will

not draw general conclusions from the behaviour of a few ungenerous and interested individuals.”

When Corny pressed his case for the college building in Providence as the better location for the hospital before the Governor and the Council on 25 June 1780, he eventually won his case. With the General Assembly no longer in session the state’s executive powers rested with the Council of War headed by the Governor. On 25 June the Council Minutes record that Corny “has made a request to this Council in Writing conceived in the most pressing Terms that a suitable Establishment for an Hospital for the Invalids of the Army and Navy who are expected to arrive in this State from France to cooperate with the Army of these United States and hath therein suggested that the College Edifice in the Town of Providence was particularly adopted, fix’d and absolutely appointed by the Court of France and Doctor Franklin as a suitable Place for that Purpose ... It is therefore Resolved That the Request of the said Col. Corny be and the same is hereby granted, and that the College Edifice be deliver’d up to him for the Purpose aforesaid, by the Deputy-Quarters Master General in this Department.”

That same Sunday morning as Manning was preaching in his church, Corny took possession of the College. That left the question of what to do with Manning. Since the house of Rev. Manning was “situated so near said Edifice that it may be disagreeable to him to reside therein so long as the College may be improved as an Hospital,” Ephraim Bowen was to find another house for him. If he chose to move, Bowen suggested to “cause the Vegetables growing in the Gardens of the said Mr. Manning to be appraised by three indifferent Persons, in order that compensation may hereafter be made him for any Damage he may sustain in said Gardens.”²¹²

²¹² The application to establish a hospital in the college is dated 24 June 1780; William Greene Papers Mss 468, Folder 5. The Providence town hospital was located in 1780/81 at the West Rope Walk. Providence Town Papers, vol. 6, January 1781 to August 1782, RIHS. See also General Heath to Gov. Greene, 3 July and 8 July 1780 from Providence. RISA, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780. It had only been on 13 May 1780, that the Council had decided to discontinue the hospital because of the small number of sick troops housed there and the expense required to keep it open.

In the same meeting Bowen was instructed to “provide a suitable House in the Town of Providence for the said Col. Corny” as well as “suitable Quarters for the Officers and Men of the Party of Light Horse who accompanied Col. Corny to this Town.” i.e. Strubing’s dragoons.



"A S.W. View of the COLLEGE in Providence, together with the PRESIDENT'S HOUSE & GARDENS" (ca. 1795).

Both University Hall as well as President Manning's house date to 1774.

Corny had had his way: University Hall had once again become a hospital.²¹³ On 1 July 1780, Royal Flint informed his employer Jeremiah Wadsworth that upon his arrival in Providence he found the "hospitals ... in great forwardness and provision is made for the sick on their first arrival."²¹⁴ Only Corny was still in Providence in a "Public House," i.e., a tavern, looking for quarters for himself, until the assembly assigned him on 3 July a house owned by Major Nathaniel Greene of Woodstock, CT, Corny "agreeing to give a reasonable rent therefor." At the time Captain Abimeleck Riggs was living in the house "on the north side of Westminster Street, east of Exchange Street"²¹⁵ but since Riggs had "a very small family, who may be easily accommodated in some other house", Deputy Quartermaster General Ephraim Bowen "to find a convenient place" for Riggs and to "remove his family."²¹⁶

²¹³ It remained a hospital until 27 May 1782.

²¹⁴ Wadsworth Correspondence, April – November 1780, Box 130 a, CTHS.

²¹⁵ Preston, "Providence", p. 5.

²¹⁶ Heath to Greene, 3 July 1780 from Providence, RISA Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Green vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780. The correspondence in *Records of Rhode Island*, vol. 9, p. 120. When in Newport Corny lodged with Simon Pease in Clarke Street.



This tablet commemorating the use of University Hall as a hospital was unveiled on the back wall of University Hall on 20 January 1897. It reads:

The Rhode Island Society of the Sons of the American Revolution commemorates by this tablet the occupation of this building by the patriot forces, and their French allies, during the Revolutionary War. For six years all academic exercises in this university were suspended. Faculty, students, and graduates, almost to a man, were engaged in the service of their country. May all who read this inscription be stimulated by their example to respond as loyally to their country's call. :.:.:.:." Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori." Erected 1897

By the time College Hall was finally prepared for a hospital, Admiral de Ternay's fleet carrying Rochambeau's troops was close to the Capes of the Chesapeake and only a few days sailing away from landfall in Newport. On 7 July, Ternay convened a council of war on the *Duc de Bourgogne* where the assembled decided to head for Newport rather than Boston. In the morning of 9 July, the *Surveillante* found bottom off the Rhode Island coast. By the evening of the 9th, the fleet anchored in view of No Man's Island. Count Mathieu Dumas, one of Rochambeau's aides-de-camp, recorded that "We had at length reached the country which we so ardently desired to see, where the bare appearance of the French flag would revive the hopes of the defenders of liberty."²¹⁷ But the quays of Newport were virtually empty: no-one had informed the defenders of liberty how they would know that it was a French, not a British fleet whose masts they saw rising on the horizon. As Blanchard reported, "What we saw with great satisfaction was a French flag placed upon each of the two shores which were in front of us. This signal, doubtless agreed upon with the M. de La Fayette, who had preceded our squadron, informed us that the English were not masters of Rhode island [*sic*], and that we would be well received there"²¹⁸ When Ternay's fleet "mit pavillon François a trois heures dapres midy le fort americaine Salue de treize Coups de Canon" – when "the French flag was raised at three o'clock in the afternoon" on the masts the gunners in the fort were the only Americans to see it and greet the allies with a 13-gun salute.²¹⁹ Georg Daniel Flohr, the enlisted man of the Royal Deux-Ponts confirms that the war-weary Newporters thought that the vessels represented not approaching allies but enemies.

As soon as we had cast our anchor the scallops already came from the city out to our ships to sell their wares, which consisted of cherries, apples, pears etc. The people in these scallops were all black, that is to say, moors, but we could not talk a word with them because their language was English, but at the same time they could not talk to us.

On the morning of the 14th around 9 o'clock we began to debark, something we were very anxious for if only to meet the inhabitants who lived there. But when we entered the city we could not see anyone except for a few moors here and there, which made us believe that the whole town was inhabited by moors! But that was not the case: the white inhabitants simply had all gone into hiding because they thought we were enemy troops. As soon as they realized, however, that we were

²¹⁷ Mathieu Dumas, *Memoirs of his Own Time* 2 vols., (London, 1839), vol. 1, p. 29.

²¹⁸ *Journal of Claude Blanchard*, p. 38.

²¹⁹ *Journal Militaire* of an unidentified grenadier in the Bourbonnois regiment. Library of Congress, Milton Latham Papers MMC 1907. The ms is unpaginated.

friendly troops and therefore auxiliaries come to help protect them, they one after the other came back into the city. We thought we would be lodged in the city, but no, the road we were directed to follow went straight through the town to the place where we had to set up camp close to the town.

Though boats sent by La Pérouse, commanding officer of the *Amazon*, out of Newport harbor reached the fleet in the morning of 10 July, Ternay refused to sail into Newport at night. Finally, around 10:30 a.m. on the morning of 11 July, the French fleet, led by the *Amazon*, sailed into Newport and anchored between Conanicut, Rose and Goat Islands.²²⁰ Rochambeau immediately went ashore around 1:00 p.m. to an ambiguous welcome: even he had a difficult time to find a place where he could stay for the night.

The welcome was less than cordial if we believe the accounts of some of the officers.²²¹ William de Deux-Ponts, colonel-en-second of his regiment, remarked that

²²⁰ A stone marker commemorating the landing of French forces was erected in King Park on Wellington Avenue on 9 July 1902. See Asa Bird Gardiner, *Address of welcome ... to the ambassador of France and the general-in-chief of the French army and other members of the official representation of the government of France, appointed to attend the unveiling, in Washington, D. C. of the bronze statue of M. le Maréchal le Comte de Rochambeau ... on the occasion of the visit of the representation to Newport, R.I. on Memorial Day, May 30th, 1902 ...* (New York, 1902).

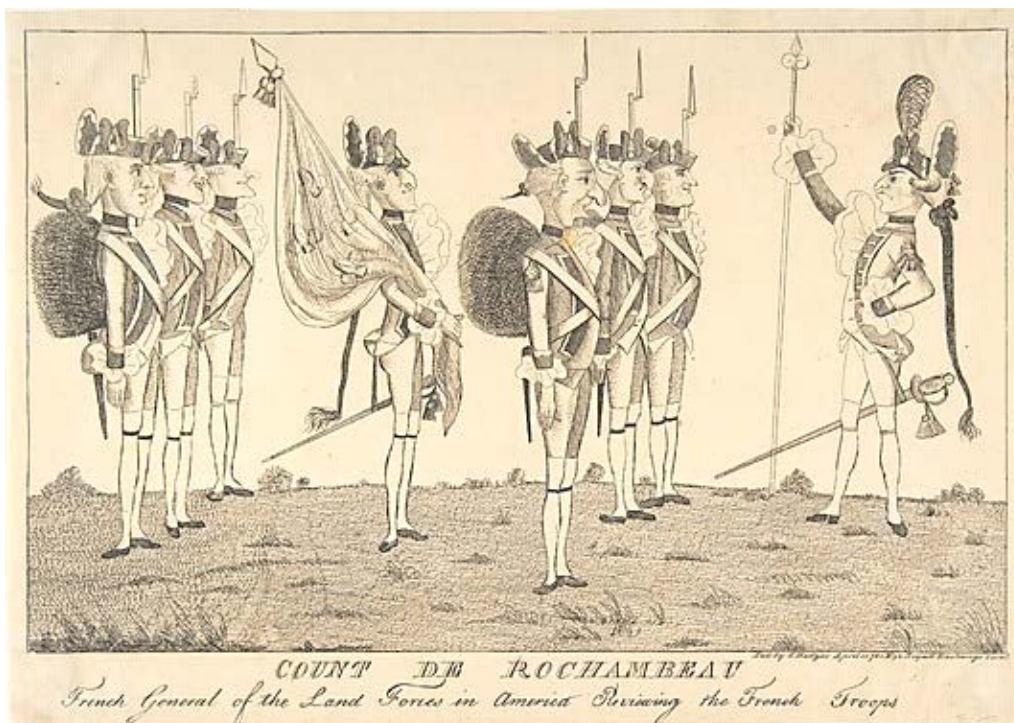
The current stone cairn was erected on 13 July 1928; see "Dedication of the Monument in King Park Newport, R.I. July 13, 1928." *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* Special no. 66 (September 1928), pp. 1-19. The current Rochambeau Monument was dedicated on 4 July 1940. See Edgar Erskine Hume, *Rochambeau. Marshal of France, Friend of America. Address at the Dedication of the Rochambeau Monument Newport, Rhode Island 4 July 1940* (Newport, 1940).

On the 150th anniversary of the landing of French forces see John R. Wadleigh, "Fifty Years Ago when Newport Remembered Rochambeau." *Newport History* vol. 54 no. 4 (1981), pp.123-125; on the bicentennial of the landing in 1981 see George Woodbridge, "Rochambeau: Two Hundred Years Later." *Newport History* vol. 53 no. 1 (1980), pp.5-21.

On 11 December 2001, a commemorative plaque was installed by the New England Committee, The American Society of Le Souvenir Français, on the lower half of the 1928 cairn facing Wellington Avenue.

²²¹ The best introduction to the subject with good maps is still "The French in Rhode Island." *Magazine of American History* vol. 3 no. 7 (July 1879), pp. 385-436. See also "With the French at Newport." In: Forbes and Cadman, *France and New England* vol. 2, pp. 30-46, and "The Marches and Camp Sites of the French Army in New England." *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 131-189, esp. pp. 166-176. See also Rochambeau Commission. *Rochambeau and Rhode Island* (Providence, 1954), and Arthur Tuckerman, *When Rochambeau stepped ashore: a reconstruction of life in Newport in 1780* (Newport, 1955).

the French had "not met with that reception on landing which we expected and which we ought to have had. A coldness and reserve appear to me characteristic of the American nation."²²² Clermont-Crèvecœur believed that "the local people, little disposed in our favor, would have preferred, at that moment, I think, to see their enemies arrive rather than their allies." He thought the British were to blame. They "had made the French seem odious to the Americans ... saying that we were dwarfs, pale, ugly, specimens who lived exclusively on frogs and snails."²²³ Nicolas François Denis Brisout de Barneville, at 44 still a *sous-lieutenant*, thought that the image of the papist French had at least in part been formed "by numerous French refugees," i.e., Huguenots who had settled in America.²²⁴



The *chevalier* de Saint-Cyr, lieutenant-Colonel of the Saintonge Infantry, wrote that the inhabitants were rather alarmed when he arrived. "L'étonnement, la méfiance étaient cependant ce qui y dominait – amazement, suspicion were what

²²² William de Deux-Ponts, *My Campaigns in America* Samuel Abbot Green, ed., (Boston, 1868), p. 91.

²²³ Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 21.

²²⁴ Barneville, "Journal," p. 242. In 1678, 12 Huguenot families established New Paltz in Ulster County, NY; in October 1686, Huguenot refugees established Frenchtown, 10 miles inland from Narragansett Bay, but there were Huguenot settlements all along the coast from Oxford, MA to New Rochelle, NY, Manakin-Town, VA and Jamestown, SC.

dominated then.” Using a term applied to the relatively well-off and stylishly dressed young men who led the revolt against Maximilien Robespierre in July 1794, he wrote that the prejudices instilled in the Americans by the English “les avaient dépeints comme des poupées muscadins”, had depicted them like dolls wearing musk perfume who occupied themselves only with prettying themselves” as depicted in this famous anti-French cartoon.²²⁵

N E W P O R T, July 15.
 The Honorable GENERAL ASSEMBLY, of this State, is to meet in this Town on Monday next.
 Last Tuesday arrived here from France, a Fleet of Men of War and Transports, consisting of 44 Sail, having on board 6000 very fine Troops; the Fleet is commanded by his Excellency Monsieur Le Chevalier de Ternay, and the Troops by his Excellency Monsieur Le Comte de Rochambeau — In Consequence of which this Town was beautifully illuminated on Wednesday Evening, and Thirteen grand Rockets were fired in Front of the State-House. The brilliant Appearance of the numerous Gentlemen Officers of the Fleet and Army of our illustrious Ally, who were on Shore, with that of the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Town, and the Joy which every Friend to Liberty expressed on the happy Occasion, afforded a most pleasing Prospect of the future Felicity and Grandeur of this Country, in Alliance with the most polite, powerful and generous Nation in the World. We have the Pleasure to inform the Public that both the Fleet and Army are extremely healthy.

Newport Mercury, 15 July 1781

But these impressions were not shared by everyone. Different observers saw, recorded and remembered different aspects of their arrival and their first few days in Newport. Baron Closen of the Royal Deux-Ponts refrained from making any comments upon arrival “since my stay among them has not yet been long enough to know their customs, character, commerce etc., etc.”,²²⁶ Graf Wilhelm von Schwerin informed his uncle Graf Reingard zu Wied in Dierdorf, a village north-west of Coblenz on the Rhine, on 1 August 1780 that “les americain ont été enchanté de nous voir arivé— the Americans were thrilled to see us arrive to assist them they gave us a welcome that could not have been better”,²²⁷ and Captain Oyré, ever the engineer, confined himself in his *Notes* to the simple sentence: “The inhabitants of Rhode Island are generally attached to the old government”, i.e. the Crown.

²²⁵ *Extrait des Mémoires du chevalier de Bellemare de Saint-Cyr, lieutenant-colonel d'infanterie [Régt. de Saintonge] régié par lui-même en 1815*, p. 36 of the typed copy. Special Collections Department, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Accession no. 4976.

²²⁶ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 30.

²²⁷ Schwerin to his uncle, 1 August 1780. Schwerin's original correspondence is (Spring 2015) owned by Dr. Cliff J. Scheiner of Brooklyn, New York.

André Amblard, the enlisted man in the Soissonnois remembered that on 12 July "tout Le monde était dans Les rues, qui par leurs danses et leurs acclamations de joye formait un très joly spectacle – everyone was in the streets who by their dancing and their acclamations of joy created a very happy spectacle." And Gallatin

All of these were subjective impression often written down immediately after an exhausting transatlantic crossing that had stretched the patience and endurance of French officers and men to the limits. Over the next months and weeks they were subject to change, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse.

An American view of the initial meetings is presented in the diary of Major Daniel Lyman. On 11 July Lyman recorded:

Last night about 11 we were call'd up by an Express from NewPort informing us of the arrival of the french Squadron of the harbour in consequence of which we prepared to go to NewPort in a Packett go on Board about 4 p.m. small wind breezes up a little before night arrived at New Port about 11 oClock lodged on board the Packett."

Then, on the 12th, Lyman

Came on shore waited on his Excellency General du Rochambeau Lⁿ General commanding the French Army consisting of 5,000 men. He informed us that he saild from Brest 2.d May with 40 Transports Convoy'd by 7 sail of the Line 1 40 gun ship & 2 Frigates commanded by Monsieur Chevalier de Terney who are now all safe arrived in the harbour of New Port except one Transport who parted with them in a fog 3 days before their arrival it is expected She will go to Boston in the afternoon we went on board the Admiral who received us very politely – They have 1 Ship of 80 guns 2 of 74 & 4 of 64. The town was beautifully illuminated this evening.

13th Spent the day with our Allies.

14th had the honor of General Rochambeau and his principal Officers to dine with us – Extreme hot wind.

15th was the Duke de Loizun & the next principal Officers of the Army to Dine with us. Spent a very sociable afternoon. The Troops are disembarking and incamping S.E. of the Town. They make an excellent appearance Extreme hot.

On the 18th Lyman dined with Ternay and his principal officers and on the 19th again with Rochambeau.²²⁸ Having recovered from their initial shock, the town of Newport as well as the legislatures of Rhode Island and neighboring states rushed to welcome their illustrious guests - everyone had heard of the learned Chastellux.²²⁹ To show their joy at the arrival of their French allies, the City Council of Newport on 11 July informed its citizens that "from the Duty & regard they owe our Country & the Gratitude & respect, which is due from Every Citizen to the Illustrious Ally of these States, as well to afford them the Utmost Aid & Assistance as also to Manifest every Mark of Respect & Esteem, Upon their Arrival, Wherefore resolved, that all Houses in the Streets hereafter Named, be Illuminated tomorrow Evening." In order to leave a lasting mark of the new-found friendship the Newport City Council also voted that as of 12 July 1780, King Street would be known as Lewis Street in honor of the French king and renamed Queen Street to Congress Street.²³⁰ As "13 grand Rockets were fired in the Front of the Statehouse" and the "Bell rang at Newp^t till after Midnight & the Even^g of the 12th Newp^t illuminated, the Whigs put 13 Lights in the Windows the Tories or doubtfuls 4 or 6. The Quakers did not chuse their Lights shd shine before men, & their Windows were broken."²³¹

²²⁸ Rhode Island Historical Society Providence, Mss 546: Daniel Lyman Papers, diary entries of visit to Newport 13-20 July 1780. Lyman, son-in-law of John Wanton and General Heath's senior aide-de-camp, was the first to welcome the French. I have been unable to identify a "Lavares"; "Mr Bannister" was probably John Bannister, whose house stood on West Main Road just north of the Newport-Middletown city line. It was demolished c. 1955.

During dinner came news of arrival of the missing French transport, the *Ile de France* with 350 men of the Bourbonnois regiment, in Boston. On 22 July 1780, the *Providence Gazette* announced that "a Transport with 350 troops on board and a large quantity of Military Stores which had been separated from the fleet is safe arrived in Boston. The Troops are on their march for this Town on their way to Newport and are expected to arrive here To-day." The *Ile de France* returned to Newport on 26 January 1781.

²²⁹ On 9 Octoberm Ezra Stiles while visiting Newport dined with Chastellux "in a splendid manner on 35 Dishes. He is a capital Literary Character, a Member of the French Academy. He is the Glory of the Army." Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, vol. 2: March 14, 1776 - December 31, 1781 (New York, 1901), p. 473.

²³⁰ Newport Town Proceedings vol. 1, 24 November 1779 – 17 April 1818, NHS. Then follows a list of the streets to be lighted on 12 July 1780. For details on these celebrations, addresses and dinners see most recently Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, pp. 60-63, as well as the French accounts listed in the bibliography. The texts of the addresses can be found John Austin Stevens, "The French in Rhode Island." *Magazine of American History* vol. 3 no. 7 (July 1879), pp. 385-431.

²³¹ *Literary Diary*, vol. 2, p. 453 and p. 456.

Over the next few days the troops debarked and marched east on Wellington Avenue, north on Thomas, past the Colony House and Touro Synagogue to their campsites on the hills overlooking the city.

French encampment in Newport (1780)



42: Artillery Park

43: Auxonne Artillery

44: Bourbonnois

45: Royal Deux-Ponts

46: Soissonnois

47: Saintonge

48: Lauzun's Legion, quartered at Castle Hill

(see following page)²³²

²³² Detail from "Amerique Septentrionale. Newport en Rhode Island 1780." Rochambeau Family Cartographic Archive (GEN MSS 146), Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

There are numerous other maps of the encampment in existence and reproduced e.g. in *The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army*, see vol. 2, pp. 126-127, maps 5, 6, 7. See also the "Plan de la position de l'armée françoise autour de Newport et du mouillage de l'escadre dans la rade de cette ville. 1780." Map 41 in the Rochambeau Map Collection of the Geography and Map Division in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C, available at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3774n.ar102000> ; *Plan de Rhodes-Island, et position de l'armée françoise a Newport. 1780.* Ibid. map 38; see <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3774n.ar101700>;



Ridge Road

Launzun's Legion quartered at Castle Hill

"The camp," according to Professor Hattendorf, "ran from east to west from present-day Spring Street, where at the west end it overlooked a marsh and the squadron anchorage. On the east end, it overlooked Easton's Beach." The infantry regiments camped on the east side, the artillery "on the camp's west end close to Spring Street. The area across Spring Street and stretching down to Thames Street

Plan de la ville, port, et rade de Newport, avec une partie de Rhode-Island occupée par l'armée française aux ordres de Mr. Le comte de Rochambeau, et de l'escadre française commandée par Mr. le Chr. Destouches. [1780?]. ibid., Map 39 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3774n.ar101800> and Michel Capitaine du Chesnoy, *Plan de Rhode Islande, les différentes opérations de la flotte française et des troupes Américaines commandées par le major général Sullivan contre les forces de terre et de mer des Anglois depuis le 9 Aout jusqu'à la nuit du 30 au 31 du même mois que les Américains ont fait leur retraite 1778.* par Mr. Capitaine, a. d. c. du Général la Fayette. [1778]. Ibid. at <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3772r.ar300300>

was laid out as the French Army's artillery park."²³³ Lauzun's Legion took up positions at Castle Hill. Next the city council tackled the task of finding lodging for the superior officers and staff of the army and navy. On 11 July already, the Town Council had appointed a committee to identify available lodgings. As Rochambeau established his headquarters in the William Vernon House, his staff officers and the colonels of his units, in all 91 officers and their servants, moved into their assigned quarters as well.²³⁴



Detail of *Plan de Stationnement des troupes française et de la marine a Newport en 1780* <http://anom.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/sdx/ulyse/notice?id=FR>

²³³ Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, p. 62.

²³⁴ NHS, Town Meeting 12 July 1780, where a number of citizens, including Daniel Mason, George Sears, and Samuel Vernon, are "added, to the Committee appointed Yesterday, to Assist the Quarter Master, in providing Houses for the Officers of the French Army & Navy." It is unknown whether these quarters were identical with the LIST OF QUARTERS OCCUPIED IN THE TOWN OF NEWPORT BY THE ARMY UNDER THE COMMAND OF THE COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU, DURING THE WINTER QUARTERS OF 1780-81 as published by Alan and Mary M. Simpson, "A New Look at How Rochambeau quartered his Army in Newport (1780-1781)." *Newport History* (Spring 1983), pp. 30-67, but at least for some of the officers such as Baron Closen, Simpson suggests as much. (p. 37)

Mr. Thomas Robinson) Newport Sep. 28. 1780
 will give Quarters for the Count Noailles
 Coll.
 N.º 614
 Jacob Champlain

Quartering billet for Louis Marie, *vicomte de Noailles*, Lafayette's brother-in-law and *mestre de camp en second* of the Soissonnois Regiment²³⁵

Mr. Thomas Forrester) Newport Sep. 28. 1780
 will give Quarters for Count Noailles Lute
 N.º 625
 Jacob Champlain

Noailles' servants were quartered nearby with Thomas Forrester

Confirming Major Daniel Lyman's observation of the French forces' "excellent appearance", Royal Flint wrote to Jeremiah Wadsworth on 21 July 1780, from Newport that: "The French Officers are the most civilized men I ever met. They are temperate, prudent & extremely attentive to duty. I did not expect they would have so few vices."²³⁶ Similarly William Channing informed Ezra Stiles on 6 August that "The French Troops are a fine body of men, & appear to be well officered. Neither Officers nor men are the effeminate Beings we were heretofore taught to believe them. They are as large & as likely men as can be produced by any nation."²³⁷

²³⁵ Robinson Papers Box 12, NHS. On Noailles see John K Howat, "A Young man impatient to distinguish himself: The Vicomte de Noailles as Portrayed by Gilbert Stuart." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* vol. 29 no. 7 (1971), pp. 327-337.

²³⁶ Wadsworth Correspondence, April–November 1780 Box 130a, CTHS.

²³⁷ *Literary Diary*, vol. 2, p. 459.

"Large & as likely" as that of any nation they may have been, but the troops debarking in Newport in July 1780 were hardly ready to face the British attack that was appearing off the coast. About 800 soldiers and some 1,500 sailors were afflicted with scurvy; according to Flohr, of companies 100 men strong, "barely 18-20 could still be used" to throw up defenses around the harbor. As the Newporters "could now daily see the misery of the many sick, of whom the majority could not even stand up and move ... they had very great pity on them and did all they could for them." Since fear of contagious diseases had constituted the primary force behind the opposition to the hospitals in Newport and Providence the *Newport Mercury* on 22 July 1780 published a note reassuring the populace that it had nothing to fear from the French soldiers and sailors:

WHEREAS fears have arisen in the minds of some inhabitants of this town, that EPIDEMICAL or CONTAGIOUS Diseases would be spread, in consequence of the Baptist meeting houses being occupied as hospitals for the sick of our amicable and generous Allies: We are authorized to assure said Inhabitants (by a physician well acquainted with infectious diseases, and who has inspected their sick) that no Small Pox, Yellow Fever, or other contagious Diseases appears among them; that their chief complaint is the Scurvy, of which they are fast recovering."

On 14 July, Blanchard placed "some of them in an unidentified establishment hastily formed at Newport", the rest he sent to Papisquash. By 18 July he "visited, in company with M. de Rochambeau, an Anabaptist temple [in Newport], where we established a hospital," i.e. in the First Baptist Church on 30 Spring Street.

The next day, 19 July, he reported 280 sick troops in Papisquash and 400 sick in Newport on 23 July, about 300 of them from the Royal Deux-Ponts.²³⁸ Blanchard thought that "it appears the Germans feel the heat more and are more subject to the scurvy than the French", thus confirming Brissout de Barneville's observation of 21 August: "Le régiment des Deux-Ponts a été inspecté aujourd'hui. Il est superbe, mais il y a beaucoup de malades."²³⁹ Then there were the sick men of the Bourbonnois in Boston. After 10 weeks on the ocean about 100 of them were sick and 12 of them died in Boston between 23 July and 20 September 1780, the youngest of them not quite 20 years old. Blanchard went to see the sick in Boston on 26 July but was back in Newport. All in all Blanchard estimated he had "about 800 sick" out of 5,200

²³⁸ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 42 et passim. Amblard estimated about 1,200 sick soldiers. The hospital in Papisquash was closed in early August and the sick transferred to Providence.

²³⁹ Barneville, "Journal," p. 254 and Blanchard, p. 46.

soldiers in early August. By 5 September there were still about 500 sick, mostly with dysentery. By early August the first sick had been sent to Providence as well.

On 12 August 1780, the *Providence Gazette* announced:

Notice is hereby given, That a Number of Sick belonging to his Most Christian Majesty's Fleet and Army are to be sent to the College Edifice in the Town of Providence for whom will be wanted immediately a Quantity of fresh Provisions also Cider and Hay or Straw for which articles a Generous Price will be given, in Hard Money. It is earnestly wished that a full Supply may be immediately brought in; and it is hoped that No Person will be so sordid as to demand extravagant Prices from our great and generous Allies who have come so great a Distance to our Relief.



Jahleel Brenton House ca. 1720, demolished in the 1920s.

Photo: Historic American Buildings Survey.

On 12 September he cared for 340 sick in Providence and 200 in Newport, by 20 October there were “not more than 300” sick. Besides in “Anabaptist temple”, the Friends Meeting House on 30 Marlborough Street and Ezra Stiles’ Second Congregational Church on 13-15 Clarke Street were used as hospitals for the land

forces as its hospital between in 1780 and 1781.²⁴⁰ The French navy used the Presbyterian Church on Broadway as well as the home of Loyalist Jahleel Brenton on Thames Street until late October when the building was converted into barracks.²⁴¹ The Colony House too saw service as a French military hospital.²⁴² Unlike the men of the Continental Army, French soldiers were not inoculated against small-pox. Those suspected of carrying infectious diseases were sent to Coaster Harbor Island, which had served as quarantine station since 1716.²⁴³ Some 400 men were briefly transferred to a house on Conanicut Island serving as a quarantine hospital.²⁴⁴



Monument to the French dead at Old North Cemetery in Providence

²⁴⁰ At the request of Governor Greene the French later vacated the Meeting House. Elaine Forman Crane, *A Dependent People. Newport, Rhode Island in the Revolutionary Era* (New York, 1992), p. 163.

²⁴¹ "Petitions to the General Assembly" vol. 18, p. 73, RIHS.

²⁴² While visiting Newport in October 1780 Stiles wrote in his diary: "My Meeting-house and three others taken up for Hospitals." *Literary Diary* vol. 2, p. 473.

²⁴³ See Dr. Isaac Senter Papers, Mss 165 series 5, Box 2, folder 8, RIHS, which contains a letter by French Chief Physician Coste to the town council in Newport of 14 April 1781, requesting that the furniture of the small-pox hospital be burnt: 10 strawbeds, 10 strawbags, 10 mattresses, 10 bolsters, 10 blankets, 20 shuts, 15 shirts, and 15 shifts. On 18 April 1781, the minutes of the town meeting record: "Voted that Solomon Southwick & Doctor Center, be a Committee, to return the thanks of this town to Monsieur D'Tarley, for his Gen'rous Present of Necessary Bed & Furniture for Coasters Harbour, Voted the Old Bedding be destroyed agreeable to the sd. Monsieur d'Tarley's request." Newport Town Meeting Minutes, 18 April 1781. NHS.

²⁴⁴ Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, p. 62. See also William L. Watson, *History of Jamestown on Conanicut Island in the State of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1949).

Despite the care they received, Flohr thought that "200-300 men [died] every day," but here he got his numbers confused: some 200 men was the total number of deaths in Rochambeau's units during the first few weeks after arrival in Rhode Island. Twelve men of his regiment had died during the crossing; another 58 died either in Newport or in Providence. Those who died in Providence were buried in the Old North Cemetery.²⁴⁵ The burial ground for the dead in Newport is unknown but it was most likely in the Common Burial Ground, the oldest public cemetery in Newport laid out about 1665 along Farewell Street. When they established the hospital in Poppasquash officials in Providence had assumed that there would be deaths in the hospital there as well and decided that

Whereas, the officers of His Most Christian Maiesty's hospital have requested this Assembly to appropriate a suitable piece of land on the state's farm, at Popasquash, for the burial of such as may die at the said hospital,—

It is therefore voted and resolved, that the principal director of the said hospital be, and he is hereby, permitted to choose and appropriate for the purpose, aforesaid, such a part of the said farm as may be convenient; and that the deputy quartermaster general be, and he is hereby, directed to enclose the same within a pale-fence.

It is further voted and resolved, that whenever the said farm shall be sold, this state will make reservation of the said burial ground.

²⁴⁵ RIHS Mss 591 North Burial Grounds Records, 5 vols. has no record of burials of French soldiers. The cemetery was established in June 1700. Mss 9001-F Box 6: French Memorial, includes a hand-written history of the memorial by Rev. Frederic Denison of 1881 in which he suggests, without sources, that about 100 French soldiers might lie buried there. RIHS French Memorial 274 contains the text of the resolution of 1 October 1881, instructing the city commissioners: "to set apart a portion of ground not exceeding twenty-five square feet, on which a memorial may be erected in commemoration of the services of our French Allies who lost their lives during the war of the Revolution, and who are buried in said ground." On 4 July 1882, a massive coffin-shape stone marker was dedicated on the grounds of the Old North Cemetery on Branch Street near the Y intersection of North Main Street (Route 1) and Branch Street (which leads to I-95/Exit 24). See City Document no. 22, *Dedication of the French Monument by the City of Providence, R.I.* (Providence, 1882).

The soldiers who died in the hospital in Poppasquash were presumably buried there as well.²⁴⁶ Without having fired a single shot, some regiments such as the Royal Deux-Ponts was 73 men, about 7% of its strength, short by the time it went into winter quarters on 1 November 1780.²⁴⁷

Each French regiment had its own medical system that took care of the sick,²⁴⁸ but at least Rochambeau and his son sent their aides-de-camp to the local doctors. One of those visited was Dr. Isaac Senter who lived in the house of Major Jonathan Otis on 109-111 Spring Street in Newport.²⁴⁹ His day-book records for 13 July 1780: "Count Genl Roshombo's Aid de Camp to v. Emitter &c for Domestic." The same day, "Viscount Rochombeau aid de Camp to Genl. Rochombeau to v. Inspecting your Domestic."²⁵⁰ Soon a professional, and personal, relationship developed between the French doctors and their American hosts. On 14 October 1780, Dr. Theodore Foster of Providence, who served as secretary on the Rhode Island Council of War, recorded that "Three of the French Doctors spent afternoon with Me – Grandy Beausien and Manatz." A week later, on 21 October, he recorded how "This afternoon M Pausancon French Commissary come to board with me in my East

²⁴⁶ The state seems to have ignored the stipulation of setting the burial ground aside as no traces of a cemetery are known to exist.

²⁴⁷ Samuel F. Scott, "The Soldiers of Rochambeau's Expeditionary Corps: From the American Revolution to the French Revolution," in: *La Revolution Américaine et l'Europe*, Claude Fohlen and Jacques Godechot, eds., (Paris, 1979), pp. 565-578, p. 570, puts the death toll in the first four months at almost 200; the Royal Deux-Ponts lost another 8 men before the year was over - fully half of its 162 dead for the whole campaign. Samuel F. Scott's *From Yorktown to Valmy. The Transformation of the French Army in an Age of Revolution* (University Press of Colorado, Niwot: 1998), p. 50, writes that 325 enlisted men of Rochambeau's forces died between arrival in Rhode Island in July 1780 and May 1781. That includes the men killed during the expedition to the Chesapeake and seven executions, but still leaves over 300 enlisted men, most of whom died in the weeks following arrival. The graves for these men in Newport as well as for the naval dead have not yet been located.

²⁴⁸ See Maurice Bouvet, *Le service de santé français pendant la guerre d'indépendance des États-Unis (1777-1782)* (Paris, 1934), pp. 69-78. I have been un-able to use [Jean-François Olier, François Olier, Médecins, chirurgiens, apothicaires militaires de l'armée de terre au XVIIIe siècle, 1756-1789 : dictionnaire biographique](#) (Brest, 2003). As of December 2014, the OCLC does not list a library in the US as holding this volume.

²⁴⁹ Following his resignation as "Senior Physician and Surgeon" in the Continental Army he had only moved to Newport in July 1780, advertising his services in the *Newport Mercury* of 29 July 1780.

²⁵⁰ Dr. Isaac Senter Papers Mss 165 daybook vol. 1, 20 May 1780 to 29 July 1781, RIHS. Both aides saw the doctor again the following day. Senter does not seem to have charged for the treatment. See also Howard S. Brown, "Newport's Revolutionary Physicians" *Newport History* vol. 54 part 1, no. 181 (Winter 1981), pp. 5-34.

Chamber.” These visits were repeated continuously throughout the fall and it stands to reason that other families in Providence hosted French guests as well.²⁵¹

Difficult as they were, these initial contacts, this getting-to-know each other, took place in an atmosphere of competing interests, goals and needs. As Rochambeau was taking care of his sick in an effort to establish even a semblance of combat readiness of the forces under his command, 1) a British fleet appeared off the coast, indicating the very real threat of an invasion. This threat negatively impacted what should have been his next priority, 2) assuring the necessary supplies to feed and maintain his forces not just for the summer but long-term into the winter. It would take more than three months to place his logistics on a sound footing. Lastly, while setting up defenses around Newport against a potential invasion 3) Washington and Lafayette kept pressuring him to prepare for a campaign against New York City.

In the middle of the votes of thanks to Rochambeau and Ternay, the dinners and celebrations, the setting up of hospitals and camp and the establishment of a supply system, a British fleet under Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot consisting of 11 ships of the line, five frigates and four smaller vessels appeared off the coast on 21 July 1780. Over the next few days, Ternay positioned his warships in a defensive, V-shaped position between Rose Island and Brenton’s Point.

Rochambeau placed as many of artillery pieces as possible into hastily repaired British earthworks on Conanicut Island as well as some larger cannon unloaded from various vessels guarded by some 150 men from the Saintonge and the 2d battalion of the Soissonnois. Fortifications on Goat Island, Brenton's Point, Rose Island and Coaster's Harbor Island were repaired as well. Concurrently Governor Greene called out the militia which responded in record numbers.²⁵²

²⁵¹ Mss 424, Series 2 and 3, Box 5 Theodore Foster, 1765-1825, RIHS. His notes are written in the margins of the printed *New-England Almanack or lady's and Gentleman's Diary for the Year of our Lord Christ 1780* and subsequent years. Neither the doctors nor the commissary have been identified.

²⁵² Service in the militia in Rhode Island was defined in *An ACT for better forming, regulating and conducting the military Force of this State* of October 1779. It stipulated that “all effective Males between the Ages of Sixteen and Fifty, except such as hereafter excepted, shall constitute and make the military Force of this State”. African-Americans are not listed among those exempt from service. In July 1780 the General Assembly instructed a number of people in every town to “form all male Persons whatsoever, of the Age of Sixteen Years and upwards [...] (Deserters, *Indians*, Mulattos and Negroes excepted) into classes” as recruits for the Continental Battalions and in view of the impending arrival of French forces.

It is interesting to note that in this emergency legislation African-Americans are excluded from Militia duty. They are again excluded in the November 1780 act for completing the



49: La Provence

50: Le Jason

51: Le Duc de Bourgogne

52: Le Neptune

53: Le Veillée

54: L'Ardent

55: Le Conquerant

56: Frigates L'Hermione, L'Astrée,

57: wrecks of vessels sunk by the British in 1778²⁵³

On 6 August William Channing informed Ezra Stiles from Newport that upon the arrival of a British fleet off the coast

state's quota to the Continental Army, keeping in mind that the Rhode Island Slave Enlistment Act of 14 February 1778, was an emergency law encouraging enlistment in the Continental Army, not Militia Laws per se.

A complete overview of militia laws in force in the colonies before 1789 is U.S. Selective Service System, *Backgrounds of Selective Service: Military Obligation, the American Tradition, Compilation of Enactments of Compulsion from Earliest Settlements of the Original Settlements on 1607 Through the Articles of Confederation 1789*. Special Monograph no. 1, vol. 2, 14 Parts in four volumes. (Washington, DC, 1947). On Rhode Island see Part 12: Rhode Island Enactments, the quotes on pp. 87, 144, 147 and 155.

²⁵³ Salvage operations had been least to Newporters; attempts by French sailors to salvage some of the materials led to short-term friction that were quickly solved when Ternay forbade these activities.

The whole Militia of our State (Rh.Isld) & of the C^o of Bristol in Mass. Bay were immed^y alarmed. --- On no occasion since the War have the Militia so universy turned out & with so much Alacrity --- Persons of the first Rank & character took the Lead & were followed by persons of every Rank & Description. I was informed by Gen Heath that there were upwards of Ten Thous^d Men assembled at Bristol and Tiverton, 6000 of wc were Inhabitants of this State. And the Number was increasg when the Militia were dismissed. [...] Our Allies are much pleased with the conduct & spirit of the Militia. I dined at Count Rochambeau the French General's last Monday (31 July) last, in Comp^a with Mr. Thatcher (Minister) of Attleborough, who had led his Parishioners into the Field.²⁵⁴

Though Royal Navy ships would continue to appear off the coast throughout August and into September 1780, by early August Rochambeau's forces had weathered the most dangerous phase of their arrival in Newport.²⁵⁵

The virtual blockade of their forces in Newport constituted a vivid reminder to Rochambeau and Ternay of the vulnerability of their position and of how little support they should, or could, count on from local authorities. The response of the Newport town council to the arrival of the fleet showed how much the city had suffered under the British occupation and how little it contributed to the defense of the island despite the enthusiastic vote of the General Assembly of Rhode Island in early July "to take every possible measure for the accommodation of the expected armament of our generous ally."²⁵⁶ Without weapons to defend themselves, the Town Council on 11 July approached Rochambeau to ask for his assistance.

Whereas many of the Inhabitants of the Town of Newport, sincerely desirous of Affording their utmost did, of assistance to the fleet & Army of His Most Christian Majesty the Illustrious Ally of the States, now within the Harbour & Town of Newport, Have Associated for the defence

²⁵⁴ *Literary Diary*, vol. 2, p. 458. The "Ten Thous^d Men" is in cursive in the text. While the Rev. Thatcher was leading his congregation to war, Stiles was examining two applicants on 15 August 1780 who wanted to enroll at Yale "to become free from Impress or Draught^s into the military Service in the Time of War." Stiles did not think "this would secure them." Ibid.

²⁵⁵ The defensive activities in July and August are best described in Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, pp. 62-67. On the earthworks see also "Butts Hill, Chastellux, and Conanicut Island Forts." In Forbes and Cadman, *France and New England* vol. 2, pp. 61-65.

²⁵⁶ Quoted in Kennett, *French forces*, p. 40.

*thereof, against the Common Enemy, & whereas the said Inhabitants have been heretofore deprived of their fire arms, & Accoutrements by the said Enemy, & are now in want of a Sufficient Number for Arming & Equiping 200 men. Wherefore Resolved that Major Gen: Heath be & he is hereby requested to apply to Genl Count of Rochambeau, Commander of the Army, of his said Christian Majesty for the Loan of a Sufficient Number of the Necessary Arms & Accoutrement, for the Arming & Equipping sd men, & this town will return the Same when thereto required by Genl Count Rochambeau, & that the Committee who waited on Gen: Heath; Yesterday be appointed to wait on him with this Vote.*²⁵⁷

Even if “The Arrival of the Fleet & Army hath given new Life to the Town”, as Channing had informed Stiles on 6 August, it turned out that there were not even 200 men to arm: when the town council decided on 26 July to establish a list of potential defenders by asking inhabitants to sign up “as also that the disaffected may be thereby known” at City Hall on 27 July at 5:00 p.m., “& such as shall not appear, will be deemed Enemies to their Town & Country,” the response must have been disheartening. Not even 200 men when the town (in 1782) was home to 157 males between the ages of 16 and 22 and another 565 males between the ages of 22 and 50.²⁵⁸ The list of men willing and able to defend Newport compiled that day contained only 68 names, including that of 79-year-old Pardon Tillinghast. Twelve more men refused to sign the list, another six asked for more time to consider. Between them they had 11 muskets. On the other hand, there were names of 50 persons on that list who “should be Immediately Sent of this Island as Inimical to the United States.”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Newport Town Proceedings vol. 1, 24 November 1779 – 17 April 1818. NHS.

²⁵⁸ *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* vol. 9, p. 653.

²⁵⁹ Newport Historical Society Vault A, Box 36. In September 1781, the town voted to buy 25 muskets with bayonets and accoutrements but had to return them again on 2 October to Henry Dayton “there not being any Money, at Present, for the payment thereof.”

9.4 Supplying Rochambeau's Army

Even at the height of its prosperity, Newport had never been able to feed itself. Now that the city was but a shadow of its former self and its environs had been destroyed, not even the resources of the whole state would have sufficed supply the troops of the *expedition particulière* and the sailors on Ternay's fleet. Feeding these thousands of men went far beyond the capabilities of any single state, straining the resources of New England. Equally critical was the apparent inability of state and local officials to even procure the necessary resources from surrounding states. Appeals by General William Heath in the *Newport Mercury* of 15 July 1781 meant very little. On 15 July 1780, three days after General Heath's announcement and about two weeks after French forces had arrived in Newport, Brissout de Barneville, aide-de-camp to *baron de Vioménil*, reported that "les boulangers," i.e., the bakers, and "les bouchers," i.e., the butchers, "sont établis au camp."²⁶⁰ What they needed were cattle to slaughter for beef for the troops and flour to bake bread for them.

Newport had never been able to feed itself and years of British occupation had impoverished the town, yet the arrival of Rochambeau's forces in June 1780 doubled the number of people living in Newport.²⁶¹ A census in 1774²⁶² had counted 7,917 white inhabitants, 46 Indians and 1,246 free and enslaved blacks for a total of 9,208

A DETACHMENT of the Army and Fleet of our Great Ally, his Most Christian Majesty, under the Command of their Excellencies Monsieur Le Comte de Rochambeau, and Monsieur Le Chevalier de Ternay, having arrived in this Harbour: The good People of this and the neighbouring States, whose Situation makes it eligible, are invited and requested to bring to the Market of Newport, all Kinds of small Meats, Poultry, Milk, Vegetables, &c. for which they will receive a generous Price, serve their Friends, and benefit themselves.

The Markets will be so regulated as to prevent Impositions, either in buying or selling.

GIVEN at Newport, Rhode-Island, this 12th Day of July, 1780.

W. HEATH, M. G.

By the Major General's Command,

TH. CARTWRIGHT, Aid de Camp.

²⁶⁰ In February 1781, Barneville estimated the weekly need at 50 head of live cattle. Brissout de Barneville, "Journal de Guerre de Brissout de Barneville. Mai 1780-Octobre 1781" *The French-American Review* vol. 3 no. 4 (October 1950), pp. 217-278, p. 254.

²⁶¹ Aaron Lopez' Store Blotter/Day Book for 1780 is not the only record in the Newport Historical Society (Shelf no. 18, no. 674) that shows how the dearth of coin had the town revert to a barter economy: on 1 August 1780, he sold "1 scythe £ 36 payable in a good Fatt Lamb", on 14 August "1 Bushel Rock Salt £ 110, payable in making Shoes @ £ 15 ppair".

²⁶² The 1774 census is available at

<http://www.newhorizonsgenealogicalservices.com/1774-ri-colonial-census.htm>

inhabitants in Newport; by the summer of 1782, fewer than 5,000 people were living in Newport:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Males Under 16 years of Age | 1,084 |
| Females Ditto | 1,162 |
| Males between 16 & 22 | 157 |
| Females between 16 & 22 | 346 |
| Males between 22 and 50 | 565 |
| Females ditto | 948 |
| Males upward of 50 | 252 |
| Females Ditto | 400 |

=====

Total: 4,914²⁶³

If the 17 Indians, 51 mulattos and 549 free and enslaved African-Americans are added the total population of Newport in 1782 numbered 5,531 men, women and children.²⁶⁴ That same 1774 census had counted 3,950 white inhabitants, 68 Indians and 303 free and enslaved blacks in Providence for a total of 4,321 inhabitants living in 655 families. By 1782, the population of the town had decreased only a fraction to 4,306 inhabitants.²⁶⁵

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Males Under 16 years of Age | 943 |
| Females Ditto | 903 |
| Males between 16 & 22 | 205 |
| Females between 16 & 22 | 293 |
| Males between 22 and 50 | 589 |
| Females ditto | 727 |
| Males upward of 50 | 176 |
| Females Ditto | 169 |

=====

Total: 4,015 plus 6 Indians, 33 mulattos and 252 blacks²⁶⁶

At the same time a review of July 1780 in the papers of the baron de Vioménil lists a total of 5,218 NCOs and enlisted men arriving in Newport.

²⁶³ NHS, Shelf no. 10, call no. 413, Ledger Book Samuel Freebody, 1739-1792, p. 152.

²⁶⁴ The charts are published in *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* vol. 9, p. 653. The printed number for Newport is 5,530 inhabitants but an addition of the columns yields 5,531. In 1774, the slave population of Rhode Island was 6.3%, nearly twice as high as any other New England colony.

²⁶⁵ The number published in vol. 9 is 4,310 inhabitants though the columns add up to 4,306.

²⁶⁶ NHS, Shelf no. 10, call no. 413, Ledger Book Samuel Freebody, 1739-1792, p. 152.

Changes since 2 May 1780:

Died on the crossing: 34

Died in Newport: 53

Bourbonnois

Soissonnois

Saintonge

Royal Deux-Ponts

Auxonne Art.

Mineurs

Ouvriers

Total effectives 4373, 387 of
them in hospitals

| Le Rég. en parti de la rade de brest de May au | Morts | | Effectifs au 30 ⁷ Ju 1780. | Donc. aux hospitaux |
|---|-------------------|------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | En m ^o | Si ané- rigue | | |
| 973 | 10 | 21 | 942 | 152 |
| 1024 | " | 5 | 1019 | 57 |
| 973 | 8 | 6 | 959 | 87 |
| 1008 | 13 | 16 | 979 | 58 |
| 432 | 3 | 5 | 424 | 33 |
| 24 | " | " | 24 | " |
| 26 | " | " | 26 | " |
| 4460 | 34 | 53 | 4373 | 387 |

Detail from a review of Rochambeau's forces in Newport, 1 September 1780. (Vioménil Papers, LB 0074). Lauzun Legion is not listed in this review but a review of the legion on 1 October 1780 showed a strength of 603 NCOs and rank and file (Archives Nationales, Paris, D2c32) that brings the total strength of Rochambeaus forces in September to not quite 5,000 men.

If the 459 officers in Rochambeau's little army and their 426 servants who had made the crossing (another ten officers, among them Brigadier Claude Gabriel de Choisy, the two Berthier brothers and Captain Jean François de Thuillière of the Royal Deux-Ponts,²⁶⁷ joined on 27 September 1780 when the frigate *La Gentille* arrived from Martinique) are added, the total of troops disembarking amounts to a little over 6,000 men, more than the 5,531 men women and children that lived in Newport in 1782.²⁶⁸ But that was less than half of the new arrivals: the crews of Ternay's warships numbered around 5,650 naval personnel, to which the crew of *la Fantasque*, a 64 gun-ship re-fitted as a hospital ship ("en flûte"²⁶⁹) and the crews of transport vessels need to be added. Ship garrisons added another 21 officers from various infantry regiments and 782 men for a total of around 7,000 personnel.²⁷⁰

Wherever Rochambeau and Ternay turned, they were faced with the need to take matters into their own hands to supply their roughly 13,000 soldiers and sailors. The responsibility of assisting the French supply officers in procuring supplies for the French land and naval forces initially lay initially with the authorities of Rhode Island in cooperation with the neighboring states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. On 16 June, General William Heath had come to Providence at express orders from General Washington "to endeavor in conjunction with the Governor, to establish a market between the Fleet and Army and Country and be carefull that our Allies are not imposed upon in the prices of articles which they may find necessary." Greene was not the only one who feared that the French allies might be fleeced. On 14 July, Governor Trumbull wrote to him from Lebanon that now that French fleet has arrived there was danger "of their being imposed and extorted upon by extravagant prices by individuals." In order to organize supplying the troops, Trumbull asked for a meeting of delegates from Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire in Boston "as early next week as possible."²⁷¹ Rhode Island appointed a committee headed by Thomas Cushing to meet with

²⁶⁷ Recommended to Franklin by Marie Camasse, Thuillière left Europe in early 1777 to join the Continental Army. Captured twice by the British, he arrived in America just as his leave was about to expire. He returned to France in the spring of 1780 only to find that there was no place for him Ternay's ships and he had to sail with Choisy's group to Newport.

²⁶⁸ About three dozen officers joined Rochambeau's forces between October July 1780 and November 1783, but there were also some who departed for Europe, esp. after the siege of Yorktown, who did not return.

²⁶⁹ "en flute" designates a ship of the line or a frigate without a full complement of artillery to create cargo space so that it can be used as a transport, hospital ship &c.

²⁷⁰ The ship crews, infantry garrisons and number of servants is taken from *Rochambeau: A Commemoration by the Congress of the United States of America* (Washington DC, 1907), prepared by De B. Randolph Keim, p. 230.

²⁷¹ Trumbull to Greene, Rhode Island State Archives, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780. The letter was received on 17 July 1780.

Rochambeau, Ternay and Corny who agreed that there should be one general supplier or purchaser for French forces if the states or their purchasing agents could get the same prices for them that Corny and his agents had already agreed upon with private sellers. The New England states wanted to gain their share of the economic benefit accruing from French silver. The obvious choice as intermediary between the states and French forces was Jeremiah Wadsworth, former Commissary General of the Continental Army, who even before the arrival of Rochambeau's army was acting as an agent for Corny at the request of Lafayette.

But by the time the New England states met, the task of procuring supplies for Rochambeau's forces, begun as soon as Lafayette had arrived in Philadelphia, had taken on a life of its own. Soon three players would be competing with each other for the same purposes: Continental Army quartermaster acting for Corny, who also sent out his own purchasers, and Wadsworth. On 17 May, Congress had established a special committee in charge of Franco-American cooperation and within days requests for horse-teams and wagons went out from John Mitchell Deputy Quarter Master General for Pennsylvania to Carlisle in Cumberland County, to Reading in Berks County and to Lancaster since "there has not been a matter of more Importance to the United States since the war then that, of obtaining proper conveyances for our Allies, who are daily expected."²⁷² On 11 June he told John Holker that "the Chavalier De Luzerne was with me yesterday, he seems extremely Anxtious that no Disapointment should take place & that the Business should be forwarded with the utmost dispatch." The next day he informed Waggon Conductor John Mulhuling that he was "to procead with your Brigade of Twelve teames by way of Corryels Ferry, Rackets Town and Sussex Court House to new Windsor with the utmost dispatch, & when their wait for orders from Mons De Corney, or if none from him you will receive orders from His Excellency General Washington or some person Authorized by him where to Cross the North River." On 15 June Colonel John Davis received orders to speed up the dispatch of teams to Newburgh "as those Teames are wanted for the Service of our great Allyes his most Christian Majesty, whose troopes are daily expected I must again most earnestly request you will use all your power and Influence in York and Cumberland County to procure at least Fifty good four Horse Teames with Drivers, & Waggon Masters to each Brigade, which is to Consist of Ten Teames".

²⁷² Mitchel to Robert Patton, 31 May 1780. "Letter book respecting His Most Christian Majesty, 1780" *Pennsylvania Archives* Sixth Series vol. 14 (1907), pp. 207-254, p. 208. Unless otherwise identified all quotes in the next few paragraphs are taken from this source. Patton was DQMG in Lancaster County.

Though the pay and conditions offered for service increased almost daily from twenty five pounds pr. day " plus forage on 31 May to 30 pounds and more by 1 July, enlistment of waggoners lagged behind expectations. The reasons were simple. After years of having been paid with increasingly worthless paper money or IOUs, Mitchell correctly suspected that "the people in General are fearfull they will not get their pay when they come here". This time it would be different, and "to convince you & them of this I now send you Twenty thousand Dolls, w'ch is the pay of one Brigade for one month", as he wrote to Major Reading Howell on 16 June. But as long as Mitchell sent papers money, wagons, teams and drivers were hard to come by.²⁷³ David Duncan, ADQMG in Cumberland County assured Colonel John Davis, that he could "not do any thing without Money at this Place . . . they say they would not Trust their Father if in Public service, I cant blame them they have been Deceived so often since these times begun."²⁷⁴ By mid-June Mitchell was sending specie such as "half Johanneses"²⁷⁵ he had received from Corny with the admonition that "this money is not the property of the United States you are on no Account nor on no pretence of emergency to dispose of it for any other purpose, but that of paying Waggons to come here" to Philadelphia. From Philadelphia the wagons were to travel via "Correyls ferry [today's New Hope], Hacketstown & Sussix Court house, to New Windsor". Here they were to cross the Hudson to Fishkill and continue on to Hartford via Waterbury and Southington. In Hartford they would receive further orders from either Corny or Jeremiah Wadsworth.

When news of the arrival of Rochambeau's forces reached Philadelphia in the evening of 15 July, Mitchell urged even more teams on to Hartford: "every horse or waggon we have or can get will be wanted." Meanwhile Wadsworth had come to an arrangement with Corny on 21 June regarding the feeding of horses for the French army on their way to Newport and had begun to re-activate the purchasing network he had built up during his days as Commissary General for the Continental Army. On 24 June 1780, he wrote to David Trumbull in Lebanon, Connecticut, that he had been "directed by the Monsr De Corney Comy General of the Army of the King of France to

²⁷³ As late as 11 August 1780, Mitchell suggested to Holker the hiring of deserters: "if you think it Safe to Employ Deserters from the Brittish Army I can get Some very good Drivers amongst them." "Letterbook", p. 240.

²⁷⁴ The letter was written on 25 October 1781. Papers of John Davis, 1755-1783. 11 vols on 5 reels microfilm. Library of Congress Microfilm no. 17,137 (reels 79-83). The papers are part of the "Papers and Collection of Peter Force" (Series 8D: entry 32). The papers are ordered chronologically; the quote on reel 5.

²⁷⁵ A "Johannes" was a gold coin named after King John V of Portugal (1689-1750), whose name was inscribed on the coin. Valued at 8 Pieces of Eight or between 40 and 48 shilling sterling it was frequently called a Half-Joe in America. On colonial currencies used in the United States during the war of Independence see Appendix 3.

procure Horses, Forage and other necessities for the use of the Army when they arrive. ... As the design of the King of France is to cooperate with these States in repelling our Enemies, it is expected by the generous Allies of the States that our avarice will not prevent their cooperating effectually. I beg you to procure the needed supplies on terms the most reasonable."²⁷⁶ To procure these supplies Wadsworth's purchasing agents fanned out across New England and as far south as Pennsylvania²⁷⁷ and Maryland.²⁷⁸ On 29 June, Royal Flint left from Windham for Providence to begin "procuring the supplies for the French Army." When he got there Corny had gone to Boston but following his return in evening of 3 July, Flint had a conference with Corny in the morning of 4 July. That evening he reported to Wadsworth that Corny was "exceedingly disappointed" that none of the articles he had requested from Wadsworth during their meeting in Hartford while on his way back from Newburgh had yet been delivered. "He expects that all the articles he contracted with you for will be purchased in Connecticut" including 20 or 30 teams of oxen Wadsworth was trying to purchase in Pomfret and Killingly. In the same letter Flint told Wadsworth that

The Horses you bought will be wanted within two hours [!] after the Fleet arrives to go as an Escort with the French Commander in Chief to confer with Genl Washington. Two hundred & forty beeves & three hundred sheep must be at this place immediately and kept ready for the army – also sixty beeves & one hundred sheep at Newport for the same purpose. We shall need two hundred beeves that will average four hundred pounds of meat each & two hundred sheep weekly. ²⁷⁹ Measures must be taken to have this quantity furnished without

²⁷⁶ Wadsworth Correspondence, April – November 1780, Box 130 a, CTHS. Unless identified otherwise all quotes are from this correspondence file.

²⁷⁷ See for example a ms letter of 11 July 1780 from Col. Mathias Slough to Frederick Derch of Lancaster, PA with instructions to take 90 horses to Hartford for the French army. The horses were to travel about 25 miles per day and be fed 12 quarts of Oats or Speltz per day or 9 of Corn or rye if no Oats or Speltz plus plentifully of good Hay or Pasture."

²⁷⁸ On 2 August Col. Mitchell informed Wadsworth from Philadelphia that he sent another 27 horses he had purchased in Carlisle and Baltimore. By "Monday next" he will send 20 ammunition waggons, has already sent 113 four-horse teams "& in a few days expect to send a considerable Number more."

²⁷⁹ The average weight of live Connecticut cattle in the late eighteenth century was around 900 lbs but could pass 1,000 lbs. In December of 1780, David Trumbull bought four oxen with an average weight of 634 lbs; on 2 January 1781, he purchased an ox weighing 600 lbs, but the next day he estimated the weight of two oxen at 1,050 lbs each. Comparable numbers for sheep are around 100 lbs useable mutton per head. In December 1782, he purchased 85 head of cattle on the hoof in Boston weighing 630 lbs on average, leaving 350 lbs of meat per animal. Wadsworth Papers, Box 144, Folder December 1782, CTHS.

possibility of failure. The flour if not already sent must be forwarded without delay. It will not be possible to procure grain in this quarter, and I must beg you to supply what corn & oats you can, as soon as possible. The wood, vegetables, boards, beams, bricks, Cyder, Beer & Straw are expected from you according to Mons D'Corney's original directions: indeed he expects you to furnish explicitly every article he proposed when he saw you at Hartford. My Situation here without the Supplies is extremely disagreeable as the Mons expresses an anxiety greater than I describe.

Corny's "anxiety" grew even more as the well-intentioned activities of Lafayette and Luzerne in Philadelphia based on completely unrealistic expectations in June and early July began to backfire. On 20 July, Continental Deputy Quarter-Master Jabez Bowen warned Governor Greene from Providence:

I am informed also from Connecticut that there is Four Hundred Waggons on the Road from Pensylvania for the use of the French Army – such a vast number of Horses will Destroy all the Forrage and all the Grain in New England the Genl Assembly had much better engage to supply the Teams that shall be wanted even to remove the Baggage of the Army to Hartford, than to incourage or countenance the coming of such a Swarm of Locust into this part of the Country. A Representation of the impropriety and vast expence attending this Business ought to be made to the Commander of the French Army. I am sure it will cost more to bring the Waggons from Pensylvania than it would to carry the whole Bagge (sic) to Camp. I should think it would be much Better to carry the Baggage in the Transports to Norwalk or Fairfield. That would save 150 Miles transportation. This matter I know must be touched delicately yet as our Allies are Strangers they ought to be informed of the most Cheap and Convenient ways of doing their Business.²⁸⁰

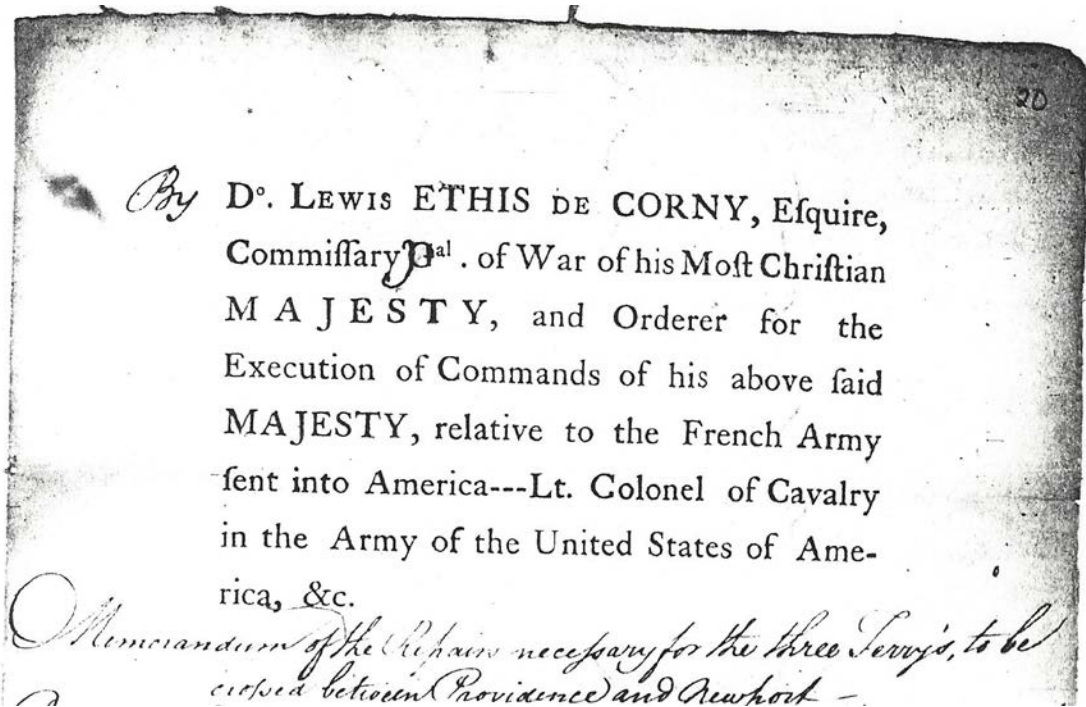
On 19 August, Ezra Stiles recorded in his journal²⁸¹ that

Five or 600 Waggons from Philad^a for Rh. Isld. passed this & last Week thro' Waterb^y, Southington &c eastward to transport the Baggage of the French Army to No. River.

²⁸⁰ Bowen to Greene, 20 July 1780. Rhode Island State Archives, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780.

²⁸¹ Stiles, *Diary*, p. 459.

Though Washington and Lafayette would push for a march to New York City for a few more weeks, French forces were in no condition to embark on such an enterprise even if there had been no British fleet patrolling outside Newport. The siege of New York City would have to be abandoned. Tens of thousands of livres and dollars had been wasted as the hundreds of teamsters assembled around Newburgh and as far away as Newport were sent back home. Now the question arose of who was responsible for this foul-up and who would pay for it. In his letter of 4 July, Flint had already warned Wadsworth that Corny was "rather out of humor, on account of some opposition there was in the town against his having an house and a disappointment from the QM on the score of forage." Unless he tried to save local supplies for emergencies, Corny already showed a streak of vengefulness – he did not like having had to wait for proper lodgings - that he (and Tarlé) would unleash on Wadsworth later that month: "I find he does not wish to have you purchase any articles in this state, except forage, but desires those supplies he engaged you to furnish should all come from Connecticut."



Corny even had his own stationary. Detail of Ethis de Corny's "Memorandum of the Repairs necessary for the three Ferry's to be crossed between Providence and Newport" to the General Assembly of Rhode Island dated 6 July 1780.²⁸²

²⁸² "Petitions to the General Assembly" vol. 18, p. 80. RIHS

July 27th 1780
His Most Christian Majesty
To Benj^m Remington
To the Forage of 79 Horses
from Jamestown to Newport 1780
This may certify the M^r Remington
Served the above mentioned Horses
for the Service of His Most Christian
Majesty
Enoch Welch
To M^r Macey
Com^d of War
Rec^d. Oct. 17. 1780. of Jeremiah Wadsworth Esq. Three
pounds nineteen Shilling, Sterling Money. in full of the
above due
Benja Remington
£5.19.0 Sterly

Benjamin Remington of Crompton was the ferryman at the Jamestown Ferry
Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS

Unfortunately the meeting of representatives of the New England States and
Rochambeau and his logistics staff would take place on 17 July, the same day that

Royal Flint told Wadsworth from Newport of the anger of Corny that the supplies promised by the States had not arrived, which “procured him censure from his Commander in Chief.” Corny decided to go out and buy what he could at whatever the cost. “I think it is probable they will open a new mode & channel of supplies as they perceive they cannot put perfect dependance upon the States.”²⁸³ Flint’s comment, however, touched a very sore spot in the Continental war effort: order, regularity and precision were not the hallmarks of a state-based supply system that had consistently failed the Continental Army. and the governmental structure and fierce independence of Rhode Islanders did not make things easier for the French. On 6 August 1781, William Channing informed Governor Greene that he needed 50 or 60 tons of straw for the French soldiers who “are now oblidgd to lie on the bare Ground” much to the detriment of their health. Yet since “I do not believe it will be in the power of the Inhabitants of this Island to furnish it without receiving some Assistance from the Army in threshing & Carting” he inquired about possibility of “Assistance from the Regiment of Col. Greene,” i.e., the Rhode Island Regiment of the Continental Line. On the 9th, the Council of War had as well received an application from Benoît Joseph de Tarlé, Rochambeau’s intendant, for straw and resolved “that it be recommended most earnestly to the Farmers on the Island of Rhode Island immediately to furnish all the straw in their Power” to Tarlé, “who will pay a Generous Price.” On 8 August, Tarlé asked Governor Greene to order the farmers to thresh out their grain because he needed the straw. The order was given, but on 12 August, General Heath again informed Governor Greene that “I find the French Troops in great want of Straw, an article absolutely necessary for the preservation of the health of the Soldiers, and about which the General and Officers are extremely anxious.” Since the farmers would not thresh their grain, Rochambeau had offered to “send out some of his own People to assist in threshing, if the straw cannot be otherwise obtained.” Yet the straw still did not materialize, and on 12 August 1780, 50 of Greene’s men were ordered to make hay at Point Judith for 20 dollars extra pay for each and every day they are employed. Almost immediately, however, the order was repealed “as it may not be found consistent with the Publick Service to detach said Men for the Purpose aforesaid, in such case,” and the commissioners appointed to have the hay made on public farm are told to find other ways of having the hay made. It is unclear whether the hay for the French forces was ever cut or the straw was ever provided since a similar order of 3 August in which militia men had been ordered to do make hay for the same pay they would receive if they performed militia service had also been revoked. When procuring firewood, which had to be

²⁸³ On 27 February 1781, John Carter wrote to Major-General Schuyler, that “the Greatest misfortune is that it is almost impossible to persuaid these People to adopt necessary measures before the oppertunety of making provision to advantage is passed.” Wadsworth Papers Box 131, Correspondence December 1780 to June 1781, CTHS.

shipped from as far south as New Haven and New London, proved equally difficult, Rochambeau on 26 July ordered his own men out to do the work with the stipulation that every enlisted man on work detail was to be paid an extra 20 sols, one whole *livre*, per day without deductions.²⁸⁴ That was three times the regular daily pay of 6 sols 9 1/2 deniers of a grenadier or hussar. Clearly – waging war under the rules of the New World was more difficult than Rochambeau had expected. Even Nathan Miller from Warren expressed his frustration to Governor Greene on 28 July 1780 with the words that “nothing but the Extremity of the Law will Convince men where the whole are Politicians (as is the Case here) of the necessity of Subordination.” No wonder that some French officers told their correspondents in France of their surprise at the strange ways of waging war in the New World.²⁸⁵

Unlike their American counterparts, French troops would not put up with insufficient food supplies or go for months without pay: the French king paid his troops regularly every two weeks. If the supply system of the Continental Army was haphazard and constantly changing, supplying the French forces was science, reflecting the professionalism of the King's forces. American observers realized that very quickly. On 17 July, Royal Flint told Wadsworth from Newport that “You have no idea with what order & oeconomy the affairs in the French Army are regulated. It is a most perfect system. Their officers & soldiers are extremely civil and the best looking men I ever saw.” In the same letter he informed Wadsworth that “The French Army must be regularly supplied, and if they go one day without a full allowance of bread & meat they will revolt; so that they determine to have their supplies on a footing that cannot fail.” Maybe not quite, but Flint's letter to Wadsworth of 21 July is full of admiration. “The systems in the French arrangements are perfect, but they are so cautious & precise that their execution is slow & tedious. It is exceeding troublesome doing business with them. Every body I employ grows tired of their Service. They expect more than the circumstances & customs of this country will admit, and cannot make allowances for necessary difficulties. ... The intendant is a cool, candid attentive man – precise in his conduct – prudent of his money – and critical in his settlements. You can form no conception of the caution they use in their purchases.”²⁸⁶ Coming from a New Englander like Wadsworth this was a compliment indeed but also provides another example of how unfamiliar French officers were with “the circumstances & customs” of their hosts and how much both sides still had to learn. Thomas Lloyd Halsey a fellow purchaser for Wadsworth put it thus to Peter Colt: “They commonly sent to me at Sunsett to

²⁸⁴ *Livre d'ordre*, 26 July, 19 September, and 8 October 1780.

²⁸⁵ The correspondence can be followed in the *Proceedings of the Council of War* the Letterbooks of Governor Greene in RISA, Providence, and in *Records of Rhode Island* vol. 9.

²⁸⁶ Wadsworth Correspondence, April – November 1780, Box 130 a, CTHS.

obtain what they wanted for the Morning, which is no way of taking the advantage of Business."²⁸⁷ And an exasperated Jeremiah Wadsworth told Corny on 29 July 1780: "Such are the customs of this country & such is the genius of this people that it will be some time before you can mold them to the customs & mode of business practised in France." Or, to quote the *chevalier* de Coriolis again, who had written to his family in France: "Here it is not like it is in Europe ... in America the people say they are free and ... the words: 'I don't want to' end the business, and there is no means of appeal."

By the middle of August that regular supply of food, straw and firewood seemed no longer assured. Rochambeau had only brought two months of provisions from France and when the presence of the Royal Navy off the coast threatened not only to cut off supplies from France but from other states as well, Rochambeau and Ternay became nervous and in the meeting of 17 July blamed Corny for the shortfall. Corny in turn blamed Wadsworth and looked for any American supplier who promised to meet French needs. Intendant Tarlé and his naval counterpart Guillaume-Jacques-Constant de Liberge de Granchain too had never liked the idea of being dependent on a single supplier and had been entering into contracts parallel to, and outside of, Wadsworth's efforts, viz. on 29 July, Tarlé had signed an agreement with Thomas Walker and Jean Baptiste Arthur Vermonel of Boston for a total of 3,352 tons of hay or 2,240 tons English weight at 130 livres per ton, 30,000 bushels of Indian corn at 32 quarters per bushel and a price of £ 6 11/ 3d per bushel, 37,125 bushels of oats at 5/ 11 d per bushel 613 tons of straw (2,240 English weight) at 65 livres per ton beginning on 1 August 1780.²⁸⁸ From 1 to 15 August 1780, Walker and Vermonel promised to deliver to Newport an immediate supply of 180 tons of hay, 2,300 bushels corn, 60 tons straw and again the same amount between 16 August and 1 September so that French forces would always have a 15-day supply.

More important than Walker and Vermonel, however, were Gideon Delano of Dartmouth and Josiah Blakeley, a merchant from Hartford. On 23 July, Blakeley and Delano arranged with Tarlé for 1,500 cords of wood to be delivered between 15 September and 1 November; the French navy would pick up the wood in New London or New Haven or wherever it desired with the risk of transportation lying with the French.²⁸⁹ To make matters worse, the army was competing with the navy

²⁸⁷ Halsey to Colt, 23 October 1781. Correspondence July 1781 to February 1782. Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

²⁸⁸ £ 6 11/ 3d = 1 pound 11 shilling 3 pence.

²⁸⁹ A cord is defined as measuring 8 feet by 4 feet by 4 feet and containing 128 cubic feet of wood. A tree with a usable height of 40 feet and an average circumference of 75 inches contains about one cord of wood.

for scarce supplies. On 21 July 1780, Granchain entered into an agreement with Delano on board the *Duc de Bourgogne* for three hundred cords of wood to be picked up in New Haven and New London during August and September for 5 dollars “hard money”, i.e. specie, each.²⁹⁰ Similarly Delano promised to have “one thousand Barrells of Flower of the best Quality to be found in Connecticut” in New Haven and New London within three months of 21 July. Again Ternay promised to supply the vessels to pick it up. Two days later, on 23 July, Tarlé negotiated a contract with Blakely and Delano for an unspecified number of cattle and sheep to be supplied beginning on 10 August until 1 January 1781. The only stipulation was that Rochambeau’s butchers would always have 50 oxen and 50 sheep at hand and in reserve. The cattle was to be weighed upon delivery and paid at 11 *sous* p/pound of 16 ounces, i.e. in English measure and on the hoof.²⁹¹ Delivery was to be at Blakely and Delano’s expense but the butchering was to be done by French butchers. The skins and tallow of oxen and sheep and everything known as the “Fifth Quarter” was to be Blackely and Delano’s. On 9 August, Granchain negotiated a separate agreement with Delano and Blakley who promised to provide 30 oxen of about 15,000 pounds total, i.e. 500 pounds each, per week “for the subsistance of the fleets Crew” in Newport or wherever the fleet might be beginning 1 September.²⁹² The negotiated price was 10 *sous* 6 deniers per pound French weight, to be weighed “with the feet head tallow and Skin except the bowells.”²⁹³

None of this would have been remarkable if Blakely and Delano had not arranged with Tarlé and Granchain to pay between 1/3 and ¼ in specie (at 5 livres 5 *sous* per Spanish silver dollar) and the rest with funds drawn on France. Wadsworth had been much more careful with the specie funds: on 24 June he had instructed David Trumbull in Lebanon: “I beg you to procure the needed supplies on terms the most reasonable, leaving it to the choice of the seller to have new money or Bills at fifty days sight on the treasury of France.” Here lies one of the explanations as to why supplies arrived in Newport only haltingly: James Hooker from Windsor just north of Hartford told Wadsworth on 7 July that a man named Timothy Burr bought corn at 4/ in specia per bushel at Poquonock and “most of the people here that have Corn

²⁹⁰ See also the description of cutting firewood in late October in Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 73. Similarly Captain Asa Waterman wrote from Norwich 19 July 1780 that wood was scarce and either to be “procured of the Indians for hard Money they will not take the paper currency” or from Fisher’s Island at 12/ per cord.

²⁹¹ 1 livre = 20 sols, 1 sol = 12 deniers, 1 livre = 240 deniers. For a comparison of currencies used in Rhode Island in 1780 see Appendix 3.

²⁹² The dressed carcass makes up about 60% of the live-weight of cattle; the remaining 40% live-weight is taken up by the hide, blood, bones, horns, hoof, tallow, intestines and casings, fat and organs such as the tongue, heart, kidney and liver known as the Fifth Quarter.

²⁹³ Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780, RISA.

to sell are displeased at its being more than the price we have given & Say its Enough." Once farmers too realized that they might be paid in specie if they only held out long enough it became virtually impossible to purchase for paper money only. Seth Miner complained to Wadsworth from Norwich on 7 September 1780 about "our farmers who are so craving after French coyn they Don't chuse to thresh their wheete at presant." As long as Blakely and Delano offered gold and silver supplies arrived in camp but the arrangement had numerous drawbacks for all parties involved - except Blakely and Delano. Rochambeau's and Ternay's specie reserves, for one, were depleting faster than anticipated, an uncomfortable situation as the prospects of re-supply remained uncertain. That situation was exacerbated by the refusal of New England farmers to accept Continental and state currencies and their insistence on being paid at least partly in specie and bills drawn on the treasure in Paris. Specie payments drove the value of Continental and state-issued bills to new lows and dried up the market for Continental purchasers who had nothing but paper bills and IOUs to offer.²⁹⁴

Even before the arrival of Rochambeau, Peter Colt had written to Wadsworth on 24 May 1780 from Danbury that "the Troops on Hudson River are at half allowance of both Meat & Bread - & no relief to be had from this Quarter - the Troops desert daily - pray urge the Cattle buyers to push the Beef Cattle forward." Eight weeks later Benjamin Tallmadge had teased Wadsworth in a letter from Cortlands Manor on Croton 14 July 1780 that "as you are Qgenl for the French I shall not be disappointed to find thro the Campaign that they are well fed & our Troops starving." Once French silver had arrived in New England the situation became desperate for the Continentals. On 10 September 1780 Rhode Island delegate to Congress Ezekiel Cornell informed Governor Greene from Philadelphia that "The army now live principally by plunder both for meat & forrage. And will if they keep together I fear soon become freebooters. And I think every man must feel for the Inhabitants where the Army marches."²⁹⁵ Two days later on 12 September 1780, William S. Pennington of the Second Regiment of Continental Artillery wrote in his diary: "Plundering and Morouding has become so prevelant at this time in the Army that there is No Such thing as Security of Property to the inhabitants."²⁹⁶This

²⁹⁴ French treasury bills became a currency medium in themselves: on 19 June 1781, Ezra Stiles "received of Treasurer Trumbull £ 74. = £ 60. Bills of Exch^a upon France as part of my Salary." *Literary Diary* vol. 2, p. 541.

The best overview is provided by Wayne Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure. Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture* (Chapel Hill, 1984).

²⁹⁵ Letters to Gov. William Greene vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780, RISA. Lack of food and pay forms the background for the mutinies of January 1781.

²⁹⁶ William S. Pennington Diary, 4 May 1780-23 March 1781, p. 62. MG 234, New Jersey Historical Society, Newark.

tendency to lawlessness was not lost on their allies. Almost a year later outside New York City Baron Closen remarked that "It is to be noted that the American Army paid neither for wood nor forage, and in a way, for nothing in this country. *The soldiers plunder a great deal* (and almost by turns.)"²⁹⁷ This scenario repeated itself wherever French forces approached. On 21 August 1781, Continental Quartermaster James Hendricks wrote from Alexandria in Virginia "Lord knows what will be done for provisions! Colo. Wadsworth & Carter, the French Agents have their Riders all round the Country, buying flour & beef with specie, this will effectively prevent the Commissioners from procuring any, as there is not a probability of the People letting the State Agents have an Ounce on Credit while they can get the French Crowns & Louis, I wish the Executive wou'd fall on some method to get the Cash from the French, and furnish the Supplies, without some method or other is fell on, the American Army will be starved."²⁹⁸

Congress, Continental Quartermasters and the New England states had foreseen this scenario and instituted price and wage controls. Additionally they asked French purchasers to only offer paper money and letters of credit drawn on France. Neither Corny nor Blakely and Delano acceded to that request; Jeremiah Wadsworth did with the consequence that he had difficulty meeting the supply demands placed on him. Working within the framework set by Congress and the New England states while trying to husband French specie did not, could not, produce the supplies demanded by increasingly nervous French forces in the summer of 1780 confined in Newport, esp. when other purchasers offered specie. When Corny and Grandchain turned to other suppliers in late July, a piqued Wadsworth ceased all cooperation. On 27 July Wadsworth informed David Trumbull from Newport: "I shall not continue to do business with the Monsieur but wish you to engage the hay and oats as it will be expected of me." Two days later he told Corny that he wanted to meet with him in Newport to settle their accounts. "I should not do you justice were I to omit telling you that the present mode of doing business is exceedingly difficult & expensive; my people who pass & repass not knowing your language are stopped at the ferries, some times sent back & always delayed. ... The vessels employed are detained when they might be dispatched if the parties could converse with each other. Every moment brings me new difficulties of this kind, and the expense is accumulating rapidly." Corny was described by Blanchard as "a man of intelligence, but intriguing and greedy" if not vengeful,²⁹⁹ but the Intendant Tarlé was trying to

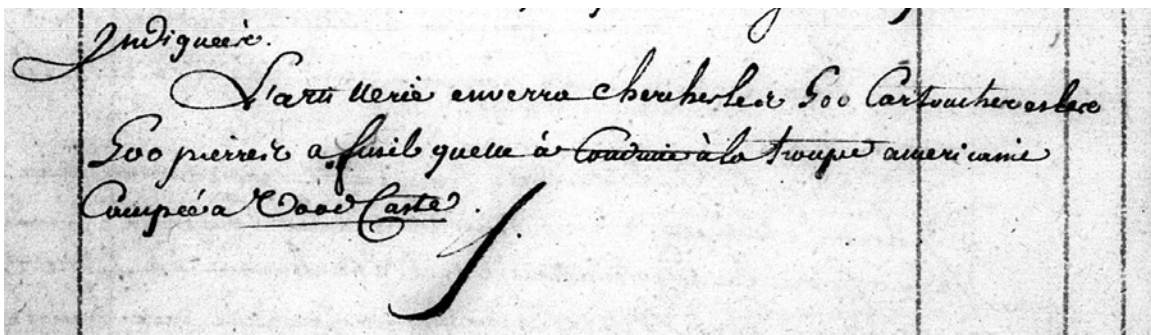
²⁹⁷ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 259.

²⁹⁸ NARA, Revolutionary War Records, Miscellaneous Numbered Records, Record Group 93, microfilm reel 92, no. 26743.

²⁹⁹ "his stay in America, short as it has been, has not impaired his fortune" Blanchard, *Journal* p. 87. On 4 December 1780 Corny requested Washington's permission returned to

protect himself as well as Flint informed Wadsworth from Providence on 5 September 1780: “you may depend upon it he is disposed to revenge himself for your asking to be released from their service and will give you every trouble in his power.” One of the reasons for Corny’s, Tarlé’s and Grandchain’s anger was that Jeremiah Wadsworth had quit cooperating with them just when wagons and horses from Pennsylvania and Maryland began to arrive in Hartford by the hundreds. (The first division of teams arrived in Hartford on 17 July – by 27 July Wadsworth had resigned.) It was only on 21 August, that Mitchel ordered Major Reading Howell to stop hiring additional teams for the French service.

Once the danger of a British attack had subsided in mid-August and the French supply staff realized the high cost of doing business with Blakely and Delano, they looked for a cheaper way of supplying their forces. The French offer in September to resume business with Wadsworth was based on the inability of Blakley and Delano to guarantee a stable food supply at the onset of winter. At the same time, Rochambeau rejected the offer of the New England states to supply his forces under a regional system of state quotas similar to that used to supply the Continental Army. During July and August when militia had joined French forces in the defense of Rhode Island Rochambeau had seen how the American system worked, or did not work. Starving militia had to be fed from French resources, needed arms, ammunition and siege material from French stores.



Detail from *Livre d'ordre* for 10 August 1780; the artillery is ordered to send 500 rounds and ammunition and 500 flints to the American forces at Wood Castle.

He had witnessed the American system first-hand and was not prepared to expose his forces to it. Just as Flint was warning Wadsworth of Tarlé’s revenge in early September, Corny, Tarlé and Grandchain approached him again. Wadsworth

France which was granted on 22 December. He departed Newport in February and arrived in France in March 1781. Bodinier, *Dictionnaire*, p. 212. On 13 August 1780, Blanchard had a run-in with Tarlé over beef purchases as well. Ibid. p. 54.

had portrayed Blakely and Delano as petty adventurers without the ability to guarantee delivery and developments proved him correct. Wadsworth refused to come to their rescue. He was determined to force the two out and to become sole supplier: he saw no reason why patriotism should interfere with his profit. His efforts were crowned with success when Rochambeau offered him a contract appointing him sole supplier of French forces on 8 October. The contract also guaranteed him a 5% commission on all purchases, which made him the wealthiest man in Connecticut by the end of the war.

The contract was to begin on 1 November, the day Rochambeau's infantry and artillery were to enter winter quarters in Newport, but Wadsworth's troubles were not over yet. Corny and Tarlé had entered into extensive and long-term contracts with Blakely, Delano and others. The French *commissaires* washed their hands of them, claiming that Wadsworth had assumed those contracts when he signed the contract on 8 October. Wadsworth of course refused to assume those contracts and while the smaller suppliers caved in to Wadsworth's pressure, Blakely and Delano refused to give in so easily. Wadsworth, however, was much better connected than the two and using his connections with Connecticut's political elite he convinced the legislature on 30 October to prohibit the sale of beef to Blakely & Delano in the state. Without access to Connecticut cattle, Blakeley could not fulfill his contracts, but still Blakely refused to give up. While he agreed for himself in a letter of 30 November to Wadsworth that he would stop supplying the French on 1 November he also told Wadsworth that the contract with the French had been made by his partner (i.e. Delano though Blakely refused to identify him) and that he could not speak for him. When Delano refused to follow Blakely's lead Wadsworth threatened to call in a loan from a third party which could have bankrupted the two. Only then did Blakely surrender.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Wadsworth's letter of 30 November with Blakely's response of 1 December on the blank conjugate leaf were advertised for sale by M&S Rare Books in January 2015. The description of the letter is here: http://www.msrarebooks.com/4DCGI/w_BookDetails/17181

[AT A MEETING OF THE GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL OF SAFETY AT
HARTFORD 30TH OCTOBER, A. D. 1780.]

Resolved, That this Council approve the agency of Jere. Wadsworth, Esq^r, which is represented to be by him undertaken at the instance of the Intendant of the French army, for the supply of the army of his Most Christian Majesty at Rhode Island, and do disapprove of any purchases of beef to be made in this State by Josiah Blakely and — Delano, or any person under them; and all persons are to desist purchasing in their name or in their behalf, as this Board have the fullest information that the French army is to be supplied with beef by said Wadsworth, and a competition of purchases must create many evils.

Extract from the minutes.

Test. W^m WILLIAMS, Clerk.
From Papers in the Conn. Historical Society.]

Charles C. Hoadly, *The Public Records of the State of Connecticut, from May 1780 to October 1781 Inclusive: With the Journal of the Council of Safety from May 15, 1780 to December 27, 1781, Inclusive, and an Appendix; Compiled in Accordance with a Resolution of the General Assembly* vol. 3. (Hartford, CT, 1922), p. 221.

While trying to sort out the mess created by Corny Rochambeau had to fend off the increasing pressure for military action emanating from Morristown.

Congress, Washington, Lafayette all urged military operations against the British as soon as possible. Hopes ran high in the Continental Army and in the colonies at large that a campaign would begin as soon as the immediate needs of setting up camp around Newport had been addressed. On 30 May 1780, six weeks before the first French infantryman set foot on American soil, William S. Pennington of the 2nd Regiment of Continental Artillery recorded in his diary that "Its reported that A Body of French Troops are to Land Near Rhode Island and March by land to Act against New York."³⁰¹ On 4 July 1780, Flint informed Wadsworth from Providence that "The Horses you bought will be wanted within two hours after the Fleet arrives to go as an Escort with the French Commander in Chief to confer with Genl. Washington. In Trenton, Moore Furman wrote on 17 July 1780, that as "The French Fleet & Army arrived at New Port the 10th I apprehend there can be no other object now but New York worthy of the Attention of the Combined Forces, & that they will Act Offensively towards that, what I wish is that every Man will now aid some

³⁰¹ New Jersey Historical Society (NJHS) MG 234, William S. Pennington Diary, 4 May 1780-23 March 1781.

decisive blow to put an End to the War.”³⁰² From Cortland Manor on the Croton, Washington's *aide-de-camp* Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge informed his friend Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth in Hartford on 14 July 1780, how “We have just been rejoicing on acct of the arrival of the French Fleet. How long before they will be ready to cooperate with us? When will be their first movement? For God’s Sake let us go about business soon.”³⁰³ Ezekiel Cornell, Rhode Island's Delegate to Congress sounded even more desperate when he wrote to Governor Greene on 1 August 1780, from Philadelphia of “the necessity of appointing General Washington sole Dictator of America, [which] is again talked of as the only means under God by which we can be saved, from destruction. ... the people will not work for the Continent without money nor trust her for any articles wanted for the Army. Therefore they must be supported by the force of Military Law, or disband.”³⁰⁴

Washington too hoped to embark on a military campaign before the onset of winter. As early as 15 July, he had suggested to Rochambeau a joint attack by French and American infantry forces against New York sometime in August.³⁰⁵ Similarly he wrote to Nathanael Greene on 14 July from Bergen County “Sir: I have determined upon a plan of operations for the reduction of the City and Garrison of New York; which is to be carried on in conjunction with the french forces daily expected from France. The number of Troops to be employed upon this occasion, may be about forty thousand men. ...”³⁰⁶ On 15 July, the day news of the arrival of Rochambeau reached Philadelphia, he sent a detailed plan to Lafayette with the request to submit it to Rochambeau and de Ternay upon their arrival.³⁰⁷ But Rochambeau's troops were in no condition for an attack, and neither was he prepared to embark on such a risky enterprise. Instead he suggested a meeting with Washington, and on 16 July wrote to Lafayette that “In an hour of conversation we shall be able to settle things far more definitely than in volumes of writing.”³⁰⁸ But Lafayette continued pressing for action, eventually even questioning Rochambeau's courage. This could have thrown the alliance into a severe crisis, and it speaks highly for the 55-year-old

³⁰² New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey, MG 608, Anderson Family Box 2: Military Correspondence Folder 12.

³⁰³ Benjamin Tallmadge to Jeremiah Wadsworth from Cortlandt Manor on Croton 14 July 1780. CHS, Wadsworth Correspondence, Box 130a.

³⁰⁴ RISA, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780.

³⁰⁵ Washington's "Memorandum for Concerting a Plan of Operations" is printed in Fitzpatrick, *Writings*, vol. 19, pp. 174-176.

³⁰⁶ [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw190197\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw190197)))

³⁰⁷ [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(gw190204\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mgw:@field(DOCID+@lit(gw190204)))

³⁰⁸ Doniol, vol. 5, p. 350.

Rochambeau that he calmly admonished the 22-year-old *marquis* as "an old father ... to a son who is very dear to him" that "I do not need to be spurred into action." Having "brought to your attention, as gently as possible, the things that displeased me in your last letter," Rochambeau concluded by assuring Lafayette of his "love and esteem to his last breath."³⁰⁹ The *marquis* had been gently, but firmly, put in his place, but the need for a face-to-face meeting of the generals remained.



Market Square in Providence. Governor Bowen's house is to the left of the Market³¹⁰

Rochambeau wrote this letter to Lafayette from Providence; once the young *marquis* had departed from Newport on 3 August and the immediate danger of a British attack had subsided as well - Sir Henry Clinton called off an invasion of Rhode Island or an attack on Newport on 1 August - Rochambeau embarked on a tour of inspection of his various posts and hospitals. On 26 August, Deputy Governor Bowen accompanied Rochambeau from Newport to Providence, where he was met by Generals Sullivan and Varnum. Like most French officers before and after him Rochambeau lodged with Bowen.

³⁰⁹ Rochambeau's letter of 27 August 1780 in Idzerda, *Lafayette*, vol. 3, pp. 155/56.

³¹⁰ This photograph is reproduced in Preston, "Providence", between pp. 8/9.



The Market House in Providence today

Rochambeau had barely returned to Newport when a five-day visit by 18 (or 19?) American Indians on 29 August brought excitement to the French camp. The thirteen Oneida and Tuscarora as well as five Caghnawaga had come to offer their assistance in the war against the common enemy, and Rochambeau welcomed them with all honors, gave them a demonstration of French military power and exchanged gifts with them.³¹¹ On 30 August he took them to Ternay's flagship where there was more cannon-fire. The visit is prominently described in all French journals: few of the officers or enlisted men had ever seen a Native American and they were fascinated by them. French response, as with virtually all aspects of the New World, was very much determined by the social status of the observer. Officers such as Clousen employ terms such as "horrible and singular faces", "bizarre manners",

³¹¹ For a recent description see also Hattendorf, *Newport, the French Navy*, pp. 67/68.

From Newport the delegation went to American headquarters where they arrived on 12 September, when Israel Angell recorded that "a Number of Savages of the Onido (sic) Nation Came to head Quarters." RIHS Mss 980, Israel Angell Papers.

“distasteful” when describing the Indians.³¹² Flohr, the enlisted man in the Royal Deux-Ponts, uses a much more value-neutral language, describing for example their religious services as “*Gottesdienst*”, i.e. divine services, a term he would also have used for a Christian service.

One of the interpreters who accompanied them was “a native German, born in the Palatinate [whose] father had migrated to America and had taken him along when he was a little boy and because his father had died he ended up among the savages and that he was now 23 years already among them and that he wanted to stay with them.” Flohr met the man, identified by Baron Closen as a man from the Palatinate by the name of Frey from Schwetzingen who had lived with the Indians since 1758, in a tavern in Newport. From him learned details about life with the Oneida, that “his father had died he ended up among the savages and that he was now 23 years already among them and that he wanted to stay with them,” or, in the words of Closen, “would end his days among them.”

9.5 Rochambeau's Journey to the Hartford Conference, 18-24 September 1780

Once the Oneida had left for New Jersey plans for a meeting between Rochambeau and Washington could be finalized. On 8 September, Washington asked Rochambeau and Admiral de Ternay to meet him in Hartford, even though he was under no illusion as to the outcome of their meeting.³¹³ “Our plans can only turn up possibilities; which is the more unfortunate, as the affairs of this country

³¹² Acomb, Closen, pp. 37/39; Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 61/63, Gallatin, “Garde Suisse”, pp. 330-332 ;

³¹³ There is no good, recent account of this conference. Older, but still useful, accounts include Allan Forbes and Paul F. Cadman, *France and New England* 3 vols, (Boston, 1925-1929), vol. 2, pp. 109-117: “Hartford and Wethersfield, Where Washington and Rochambeau Met in Historic Conferences.” Forbes and Cadman erroneously include the duc de Lauzun in Rochambeau's party and confuse Rochambeau's aide Joseph *comte* de Damas, who did not go to Hartford, with Mathieu Dumas, who did. Damas did not leave any writings. See also the unsigned “Hartford in the Revolutionary War” in *Protection. A Magazine published for Representatives of The Traveler's Insurance Companies. Bicentennial Edition* vol. 99, no. 7, (July 1976), pp. 2-5. It was not, however, a three-day conference as claimed in this article. Finally see the *Washington-Rochambeau Celebration: 1780-1955 Hartford - Connecticut. Official Souvenir Program* (Hartford, 1955), where Baron Cromot du Bourg is listed as having accompanied Rochambeau to Hartford. (p. 11) Du Bourg cannot possibly have been at Hartford since he only arrived at Boston from France on 18 July 1781. See his “Diary of a French Officer 1781” *Magazine of American History* vol. 4, no. 3, (March 1880), pp. 205- 214, p. 208. The diary is continued in no. 4, (April 1880), pp. 292-308), vol. 4, no. 5, pp. 376-385, and vol. 4, no. 6 (June 1880), pp. 441-452. Many details can be gleaned from the relevant entries in Florence S. Marcy Crofut, *Guide to the History and Historic Sites of Connecticut* 2 vols., (New Haven, 1937), esp. vol. 1, pp. 231/32.

require activity, upon whichever side they are viewed."³¹⁴ Five days later, on the 13th, he renewed his request, urging once again action before the onset of winter. "Should the Count De Guichen arrive before the end of this month, I still recommend New York to be our object; and in this view I cannot forbear to you how essential it is that the fleet should instantly proceed to take possession of the port, and that your troops should as soon as possible form a junction with ours by way of the sound."³¹⁵ On the 18th, Rochambeau and Ternay set out for Hartford.

In a letter of 16 October 1780, Swedish Count Axel von Fersen, aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, informed his father that Rochambeau's group at Hartford had consisted of six persons.³¹⁶ They were the commander-in-chief himself, his son Donatien Marie Joseph de Vimeur, *vicomte* de Rochambeau, Admiral Henry d'Arsac, chevalier de Ternay, the French chief engineer Colonel Jean Nicholas Desandroins, and two aides, i.e., Mathieu Dumas and Fersen. All of these participants kept journals or diaries, sent letters to parents or relatives in Europe, or wrote memoirs yet they allow but a sketchy reconstruction of the journey to Hartford Conference.³¹⁷

Short as they are, the most detailed reports of the route are given by Admiral Ternay and the *vicomte* Rochambeau.³¹⁸ Ternay records that the group left Newport at 9:00 a.m., took Bristol Ferry to Bristol and dined at Warren. From there it was on to Providence where the two men and their suites arrived ten hours after departure from Newport. Having spent the night at the home of Deputy Governor Ephraim Bowen they departed Providence at 7:00 a.m. and had dinner at "woulangton", i.e.

³¹⁴ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 20, p. 16.

³¹⁵ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 20, p. 46.

³¹⁶ *Lettres d'Axel de Fersen a Son Père*, F.U. Wrangel, ed., (Paris, 1929), p. 82. Arnold Whitridge in his *Rochambeau* (New York, 1965), p. 99, adds the *marquis* de Chastellux to this group, which is wrong since Chastellux himself wrote "I did not attend him on this journey." François Jean *marquis* de Beauvoir de Chastellux, *Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781 and 1782* Howard C. Rice Jr., ed., 2 vols (Chapel Hill, 1963), vol. 1, p.63.

Washington was accompanied by LaFayette, Henry Knox, his French-born Chief of Engineers Jean Baptiste de Gouvion, six aides, including Alexander Hamilton, and an escort of 22 dragoons.

³¹⁷ See also Claude C. Sturgill, ed., "Rochambeau's *Mémoire de la Guerre en Amérique*" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 78, (January 1970) pp. 34-64, p. 41.

³¹⁸ Rochambeau wrote that he "left on the eighteenth, with the admiral and the commanding officer of the engineers." Next the group was "given beds at Providence" and "left the next day," 19 September, at 7:00 a.m. "to go to Hartford. We went through Sutuate [Scituate], Coventry [Rhode Island], Voluntown" [Sterling Hill], three miles from the state line in Connecticut. Vicomte de Rochambeau, *The War in America. An Unpublished Journal (1780-1783)* in Jean-Edmond Weelen, *Rochambeau. Father and Son* (New York, 1936), pp. 191-285, pp. 211-212.

Voluntown, today's Sterling Hill. The group had planned on spending the night in Windham, but, as Admiral de Ternay recorded in his *Journal*, "the roads were filled with rocks and difficult for four-wheeled vehicles" so that "the inhabitants, men and women, traveled almost all on horseback." Since Ternay was sick, he and Rochambeau rode in a carriage.³¹⁹ As they were approaching "close to the village of Scotland," the inevitable happened. One of the wheels broke and "we were obliged to stop."³²⁰ Rochambeau sent an aide to get a wheelwright "who lived about a mile from the spot where the accident occurred." Fersen returned with the news that the wheelwright was sick and "that for his hat full of guineas he would do no work at night." But when the wheelwright found out who his customers were and that they were on their way for a meeting with Washington, he promised to have the carriage "ready for you at six in the morning. He kept his word," and by 7:00 a.m. the next morning, the group was on its way.³²¹ Rochambeau found the incident "strikingly characteristic of the manners of the good republicans of Connecticut."³²²

Following lunch in Andover, the party arrived in Hartford around 3:00 p.m. On Thursday, 21 September, the meeting began in the home of Jeremiah Wadsworth. Fersen informed his father that "The two generals and the admiral remained closeted the whole day that we spent in Hartford," with the *marquis* de Lafayette and Alexander Hamilton serving as interpreters and translators.³²³ Washington had brought an eight-page outline for an operation against New York City drafted by Alexander Hamilton, in the hope that he would be able to convince Rochambeau and Ternay to stage such an attack before the onset of winter.³²⁴ But both generals were well aware that independent of their infantry strength any such attack would be doomed without French naval support. The arrival of British Admiral Sir George Brydges, Baron Rodney, and his fleet in New York combined with the departure of

³¹⁹ Ternay died on 15 December 1780.

³²⁰ See in Ternay's "Journal de ma voyage sur le vaisseau le duc de Bourgogne anno 1780," the entry for Tuesday, 19 September 1780. Ternay's "Journal" forms part of the Destouches Papers in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The blacksmith has not been identified.

³²¹ Rochambeau's memory may have failed him here; the aide may have been Dumas since Fersen wrote his father on 16 October 1780, that Rochambeau had sent him ahead to Hartford to announce his arrival. Fersen, *Lettres*, p. 82.

A guinea was an English gold coin first minted in 1707 worth 21 shillings. It was named after the coast of Guinea in Africa, the place of origin of the gold.

³²² *Memoirs of the Marshal Count de Rochambeau, relative to the War of Independence of the United States*. M.W.E.Wright, ed., (Paris, 1838), p. 20.

³²³ Fersen, *Lettres*, p. 83.

³²⁴ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 19, p. 423, note 68. The "Idées mises sous les yeux de S.E. le général Washington par M. le comte de Rochambeau et M. le chevalier de Ternay -Réponse du général Washington" are printed in Doniol, *Histoire* vol. 4, (Paris, 1892), pp. 104-107.

Louis Urbain de Bouexic, *comte* de Guichen for France, ruled out that possibility for the foreseeable future. Both generals decided to return to their headquarters to prepare for the eventuality of an amphibious attack and to delay any major action until the arrival of the second division from France.

On early Friday afternoon, 22 September, the French delegation, again accompanied by the Governor's Guard and a thirteen-gun salute to the river, departed for Newport. Washington left the following morning, 23 September, for the Hudson. At the same spot where a wheel had broken three days earlier, Rochambeau's carriage broke down again. Once again the friendly "blacksmith agreed to work through the night for the single reason that our journey was in the interest of America."³²⁵ By 5 a.m. on the 23rd the carriage was ready. Again Rochambeau's comment: "I do not mean to compare all good Americans to this good man; but almost all inland cultivators and all land owners of Connecticut are animated with that patriotic spirit, which many other people would do well to imitate." Following a dinner in Voluntown/Sterling Hill, the two officers inspected the hospital at the college in Providence, where Ternay counted 300 sick French soldiers though he thought the building could accommodate 200 more. After another night in Providence at the home of Ephraim Bowen on 23/24 September, the group left at 10:00 a.m., dined at Warren, took the Bristol Ferry and was back in quarters in Newport by 7:00 p.m.

The results of the conference must have been disappointing for Washington, but even without firm plans, it had served an important purpose. The two generals had met for the first time face to face and had taken an instinctive liking to each other, a precondition for any successful cooperation. Rochambeau's officers too had encountered Washington for the first time and Dumas' impression of the American would be repeated in the writings of many officers: "We had been impatient to see the hero of liberty. His dignified address, his simplicity of manners, and mild gravity, surpassed our expectation and won every heart."³²⁶ Fersen was a bit more reserved. He found the American "illustrious, if not unique in our century. His handsome and majestic, while at the same time mild and open countenance perfectly reflects his moral qualities; he looks the hero; he is very cold; speaks little, but is courteous and frank. A shade of sadness overshadows his countenance, which is not unbecoming, and gives him an interesting air."³²⁷

³²⁵ Ternay, "Journal," entry for Friday, 22 September 1780.

³²⁶ Mathieu Dumas, *Memoirs of his own Time; including the Revolution, the Empire, and the Restoration*, 2 vols., (London, 1839), vol. 1, p. 29. Captain Dumas (1753-1837), later served as *aide-major général des logis* or assistant quartermaster general in Rochambeau's staff.

³²⁷ Fersen, *Lettres*, p. 82.

Dumas summed the conference well when he wrote that "General Washington and General Rochambeau decided on passing the whole winter in passive observation, always holding themselves ready to profit by the most favorable circumstances which might present themselves. The whole of this comparative suspension of hostilities was well employed in putting the American army in good condition for the opening of the campaign; and General Rochambeau, on his side, who was expecting the arrival of the second division, prepared himself to aid our allies with vigor."³²⁸ Washington himself wrote to James Duane on 4 October 1780 that "the interview at Hartford produced nothing conclusive because neither side knew with certainty what was to be expected. We could only combine possible plans on the supposition of possible events and engage mutually to do everything in our powers again against the next campaign."³²⁹

As it turned out the Franco-American cause was not so much threatened by an amphibious attack from the outside but by treason from within. Just as Washington reached the Hudson, news of Benedict Arnold's treason and failed attempt to hand over West Point to the British on 25 September reached American lines, sending shock waves through the colonies. The incident only confirmed Rochambeau's conviction of the shaky ground upon which the success of the rebellion rested as well as determination not to risk anything without overwhelming odds in his favor. The American cause might not survive any more failures such as the unsuccessful sieges of Savannah or Newport. France, and America, could not afford another year of losses. But America was at the end of her rope, and the odds in favor of success could only be improved by French aid. Immediately upon his return to Newport, Rochambeau sent his son to Versailles to ask for more aid and the second division, without which he felt there was no chance of success against New York. To support the *vicomte* in his mission, Washington ordered Henry Laurens, son of the president of Congress who had fought valiantly in the Battle of Rhode Island, to accompany the Frenchman. "Without a foreign loan," he told Laurens, "our present force, which is but the remnant of an army cannot be kept together for this campaign, much less will it be increased and in readiness for another."³³⁰

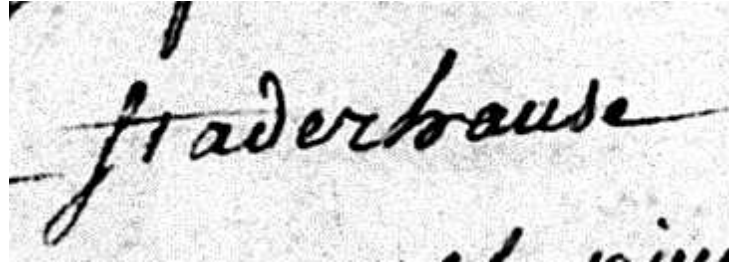
Both before his departure and following Rochambeau's return from Hartford and prior to entering winter-quarters French and American forces conducted sham battles in September and early October in order to test their military skills and to

³²⁸ Dumas, *Memoirs*, p. 32.

³²⁹ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 20, p. 118.

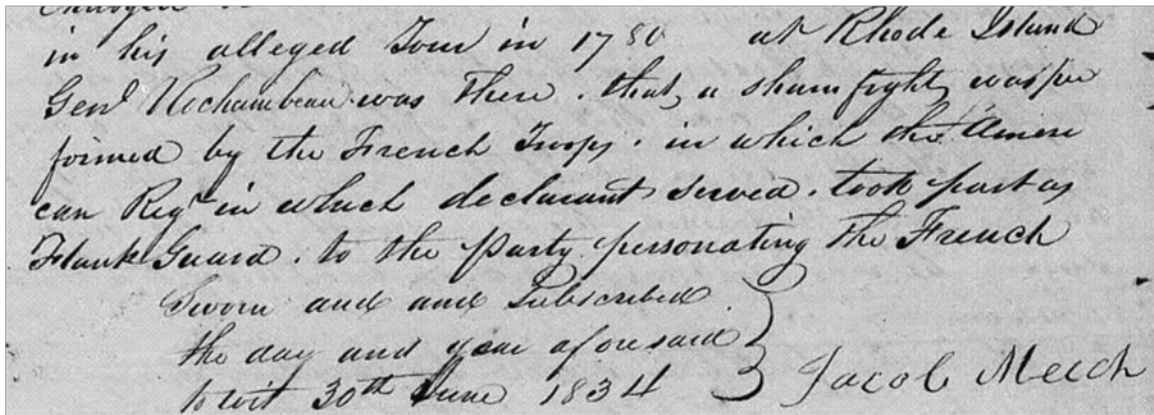
³³⁰ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 21, p. 438.

prepare for the eventual defense of the island. On 9 September, the Soissonnois and Royal Deux-Ponts were ordered to receive 12 blank rounds each for regimental exercises the next day; the Bourbonnois and Saintonge conducted brigade exercises the following day.³³¹ Following Rochambeau's return from Hartford, the army on 1 and 6 October practiced defending against a British Landing in the vicinity of an unidentified location called "Statlers House" by Closen and "Staderhouse" by the *comte de Lauberdière*.³³²



Continental Army forces participated in these maneuvers as well. In his pension application of 30 June 1834, Jacob Meech, serving in the Rhode Island Regiment, remembered that

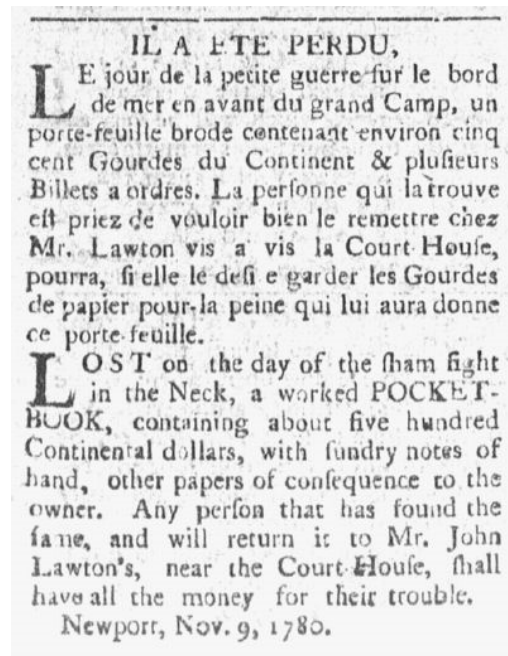
while serving his alleged Tour in 1780 at Rhode Island Genl Rochambeau was there that, a sham fight was performed by the French Troops, in which the American Regt in which declarant served took part as Flank Guard to the party personating the French."³³³



³³¹ A detailed description of these maneuvers can be found in Rochambeau's *livre d'ordre*.

³³² Acomb, *Closen*, p. 42. Closen places the manoeuvres on 1 and 6 October (Acomb, *Closen*, p. 42); Blanchard writes that they were held on 2 and 7 October. Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 53.

³³³ Pension application of Jacob Meech, 30 June 1834, no. S15524.



During one of these exercises Pierre d'Espeyron, Major of the Soissonnois, who lodged with John Lawton, lost his pocket-book.³³⁴

While these exercises went on Ezra Stiles visiting Newport in early October and was introduced to Rochambeau on 5 October. Two days later, on 7 October, he dined with Rochambeau "in a splendid manner. There were perhaps 30 at Table. I conversed with the General in Latin. He speaks it tolerable." On 9 October he dined with Chastellux, again "in a splendid manner on 35 Dishes. He is a capital Literary Character, a Member of the French Academy. He is the Glory of the Army. After Dinner the Minister of France the Chevalier de la Luzerne with the General came in & socially conversed round the Table."³³⁵

On 28 October, Ternay's frigate, *l'Amazone*, commanded by the de la Pérousse, one of France's most promising young naval officers accompanied by the *Surveillante* and the *l'Hermione* slipped out of Newport harbor and headed for France where it sailed into Lorient after a very fast crossing of nineteen days on 15

³³⁴ *Newport Mercury* 23 November 1780

³³⁵ Literary Diary, vol. 2 p. 473. He also reported his visit in a letter to Benjamin Franklin which Chastellux forwarded to France. He also dined with Vioménil and other French dignitaries before departing again on 10 October.

November 1780.³³⁶ Until the return of young Rochambeau, the French would have to bide their time and wait in "passive observation" for the news he would bring.

³³⁶ Vicomte de Rochambeau, *Journal*, p. 214, including the text of Rochambeau's letter to the ministry.

Quantity of Materials necessary for
the Building and repairing of the houses
for Caracking the Troops of his. M. G. M.
at Newport,

80000. Bricks.
 100. Cart loads of Stone
 80. Hogsheads of Lime
 600. Cartloads of sand.
 600. Feet of Timber ten inches square
 5000. Feet of Timber six inches square
 15000. Feet of Timber, four or five inches square
 30000. Feet of Planks two inches thick, for the
 repairing of almost all the stairs.
 150000. Feet of Plank, one inch thick, for flooring
 100000. Shingles.
 8000. Laths.
 6000. Weight of Nails, three inches long
 200000. Shingle nails.
 6000. Weight nails two inches long

If the General assembly can make the Count, have
 two thousand cords of fire-wood, along with the
 other materials that they think they may conveniently
 let him have; it is to be noted that all the
 Bargains made by the French army, are all
 paid $2\frac{1}{3}$ in bills upon France, and the other $\frac{1}{3}$
 in hard money.

Estimate of materials needed to make the houses in Newport habitable for winter quarters for French forces.

9.6 Winter Quarters in Rhode Island and Connecticut

The French had been thinking about winter quarters as early as 29 August, when Tarlé inquired of Governor to Greene about the possibility of moving into empty and/or destroyed houses in Newport, Warren and Bristol rather than build new barracks for the troops. Tarlé did not fail to point out that repairing these houses would be of great benefit to inhabitants as well as the fact this was Rochambeau's preferred solution. In his response, Governor Greene assured Tarlé that "The Council will at all Times be extremely happy in giving their utmost Assistance to effect the General's Intentions." Concurrently he appointed General James M. Varnum and Colonel Lovitt, Deputy Quarter-Master, to confer with Rochambeau on the particulars. He also promised that take the General Assembly would take up the request when convened in Newport on 11 September.³³⁷ Between mid-September and the end of October, empty and deserted houses in Newport were repaired at a cost of more than 120,000 livres. The British occupation may have destroyed as many as 400 of the more 1,100 homes standing in Newport before the war.³³⁸ When a great storm overturned the tents pitched on the hills around Newport on 18 October, the infantry and artillery in Newport were anxious to get out of the cold and into winter quarters.

Lauzun's forces were anxious to enter into winter quarters as well. But where would they go and who would provide them with the necessary supplies? Rochambeau had planned on quartering the Legion in Providence, and Washington approved of the plan. As late as 14 October, he wrote to Rochambeau that "from the reputation of the Duke de Lauzun I am persuaded he will do every thing in his power to give satisfaction to the inhabitants of Providence, and I flatter myself he will find the greatest cordiality in them."³³⁹ Washington's hopes turned out to be wishful thinking. On 9 October, Ephraim Bowen informed Governor Green,

that the Duke de Lauzun Brigad. General of the French Army, will be in this Town the day after tomorrow to see the Quarters for himself, the Officers & Men of the Legion. I pointed out to the Aid De Camp of his Excellency the Count De Rochambeau, Such Houses &c as I thought would be suitable & Best Spared. I also Requested the Council to make Some provision for the Quartering of the Men Above mentione'd which

³³⁷ Rhode Island State Archives, Letterbooks, vol. 4, Letters from the Governor, 19 January 1780 to February 1807.

³³⁸ Captain Oyré estimated "plus de 700 maisons" in Newport. Oyré, Notes, p 1 of the typed copy in the Library of the Society of the Cincinnati, Washington, DC.

³³⁹ The letter is available on-line through Washington Papers on the website of the Library of Congress. In a letter of 24 October 1780, Washington approved of this change of plans.

*they Refer'd to the Assembly - As the Duke Comes on Purpose for this Affair, I Beg that Your Excellency will Immediately Call the Council & Make Such Provision as will appear Necessary. I shall not undertake to give any Assistance to Him without Proper Direction."*³⁴⁰

Governor and Council complied, and on 15 October 1780, the Minutes of the War Council recorded that

Whereas it hath been represented to this Council that a Legion of the Troops of His Most Christian Majesty commanded by the Duke de Lawzun is to be canton'd in the Town of Providence during the ensuing Winter: and whereas his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau hath requested the Quarters may be provided for said Troops as also Stables for their Horses, and Magazines for their Forage, Grain &c. Therefore Resolved that it be recommended to Col. [Jabez] Bowen Deputy Quarter Master General to take up the following Houses to be appropriated for Quartersing said Troops, viz: The Work House to contain One Hundred and Twenty Men, Mr. Benjamin Stelle's House Fifty – his Shop Eighteen, Mr. Stephen Whipple's House Fifty, Mr. Joseph Hoyle's Shop Twelve Men; and that he be also directed to take up the Market House Chamber as a Store for their Grain, and the Sperma Caeti Works and Store belonging to John Jenckes Esqr. And Company as a Magazine for their Forage; and that he be also directed to take up a sufficient number of Stables for their Horses.

*Resolved that the Town of Providence be and they are hereby directed to provide suitable Rooms for the Officers of the Legion commanded by the Duke de Lawzun by Tuesday Evening Next, and in Case the said Town does not provide Rooms for said Officers by the Time aforesaid, that Col [Jabez] Bowen Deputy Quarter Master General be directed to take up suitable Rooms for them in such Houses as he may think proper and that a Copy of this Resolve be immediately transmitted to the Town Clerk of Providence."*³⁴¹

Since 15 October 1780 was a Sunday, Tuesday evening next would have been 17 October 1780. But the inhabitants of Providence were not to be directed by the War

³⁴⁰ Bowen to Greene, 9 October 1780, RISA, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780.

³⁴¹ This is the last entry in the minutes until 9 June 1781. Bowen to Greene, RISA, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, vol. 15, 19 June to 10 November 1780.

Council and seem to have been anything but cordial to Lauzun for on 19 October 1780, Rochambeau inquired of Governor Jonathan Trumbull about the possibility of quartering the Legion in Connecticut.³⁴²

Sir, I had at first projected to quarter this winter The Duke of Lauzun's Cavalry at Providence, The Governor and the States of Rhode-island had very kindly prepared there exceeding good Lodgings for him and his corps, but the immoderate cupidity of the neighboring inhabitants having raised forage to an extravagant price in hard money, I have had a conference about it with Colonel Wadesforth whom you love, and we are agreed that I would write to your Excellency to ask that a winter quarter be assigned to the Cavalry of the Duke of Lauzun in Connecticut State. The good policy would render it necessary that it should be in the same place, under the inspection of its chief, who will answer of the Discipline of his Troops. I am likewise caution to your Excellency of his honesty every way. The number of horses will amount to 220. or 240. thereabouts, because I will keep 50 of them here. The Huzzards will be equal in number. I am acquainted with all the Zeal that Your Excellency has for our common cause, and that you will do all in your Power to receive that part of the French Corps.

Trumbull immediately forwarded the request to the General Assembly, and both Houses of the legislature appointed committees to consider the petition. In "Perswasion that regular Discipline will be observed by them," the Upper House recommended that the "Duke of Laezun's Cavalry may be Quotered in the Towns of Windham Lebanon and Colchester or any of them and that Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth David Trumbull Esqr and Mr Joshua Elderkin be impowered and Directed ... to provide Such Quarters for the Officers and for the Men for said legion in all or any of the Towns aforesaid."³⁴³ The Lower House agreed and ordered Wadsworth and David Trumbull to "prepare without delay Quarters for the Officers and Barracks for the Men either by repairing some decayed buildings, having vacant houses or building some low Barracks as they shall find most convenient and least expensive

³⁴² The proceedings in Hartford can be traced in Connecticut State Library, *Connecticut State Archives*, vol. 19: Revolutionary War Series I, pp. 66-68; Rochambeau's letter on p. 67. See also the entry for 23 October 1780, in Governor Trumbull, *Diary*, Jonathan Trumbull Sr. Papers, CTHS. In a letter to Rochambeau of 24 October, Washington approved of this change of plans.

³⁴³ Connecticut State Library, *Connecticut State Archives*, vol. 19: Revolutionary War Series I, from the undated resolution passed by the Upper House, p. 68. On the winter-quarters of Lauzun's Legion see my *Hussars in Lebanon! A Connecticut Town and Lauzun's Legion during the American Revolution, 1780-1781* (Lebanon, 2004).

to the State."³⁴⁴ Rochambeau charged his aide-de-camp Mathieu Dumas with "the establishment of the quarters of the legion."³⁴⁵

Three days into his new contract, on 4 November, Wadsworth informed his business partner John Carter, the French-speaking son-in-law of General Philip John Schuyler that he would proceed to Lebanon on 6 November "to make the arrangements for the Legion agreeable to the order of M. Tarlé."³⁴⁶ When Wadsworth assured Carter on 11 November of his satisfaction with these arrangements the hussars were already in Providence.³⁴⁷ While quartered in Newport on 8 November 1780, "les hussards de Volontaires Etrangers de Lauzun" had received orders to supply themselves with bread for the next two days. On the 10th they would receive their bread rations for the 12th through the 15th in Providence. There they would also receive an eight-day ration of rice for those four days, the extra ounce per day was given "en gratification."³⁴⁸ "Much snow fell and it was very cold" when the hussars crossed over from Newport to Providence in the morning of 9 November. Despite the inclement weather Lauzun gave a ball in Hacker's Hall in the evening.³⁴⁹ After two days of rest they left Providence for Windham on 12 November. Here they stayed for a week, but on Monday, 20 November, Lauzun and his hussars rode into Lebanon "without finding any cedars there", as Closen entered gleefully in his journal.³⁵⁰ Maybe not cedars, but there were plenty of other trees. In his memoirs Lauzun compared his winter quarters with "Siberia [which] alone can furnish any idea of Lebanon, which consists of a few huts scattered among vast forests."³⁵¹ On 11 January he joined Henry Knox who was traveling through Lebanon to inform Rochambeau of the mutinies at Morristown. In mid-March he accompanied Washington to Lebanon on his way back from Newport but returned almost immediately. The next time he set foot in Lebanon was in June.

³⁴⁴ Quoted *ibid.* from the resolution passed by the Lower House, p. 66. See also Charles J. Hoadley, ed., *The Public Records of the State of Connecticut from May, 1780, to October, 1781, inclusive* (Hartford, 1922), p. 187.

³⁴⁵ Dumas, *Memoirs*, p. 53.

³⁴⁶ Wadsworth to Carter, 4 November 1780, Wadsworth Papers, Letterbooks Box 151, CTHS.

³⁴⁷ Wadsworth to Carter, 11 November 1780. Wadsworth Papers, Letterbooks Box 151, CTHS.

³⁴⁸ See *Livre d'ordre*, entry for 8 November 1780.

³⁴⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 75.

³⁵⁰ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 45.

³⁵¹ Lauzun, *Memoirs*, p. 194. On winter quarters in Lebanon see also Allan Forbes and Paul F. Cadman, "De Lauzun's Cavalry at Lebanon, Connecticut" in Forbes and Cadman, *France and New England*, 3 vols., (Boston, 1925-1929), vol. 2 (1927), pp. 99-108, and Rowland Ricketts, Jr., "The French in Lebanon 1780-1781," *Bulletin - The Connecticut Historical Society*, vol. 36, no. 1, (1971), pp. 23-31.



Rochambeau himself as well as his highest-ranking officers and their aides-de-camp had moved into houses in Newport immediately following their arrival in July. The vast majority of the remaining +/- 360 officers were company-grade officers who quartered with their companies. Only now, on 1 November 1780, did they move from the outskirts of town into Newport. Rochambeau had been quartered in the home of Newport merchant William Vernon who was serving as head of the Continental Navy Board in Boston. Vernon probably started to worry about his property when 10 October 1780 his son Samuel Vernon told him that he “believe[d] the General takes as much care of the House as the French Men generally do, but it will sustain more damage than a Family living in it seven years. The Floors will be entirely spoiled.” In early December Rochambeau ordered an addition – “une grande et vaste baraque”, according to Lauberdière - be built to William Vernon’s house. It was meant both as a place for his officers to meet, to gamble and to save

fire-wood, which was “rare et cher”.³⁵² On 19 January 1781, he informed the officers of his little army that the gambling hall was open daily from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.³⁵³

Mps. Les Officiers de l'armée sont avertis qu'il y aura du feu tous les jours depuis 11 heures du matin jusqu'à 11 heures du soir dans le salon que Mr. Le Comte de Rochambeau a fait construire près de chez lui. Mps. les officiers sont invités à y aller et à y rester tout le temps qu'il leur plaira.

Livre d'ordre, 19 January 1781

Berthier claimed that Rochambeau had only been “Concerned with the welfare of his little army as winter set in [when he] had a large hall built where all the officers could get together. . . . [I]t is my opinion that this hall served a very useful and beneficial purpose to the whole army and did honor to M. de Rochambeau, who presided there like the head of a family.”³⁵⁴ Head of the family or not – a rather angry William vented his anger to Samuel in December, informing his son that “I can’t think it polite of him not to mention it to you or write me on this matter—I expect they will make great work on the House if not ruin it. But I intend being fully paid for all damage.” Part of the damage was caused by the weekly balls that Rochambeau had promised (“tous les huit jours”) to the ladies for “leurs plaisirs, et ceux de la garnison.” On 12 December 1782, Vernon demanded 450 Spanish Silver dollars or £ 135, which he was paid in full.³⁵⁵

³⁵² Gallatin described it as a “wooden building, very spacious and forming a large salon where he [i.e., Rochambeau] entertained throughout the winter. A big fire was always ablaze there.” Not surprisingly Rochambeau on 22 February 1781 had to issue a prohibition against gambling for high stakes.

³⁵³ Closen recorded that the building opened on 20 January 1781; Rochambeau had constructed it in order to “prevent the officers from playing in their rooms or *gambling*.” Acomb, Closen, p. 55.

³⁵⁴ Berthier in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns* vol. 1, p. 237.

³⁵⁵ The correspondence can be followed in the Vernon Papers Box 63 Folders 4 and 19, NHS. The receipt for the damages paid by Rochambeau is reproduced in John Austin Stevens, *Newport in the Revolutionary Period, 1778-1782: the French Occupation, 1780-1781. An Address Delivered in Newport by John Austin Stevens, in 1897.* (Newport, 1928).

The addition built by Rochambeau was torn down in 1894 only.

On Wednesday the 31 instant, an elegant Ball was given by the gentlemen officers of the Royal Regiment of DEUX PONTS, in the service of his most Christian Majesty, to the Ladies of this town.

This ball given by the officers of the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment on 3 January 1781 provided an opportunity where the two nationalities could meet and mingle.

Newport Mercury 15 January 1781

A few days later, on 8 February, the *baron* de Vioménil gave a ball on the anniversary of the 1778 Treaty of Amity and Friendship between the United States and France. The weekly balls fulfilled many purposes. They were meant to shorten the time in winter quarters, bring locals and their guests together and not least for the officers to learn English and for Newporters to practice what French they had learned. In the summer of 1780 few Newporters spoke French and with the notable exception of Chastellux, Dumas or Lauzun and his aide-de-camp Jacques Nicholas Desmaison, the only French officers who spoke English were those who had seen previous service in the Continental Army. Those were officers such as Rochambeau's aide-de-camp Langlois du Bouchet or Teissedre de Fleury, who had received a Congressional medal for his role in the storming of Stony Point in 1777 but was now serving as the Major in the Saintonge Regiment. It did not take long before advertisements offering classes in English or French began to appear in the *Newport Mercury* and the *Gazette Française*.³⁵⁶

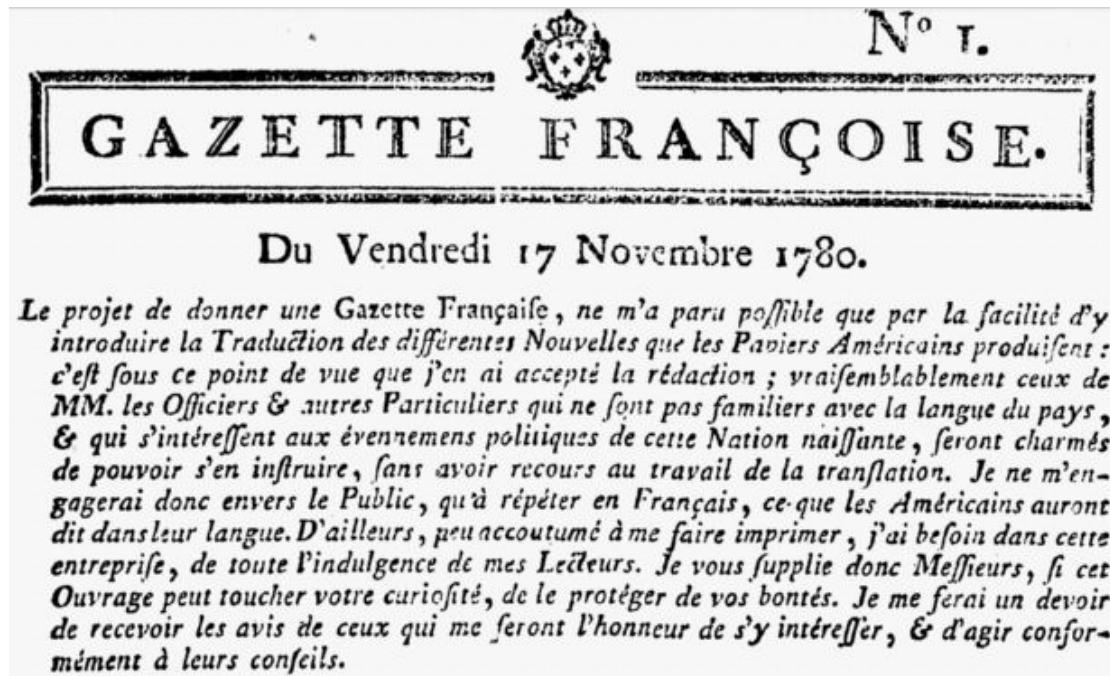
MM. les Officiers & autres habitants qui desireront apprendre la Langue Anglaise, peuvent s'adresser au sieur Phineas Salomon Lemonnier, qui la leur enseignera: il prend trois piastres gourdes par mois, & une d'entrée: il demeure chez le sieur Robert Potter, sur le grand Quai.

Phineas Salomon Lemonnier, Schoolmaster, begs leave to acquaint the Ladies and Gentlemen, in the town of Newport, that he has opened a French and English School, at the house of M. Robert Potter, N^o 485, on the Long-Wharf, at Three Spanish Mill'd Dollards per month, and one Dollar entrance.

Gazette Française 2 January 1781

³⁵⁶ Only eight issues of the *Gazette Française* are known to have been printed, i.e. on 17, 24 and 29 November, on 8, 15, 22 and 30 December 1780 and on 2 January 1781.

An important – if short-lived – component of the language-learning process was the *Gazette Française*. Printed on a press that had crossed the Atlantic on *le Neptune* in Admiral de Ternay's fleet and set up in No. 641, Water Street, it aimed to keep primarily French officers unable to read English informed of current events. Current in this case meaning the past six to eight months. We do not know how successful the paper was: Closen for one preferred Rivington's *Royal Gazette*; he thought it more interesting and funnier than the local French offerings.³⁵⁷

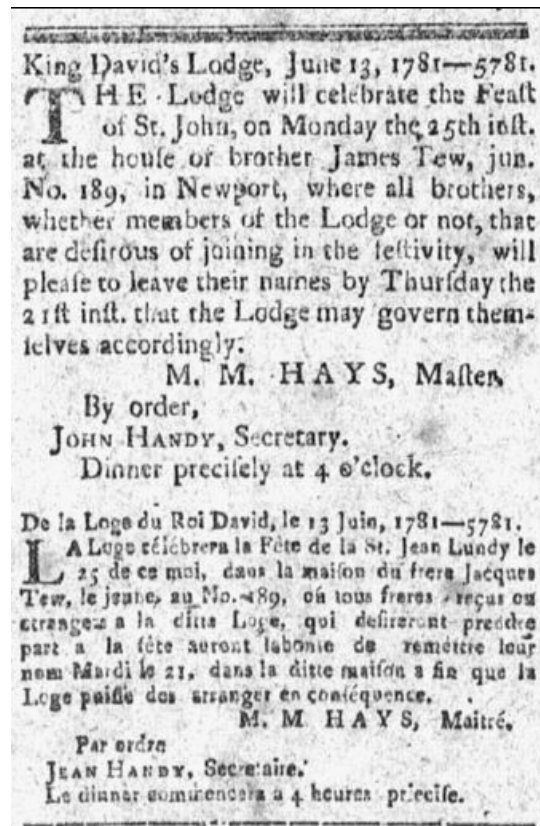


Higher-ranking officers lodged with families throughout their stay frequently gave – and received – private lessons from the (usually) lovely daughters of their hosts. By 8 September, Axel von Fersen had begun to teach 18-year-old Hunter English, mostly because “We do nothing. Sometimes we amuse ourselves, but often we are bored. After the troops had entered winter quarters he wrote to his sister on 7 December 1780: “Every evening I go to Mrs Hunter's ... Her daughter is charming. I teach her French, she teaches me English, and teaches me better than I do her. She

³⁵⁷ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 45. Lawrence Wroth, “The French Fleet Press in the American Revolution.” *The Preservation Society of Newport County, Washington-Rochambeau Celebration 1780~1955. Newport ~ Rhode Island* (Newport, 1955), pp. 25-29 and p. 31. Besides the newspaper the press printed primarily official announcements of the fleet and the army, the *Calendrier Français pour l'année commune 1781*, 24 copies of Chastellux' *Voyage de Newport à Philadelphie, Albany &c*, and the *Relation de la sortie de l'Escadre Française, aux ordres du Chev Destouches ... le 16 Mars 1781 ...*. The last known item printed on the press is dated 18 July 1781.

already speaks quite prettily.”³⁵⁸ By the summer of 1781, Fersen, Blanchard, Noailles, the two brothers Deux-Ponts and many other officers spoke the language fluently enough to write letters in English and the *Newport Mercury* could rightfully claim (on 21 April 1781) that “embarrassment of not understanding one another diminishes sensibly every day.”

Another place where male Newporters and French officers - and soldiers - met was in the meetings of the King David Lodge. St. John’s Lodge of Newport, the first lodge in Rhode Island, had been established on 27 December 1749 but lost its charter in 1765 and remained dormant until it merged with King David Lodge in 1790. King David had been established on 7 June 1780 just a few weeks prior to the arrival of Rochambeau’s forces.³⁵⁹



Invitation for the meeting on 25 June in the home of James Tew to celebrate the
Feast of St. John the Baptist, Patron Saint of the Freemasons
Newport Mercury 23 June 1781

³⁵⁸ *The Letters of Marie Antoinette, Fersen and Barnave*. O.-G. Heidenstam, ed. (New York, 1929), p. 10.

³⁵⁹ Henry W. Rugg, *History of Freemasonry in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1895), does not mention participation by French masons at meetings.

Newport , le 22 Décembre 1780.

**Les Freres Francs & acceptés Maçons ,
sont avertis de s'assembler chez M. Jean
Lawtons proche la Maison de Ville , Mer-
credi prochain Jour de la fête de St. Jean ,
à trois heures précises de l'après-midi sui-
vant leur résolution**

**Par ordre du très-digne Maître ,
JEAN HANDY , Secrétaire.**

Invitation for the meeting on 27 December in the tavern of John Lawton to celebrate the Feast of St. John the Evangelist. *Gazette Française* 22 December 1780³⁶⁰

French officers and soldiers who were masons could have participated in these meetings. Three of Rochambeau's infantry regiments as well as the Auxonne Artillery had Military Lodges. The oldest of these lodges belonged to the Royal Deux-Ponts, which had constituted the Lodge *Joseph of Union* in Nuremberg on 12 May 1761 (legitimated on 29 May 1762). The Saintonge regiment established its lodge *Saint-Charles des Amis Réunis* on 2 June 1763 while the masons in the Bourbonnois organized themselves in the « *Les Vrais Amis* » in June 1764. That these lodges did indeed bring their tools with them is suggested by the fact that the Bourbonnois lost its tools in the wreck of the *Bourgogne* of the coast of Venezuela in May 1783. The Auxonne artillery had a lodge called la Concorde.³⁶¹

It is unknown whether Newport masons were invited to meetings of the military lodges but such reciprocity is highly likely. Similar meeting took place along the march wherever there were lodges, viz in Wilmington, Delaware Lodge No. 14. The first recorded monthly meeting of the lodge took place on 19 July 1781, in Bezaleel Bently's tavern. On 16 January 1783, at the first meeting of the lodge after the arrival of Lauzun's Legion, its Lieutenant-Colonel Claude Etienne Hugau, "Br. Hugo," attended as a "visiting brother." We don't know if Hugau returned to the lodge for

³⁶⁰ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 84 describes parade of freemasons through Providence on 27 December 1780.

³⁶¹ The lodge in the Lauzun Regiment of hussars was constituted only on 14 September 1783 after the return of the Legion to France and its conversion into a regular regiment of hussars. *Loges Et Chapitres De La Grande Loge Et Du Grand Orient De France* (2^e Moitié Du XVIII^e Siècle), Le Bihan, Alain, Paris, 1990).

additional meetings, but on 20 March 1783, Claude Joseph Guy Edouard Blondeau, "Br. Blando," the captain of the artillery company of Lauzun's Legion, the *volontaires étrangers de la marine*, is listed as a visiting brother, and he did return on 17 April 1783, when the lodge met at the home of John Thelwell.³⁶²

The influence of Freemasonry on the approach of French officers to the American War is virtually impossible to gauge. Bodinier's exhaustive research identified 43 officers who were masons.³⁶³ But while Charlus, Chastellux, Fersen, the Deux-Ponts brothers and others left journals or wrote letters, the only officer who mentions any mason activities is Blanchard, but he was only inducted into the mysteries after his arrival in Newport on 1780 when he was already 39 years old.

But even with entertainments "throughout the winter" in the Vernon House, Axel von Fersen, though himself a member of that group, wrote his father how these "*gens de la cour*" were in "despair at being obliged to pass the winter quietly at Newport, far from their mistresses and the pleasures of Paris; no suppers, no theatres, no balls." Those officers who could afford it departed as soon as the troops were settled. Chastellux together with his aides Montesquieu and Lynch traveled through Providence on his way to Philadelphia on 12 November. Armand Charles Augustin de la Croix, *comte* de Charlus Castries, colonel-en-second of the Regiment de Saintonge, Rochambeau's aide the *comte* de Dumas, and Robert Dillon, *colonel-en-second* of Lauzun's Legion arrived at Washington's headquarters in Newburgh on 19 December where they received letters of introduction to Samuel Huntington, President of Congress, on 24 January from Washington.³⁶⁴

And on 18 November, Anne Alexandre, *marquis* de Montmorency-Laval, colonel of the Boubonnois Regiment, the Adam Philippe, *comte* de Custine, colonel of the Saintonge and Christian de Deux-Ponts, colonel of the Royal Deux-Ponts, had also passed through Providence on their way to see some more of the United States. Christian de Deux-Ponts had his own reasons for travel: by the time Laval and

³⁶² By the time the lodge met again on 15 May 1783, the Legion had departed for France. Wilmington Lodge No. 14, Records 1781-1805, Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington, DE. The official history of the lodge does not mention the visits by the French officers. That Masonry could build bridges between the warring factions is evident from the entry for 18 April 1782: "Jeremia Parker and Charles Cook, Masters of two Flagg Vessels Lying in this Harbour for Permission to spend the Evening with the Worshipful Master and Bretheren of this Lodge." Both were admitted to the meeting..

³⁶³ Bodinier, *de Yorktown à l'an II*, pp. 373/75.

³⁶⁴ As late as 1 March 1781 Dillon and Charlus were still in Philadelphia from where they asked Washington for permission to join Lafayette as volunteers in the Continental Army.

Custine³⁶⁵ returned to Providence on 2 February (Chastellux would dine with Blanchard on 3 February³⁶⁶), Deux-Ponts was still in Pennsylvania. On 13 November 1780, the chevalier de la Luzerne informed Rochambeau from Philadelphia with the news that the Hessian prisoners of war in western Pennsylvania had spread unfavorable rumors concerning the French troops. Since that threatened to impact French recruitment efforts negatively he proposes that the Deux-Ponts make a tour of those parts of Pennsylvania to counter this ant-French propaganda. Such a journey was particularly important just then since the Royal Deux-Ponts was expanding its recruitment efforts into Maryland.³⁶⁷ On 28 November 1780, the Maryland Council informed the General Assembly that

*On the Application of His Excellency the Chevalier de la Luzerne to this Board, Mr Beyerfalk Lieut. in the Regiment of Deux Pont, in the service of his Most Christian Majesty, is hereby Permitted to enlist into that Regiment any Deserters from the German Troops in the Service of Great Britain which are within this State.*³⁶⁸

It is unknown how successful the *porte-drapeau*, i.e. standard-bearer of the Royal Deux-Ponts Jean Mathieu Beyerfalk was in his recruitment efforts in Maryland, especially since Rochambeau ordered all recruitment stopped on 22 December.³⁶⁹ One of the stipulations in Rochambeau's instructions for the *expédition particulière* had been that one third of his troops consist of German-speaking troops. The Royal Deux-Ponts and the German-speaking Lauzun's Legion The argument was that these units could easily be kept at full strength by recruiting "deserters from the troops that the English have drawn from Germany, and even prisoners, if any are taken."³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ The journal of his journey which Custine showed Blanchard has disappeared.

³⁶⁶ Chastellux published his travel account in Newport shortly after his return in an edition of 24 copies.

³⁶⁷ Rochambeau Papers GEN MSS 146 Box 2, no. 131, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

³⁶⁸ *Journal and Correspondence of the Council of Maryland, 1780-1781*, quoted from the on-line edition at <http://aomol.msa.maryland.gov/000001/000045/html/am45--227.html> Concurrently the Council informed Colonel Thomas Price of Frederick Town and Thomas Donellan that "Mr Beyerfolk Lieutenant of the Regiment of Deuxpints, in the service of His most Christian Majesty, having obtained the Permission of this Board to enlist the Deserters from the German Troops in the British Service, you are hereby requested to furnish such Recruits, when procured, with Rations on his Demand, keeping a particular Account thereof, which you are to render to us."

³⁶⁹ Beyerfalk was one of the few soldiers who eventually worked their way up into officer rank. Born in 1739, he entered the Berry Regiment in 1758, transferred to the Royal Deux-Ponts as a sergeant in 1766 and became *porte-drapeau* in 1772. He was promoted to sous-lieutenant on 28 October 1781 following the victory at Yorktown.

³⁷⁰ Quoted in Kennett, *French Forces*, p. 23.

On 25 July 1780, only two weeks after Rochambeau's arrival, Joseph Reed, President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, informed the chevalier de la Luzerne that there was no legal obstacle to their recruitment. The next day, 26 July, Luzerne suggested to Rochambeau he should send recruiters to Philadelphia.³⁷¹

By August 1780, advertisements appeared in newspapers in the Mid-Atlantic States, calling on "all German deserters from the armies of Great-Britain" to enlist "in the hussars, commanded by the Duke of Lauzun, who is in Rhode Island at the head of a Legion, or in the German regiment called Zweybrück or Royal Deuxponts, commanded by the Count of Deuxponts." Concurrently, *sous-lieutenant* Charles de Kilmaine of the Second Squadron of Hussars of Lauzun's Legion was sent to Philadelphia to establish Lauzun's recruiting station. During the course of the war, Kilmaine and his fellow officers from the Royal Deux-Ponts signed up well over 100 soldiers in the two recruiting stations at "the Barracks" on today's Green Street and at "Mr. Peter Hays's, in Third-street, near Race-street."³⁷²

As was almost predictable, many of these recruits deserted again, sometimes on the way from Philadelphia to Newport already. When a whole patrol of hussars, horses and all, deserted into the woods of Connecticut in mid-December 1780, Rochambeau had had enough. On 22 December 1780, he wrote to Lauzun "not to [further] taint yourself with the business of recruiting Hessian deserters, of whom as you know I have never had a good opinion."³⁷³

³⁷¹ Luzerne to Rochambeau with insert of Reed's letter, Rochambeau Family Papers, Gen Mss 146, Box 2, no. 123, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. See my "Hessians Fighting for American Independence? German Deserters recruited for Lauzun's Legion in America, 1780 - 1782." *Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Historical Association* vol. 7, no. 4, (2004), pp. 39-51.

³⁷² The advertisement as quoted here, dated Philadelphia, 29 August 1780, appeared in the *New-Jersey Gazette* [Trenton] Wednesday, 27 September 1780.

The total number of men enlisted in the United States into the French forces was 160: 92 of them enlisted in Lauzun's Legion and 67 in the Royal Deux-Ponts. Only a single soldier enlisted in another unit. Congress had forbidden the recruitment of Americans into the French army; Jean Folmer of Pennsylvania who joined the Second Squadron of Hussars on 5 November 1780 is the only American-born soldier known to serve in any of Rochambeau's units. Having enlisted only for the duration of the war, he was discharged on 1 May 1783.

³⁷³ Rochambeau to Lauzun, 22 December 1780, Rochambeau Papers, Library of Congress, vol. 7. After that recruitment slowed down but never ceased completely: See Bernhard A. Uhlendorf, ed., *Revolution in America. Confidential Letters and Journals of Adjutant General Major Baurmeister of the Hessian Forces* (New Brunswick, 1957), p. 406: "On the 8th of this month, (January 1781) a French recruiting command left Philadelphia with twenty-eight recruits, among whom were five Hessians and two Anspachers." A recruit joined the Legion as late as November 1782.

Officers such as Blanchard, whose presence was critical to the administration of the army, took short trips into the neighborhood, viz. on 27/28 November 1780, Blanchard, Captain Frederick Charles Baron von Haacke and an anonymous chaplain of the hospital visited Nathanael Greene's homestead in Coventry.³⁷⁴

Laſt Saturday morning His Excellency the Count Rochambeau, Commander in Chief of the French army at Newport, whoſe military character is much reſpected throughout Europe, accompanied by the Count Chaiſie, Major-General, and a number of French officers, ſet out from this town on their return to Newport.— They arrived here on the preceeding Wednesday, in the evening, and on the two following days they viſited the caſtle, Bunker-hill, the lines round Boſton, General Waſhington's former head-quarters at Cambridge, and the univerſity. Every reſpect was paid them that the time would allow, the ſhortneſs of which was much regretted. The General and Count Chaiſie reſided in the houſe of His Excellency the Governor.

Independent Chronicle (Boston) 21 December 1780

Accompanied by Axel von Fersen, Rochambeau set out to inspect outposts in Connecticut in early December. Traveling via Windham to Lebanon, he spent the night of 4/5 December in Providence before returning to Newport. Following a brief stay in Newport, the French commander, once again accompanied by Fersen, set out for Boston on 11 December.³⁷⁵ We do not know if any other officers besides Choisy accompanied him or where he stayed the night of 11/12 December; Rochambeau does not mention any, no letters or other primary sources from Choisy are known to

³⁷⁴ Blanchard, pp. 80-81. The Royal Deux-Ponts had two brothers von Haacke as captains: Frederick Charles, born 1744, who was promoted to captain in October 1777 and his brother Frederick Charles Ernst, who was eight years younger and was promoted to captain in August 1779. Both had entered the regiment as *sous-lieutenant* at age 16. Bodinier, *Dictionnaire*, p. 239.

³⁷⁵ On 7 December 1780, Fersen wrote to his sister from Newport: "We have just taken a six days' journey, I and one other with the General, to reconnoiter the country. In a few days we go to Boston." *Marie Antoinette, Fersen*, p. 10. Other officers visited Boston as well, viz. on 28 December the *comte* de Viomenil and the Jean-Baptiste Félix d'Ollière, *comte* de Saint Maisme, colonel of the Soissonois Regiment lodged with Blanchard in Providence on their way to Boston; they returned to Newport via Providence on 3 February 1781. Captain Oyré went to Boston in January 1781 for a careful inspection of the defenses at Bunker Hill before traveling on to Salem and Portsmouth and returning via Providence. Oyré, Notes, pp. 9-22 of the typed copy in the Library of the Society of the Cincinnati, Washington, DC.

exist and Fersen never mentions the visit in any of his letters either. Arriving in Boston on Wednesday, 13 December, the group took lodgings with Governor John Hancock in Beacon Street. Not only Boston papers but others as far away as Philadelphia covered the stay. It is from their accounts that we know where Rochambeau went. When Lauberdière brought news of the death on 15 December of Admiral Ternay, the group returned to Newport but arrived there too late to attend the funeral on 16 December 1780.³⁷⁶

Mostly, however, the French officers were bored. In September, Lafayette's brother-in-law the *vicomte* de Noailles, colonel-en-second of the Soissonnois, had already expressed the frustration of many when he wrote that the "gallant Frenchmen" had come to America "to deliver America entirely from the yoke of her tyrants," but all they seemed to be doing was waste time and money in their less than comfortable winter-quarters in Newport.³⁷⁷ Frustration about this forced inactivity resulted in at least three duels among officers. One of the duelists was Robert Dillon, who had already fought a duel with swords with a gendarme on 21 April 1780 just before his embarkation for the New World. He had been severely wounded in that duel which did not keep him from dueling the *vicomte* de Noailles in Newport on 6 September 1780. Blanchard thought the reason for this duel not worth mentioning.³⁷⁸ In at least one case when the injured party could not extend a challenge to a duel or the challenge was not accepted the officer killed himself to preserve his honor.

Such questions of honor proved a fertile ground for tensions in the officer corps. As the Saintonge prepared for departure in the spring of 1780, the position of Major in the regiment became open. Captain Pierre Rezard de Wouves, a commoner ("*roturier*"³⁷⁹) born in 1740, had entered the artillery at age 13 in 1753 and the Saintonge as a captain in March 1774. A chevalier de St. Louis since 1779 with 27 years of service he had hoped he would be promoted to the position. Instead it went to Teissedre de Fleury, an officer whose nobility was uncertain – "he seems to be noble" writes Bodinier in his authoritative biographical dictionary. Nine years younger than Wouves, Fleury had gone to America with Tronson du Coudray in 1776, after eight years of service in the French infantry, distinguished himself at Fort Mifflin and Stony Point and was wounded at Germantown. He returned as a lieutenant-colonel in the Continental Army. Though he had only been a *sous-aide-*

³⁷⁶ The most detailed account of Ternay's funeral in Hattendorf, Newport, the French Navy, pp. 73/75

³⁷⁷ In a letter to Vergennes of September 1780, quoted in Kennett, *French forces*, p. 87.

³⁷⁸ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 63.

³⁷⁹ On *roturiers* in Rochambeau's army see Bodinier, *de Yorktown à l'an II*, pp. 83-85.

major or a sergeant-major in the Royal Army, Rochambeau appointed him Major in the Saintonge Regiment.³⁸⁰ Embarked on the same vessel, Wouves, with the compliance of other officers who resented the appointment of a non-noble out-sider and NCO to this coveted position, tried to make Fleury's life miserable until Wouves was court-martialed and sent to prison for a month in late February. Upon release Wouves resigned his commission on 4 April 1781, sailed to Martinique and from there entered Spanish service.

Next the *comte* de Custine, Colonel of the Saintonge, set his eyes on André de Bertrier des Forest, a captain in the Saintonge with 22 years of service, whom he suspected to be next to Wouves "le chef de cabale". When Fleury ordered Forest on 5 March 1781 to have a soldier of his company punished with a number of blows with the sabre, Forest, who thought the soldier innocent, whispered in the ear of the corporal to only "effleurer les epaules" – to only "graze the shoulders." When Custine learned of this he ordered Forest to repeat the punishment. Forest refused. As Custine set out to carry out the punishment himself he made a threatening motion toward Forest with his walking cane calling Forest "a miserable creature whom I shall throw into the dungeon." By then a group of soldiers had gathered and Forest challenged Custine to a duel at 4 p.m. When Forest appeared at Custine's lodging Custine refused to meet him. Next Forest went to Custine's commanding officer, the *comte* de Vioménil. Vioménil threatened to have him hanged, telling Forest that he was "trop heureux qu'on voulut bien ne pas prendre garde à sa mauvaise tête" and that he should submit to his superiors unless he wanted to be made an example of. The next day, upon the orders of Rochambeau, his sword was returned to Forest with the order to get ready to board a frigate about to leave for France. A dejected Forest went to his room and shot himself in the head.³⁸¹ Approached by Forest's fellow officers to take action against Custine, Rochambeau's

³⁸⁰ Fleury had sailed to America in the Fall of 1776 with Tronson du Coudray to join the Continental Army. The *ordonnance du roi concernant l'infanterie* of 25 March 1776 abolished the offices of *aide-major* and *sous-aide-major* and created instead the position of *adjutant*. The *adjutant* was the highest-ranking sergeant-major in a regiment; after ten years of peace-time service in that position, or five years during war, he was to be promoted to *sous-lieutenant*.

³⁸¹ This account is based on *Mémoires de Saint-Cyr*, pp. 47-54. Saint-Cyr was a captain in the Saintonge at the time.

Baron Gallatin recounts this sad event along similar lines. Custine threw the captain out of his room "avec fureur: "Monsieur, vous m'ennuyez; f ... - moi le quand de chez moi". The three dots are in the published version but the meaning is clear nevertheless. Vioménil used similar language against Forest and even Charles François chevalier Chandeon de la Valette, lieutenant-colonel of the Saintonge who happened to be present, took the side of Vioménil and Custine. Gallatin, "Garde Suisse" (August 1931), pp. 22-23. It is also told with similar details by Brisout de Barneville, "Journal de Guerre", pp. 254-55.

comment in the hall behind Vernon's house was: "C'est un fou qui a voulu se tuer – it is a fool who wants to kill himself." That evening while in the addition to the Vernon House, Forest's cousin Captain Alexis Dujast de Vareilles drew his sword and had to be disarmed while other officers moved the Soissonnois out of the room. Though not even 40 years old with over 21 years of service, Dujast resigned his commission on 14 November 1781. Gallatin ended his account in the conviction that "sans eux on aurait déchiré M. de Custine en morceaux – would have torn Custine to pieces.

Saint-Cyr continued that "Les généraux" – the generals took council on how to best end this affair with as little noise as possible and decided to bury the corps secretly, but when an out-cry went through the regiment they had to relent. "The funeral cortege was followed by an immense crowd, everyone was there, from the commanding general down to the lowest valet, nobody was missing except the comte de C ... " who did not have the courage to show himself.

For weeks the company-grade officers refused to have anything to do with Custine as discontent continued to simmer until it erupted again on 28 May. The next day Custine wrote to War Minister Philippe Henri, *marquis* de Ségur that in late April 1780, 32-year-old Lieutenant Claude François la Chesnaye had written him an insolent letter for which Custine punished him with three weeks in prison. Barely released, Custine gave a coveted combat assignment he had wanted to another officer. On 28 May, a very drunk Chesnaye complained to Custine, who however refused to change the assignment. Chesnaye left but returned only a few moments later with "un grand nombre d'officiers" – undoubtedly his fellow company-grade officers with whom he had been drinking. To the great embarrassment of Custine and officers from other regiments present he proceeded to use "les propos les plus malhonnêtes – the most inappropriate language" against his lieutenant colonel the chevalier Chandeon de la Valette, calling him "a dirty bugger." In his outburst he did not forget to mention the man whose appointment to major of the regiment in March 1780 had set this whole series of events in motion: Teissedre de Fleury. La Valette's nephew, sixteen-year-old Emmanuel Joseph de Merendol de la Valette, who served as a *cadet gentilhomme* in the Bourbonnois regiment, witnessed the insult and challenged Chesnaye to a duel. When Merendol de la Valette was wounded, Custine had Chesnaye arrested and demanded that Chesnaye be cashiered.³⁸² Rochambeau, who by appointing Fleury bore a large share of the blame, ordered Chesnaye to be transported back to France on the next frigate with the recommendation that Chesnaye lose his lieutenancy.³⁸³ Upon Chesnaye's return to

³⁸² For an account of the background of the duel see Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 40.

³⁸³ Custine's letter in Fonds Vioménil, LB0074-145.

France, Sartine was not quite ready to accede to Custine's and Rochambeau's wishes. On 5 October 1781, Sartine sent Vioménil a copy of Custine's letter informing Vioménil that he could not submit a request to the king, from whom Chesnaye held his commission, to cashier Chesnaye on the basis of Custine's letter alone without supporting evidence.³⁸⁴

By then the affair had become public and been reported in European papers. Upon receipt of Sartine's letter Custine compiled a four-page *Memoire* detailing the course of events, and his role in them. The facts agreed with those reported by Saint-Cyr: ordered to have a soldier in his company punished with 30 blows of the sabre, Forest refused, and as the conversation heated up, Major Fleury was mentioned as well. Custine departed to confer with Vioménil when Forest caught up with him and told Custine that the soldier had received 15 blows. When Custine ordered Forest to mete out the other 15 the next morning, an enraged Forest challenged Custine to a duel and thus began the sequence of events that ended in Forest's suicide later that afternoon.³⁸⁵ Since there could be no doubt that Forest had disobeyed orders, Sartine cleared Custine cleared of all responsibility for Forest's suicide.

Chesnaye's name never came up in the *Memoire* but Vioménil must have provided the requested evidence since Chesnaye's career was over: he never served in the infantry again. A super-numerary officer in the guards of the *comte* d'Artois in 1782, he became a captain in the provincial artillery regiment of Toul in 1785.³⁸⁶ One officer dead, one cashiered, one resignation, a severely damaged *esprit de corps*: the results of the appointment of an outsider to a coveted position.³⁸⁷

Though noblemen all, the gap between the lower nobility and the court nobility was huge, not just in financial resources but in possibilities for advancement and access to resources as well. Besides gambling, travel and balls, hunting was another way that – some – noble officers could spend their leisure hours. On 2 November, Rochambeau gave officers who wanted to hunt permission to do so for nine days, ("une Neuvaine") from 3 November, Feast Day of St. Hubert, the Patron Saint of

³⁸⁴ Sartine's letter dated Versailles, 5 October 1781 *ibid.*, LB0074-144.

³⁸⁵ Custine's *Memoire* of 11 March 1782 *ibid.*, LB0074-117.

³⁸⁶ Bodinier, *Dictionnaire*, p. 305.

³⁸⁷ The reaction of Armand Charles de la Croix, *comte* de Charlus, the 24-year-old colonel-en-second of the Saintonge Regiment to the appointment of Du Bouchet is another example of how much these appointments of outsiders were resented. When Rochambeau chose Du Bouchet as an aide Charlus scathingly commented that du Bouchet was but "a brave man who has been to America, [and] who has no other talent than to get himself killed with more grace than most other people". Quoted in Vicomte de Noailles, *Marins et Soldats Français en Amérique pendant la guerre de l'Indépendance des États-Unis* (Paris, 1903), p. 161.

hunters, until 15 November.³⁸⁸ Six officers per day were allowed to go out under certain conditions such as not firing close to the pickets and to avoid any run-ins with Americans. "At the first complaint the officer will be punished and the permission will be revoked." All went well since on 16 November "La permission de chasse est continue jusqu'au nouvel ordre tans qu'il n'y aura pas de Plaintes." Soon the inevitable happened and *baron* de Vioménil had a run-in with an irate American farmer, but as Rochambeau could hardly put his second-in-command under arrest the hunt continued.³⁸⁹ Officers of Schwerin's standing were unlikely to participate in the hunt; in December 1781, Baron Ludwig Eberhard von Esebeck, the 40-year-old lieutenant colonel of the Royal Deux-Ponts informed his father in Zweibrücken, albeit from Virginia, how he "would never have believed ... that I should find in America the means of hunting deer and foxes. In Europe it is the *exclusive luxury of the great*. (my emphasis)"³⁹⁰ That Esebeck was not one "of the great" was driven home to him a few months later when the rewards for the victory at Yorktown were announced. William de Deux-Ponts had returned to France and resigned his commission as *colonel-en-second* of the regiment. A captain in the regiment since March 1758, it had taken him 21 years to reach lieutenant colonel in April 1779. Baron Closen thought Esebeck "had much reason to hope for and even some rights to this position." Instead the appointment of 27 January 1782 went to Rochambeau's 27-year-old aide-de-camp Axel von Fersen, who "was too well liked at Court!!!"³⁹¹

Officers such as Schwerin were not likely to receive an invitation to dine with Rochambeau to celebrate the feats of St. Louis on 23 August with "a large fancy-dress ball" in the evening.³⁹² One had to have been awarded that medal. At best they were allowed to contribute to the festivities by commanding their platoons when they fired a feu-de-joy, a rolling fire first from the left, then from the right of the line and then all together. For that occasion the troops even received *cartouches à balle*. The next time Rochambeau distributed cartridges with balls was ten months later

³⁸⁸ In the Catholic Church a *neuvaine* is a nine day long period of prayer, mourning and hope to obtain certain graces; for an explanation of the neuvaine de St. Hubert see P. -P. Gossiaux, "La neuvaine de Saint Hubert: Une pensée sauvage." *Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme* vol. 86 (1997), pp. 143-176.

³⁸⁹ On 30 July 1780 Rochambeau had forbidden any hunting. On 5 January 1781, the chevalier de Chastellux visited Lebanon and where he participated in a squirrel hunt. Chastellux, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 229-230.

³⁹⁰ John M. Lenhart, "Letter of an Officer of the Zweibrücken Regiment," *Central-Blatt and Social Justice*, vol. 28, (January 1936), pp. 321-322, and (February 1936), pp. 350-360, p. 322. The letters were mailed from dated Jamestown Island in Virginia and dated 12 and 16 December 1781.

³⁹¹ Acomb, *Closen* p. 242.

³⁹² Acomb, *Closen*, p. 37.

on 6 June 1781, just as the campaign was about to begin, when each soldier received two rounds for live firing exercises. In America just as anywhere else, life was easier if you had money. As Schwerin wrote his uncle on 26 January 1781: "I would get used pretty quickly to living in this country if I were a rich man, but since I have the misfortune of being poor I long for the moment when I return to France." His complaints that the campaign in the New World was ruining him were not without foundation: upon return to France, a compilation of his debts on 25 September 1783 ran to 5,571 livres or nine annual peacetime incomes! For once his superiors shared his situation: baron de Vioménil claimed that he had to borrow 30,000 livres to finance his service in America and the *comte* de Saint-Mesme spent 45,000 livres of his own money.³⁹³

When Count Schwerin of the Royal Deux-Ponts wrote to his uncle on 16 November: "Nos cartirs D'hiver ne sont pas si agreabel quan Europe et les logi sont fort mal – our winter-quarters are not as agreeable as in Europe and the lodgings are quite bad" he spoke for the *noblesse d'epée*, the lower nobility which had few opportunities to share in the amusements of the *noblesse de la cour*. What was more, "the inhabitants are not to my liking ("de mon gout"), victuals are horribly expensive, you can imagine there are more than five thousand men in a small island." Since his arrival four months earlier a marked shift in opinion had occurred. If William de Deux-Ponts had found Rhode Islanders cold but could now imagine living in the United States, Schwerin thought exactly the opposite. On 22 January 1781, William de Deux-Ponts wrote to a friend in Europe that he "could get used quite easily to America. I love the inhabitants very much." But as he loved his wife "more than anything else in the world," he would return to Europe at the end of the war.³⁹⁴ William de Deux-Ponts initial apprehension had turned love; in other officers the fervor of fighting in the New World had turned to disillusionment. Unlike in July 1780, Schwerin now told his uncle "I would never settle down in this country. The inhabitants are dishonest and gloomy." Those officers who were either too poor or too low in rank to get permission to travel continued the activities they had pursued since their arrival in Newport. Foremost besides their military duties was their desire to learn English; for Schwerin the only bright spot in his life was that his English was getting better: "I already understand much. " A few weeks later,

³⁹³ Bodinier, *de Yorktown à l'an II*, p. 142.

³⁹⁴ "si j'étois né dans ce pays ci, si je n'avoie partout de raisons qui m'attachent a 'europe je m'accomoderoi fort bien de l'amerique, j'aime assez ses habitants, leurs moeurs, parcequ'elles sont bonnes, leurs usages parcequ'ils sont commodes, et si je n'aimois pas ma femme plus que tout au monde, j'aimerois fort celles de l'amerique qui sont aimables et plus jolies que celles d'aucunnes des parties de l'europe qui je connoise". I am grateful to Ms Nancy Bayer, a descendant of William de Deux-Ponts, for providing copies of the correspondence in the possession of Anton Freiherr von Cetto in Germany.

on 26 January 1781, he informed his uncle in mocking praise of his teachers where he learned English: "There is not much of a social life here besides cobblers and tailors who are of a great distinction in this country and whom you need to visit a lot to learn the English language."

Though many, if not most, officers agreed with Schwerin's complaints about the expensive living in Newport, there are dissenting voices again, such as those of Cromot du Bourg or of baron Gaspard de Gallatin, like Schwerin a lieutenant in the Royal Deux-Ponts. Gallatin wrote that "we lacked nothing in food supplies, and even at a rather low price ("un assez bas prix"). [...] Meat, vegetables, game, and particularly fish were available in abundance and of an excellent quality. We were frequently invited by them ["chez eux", i.e. the Newporters] it seemed that they vied with each other who provided the best food and who had the most people at dinner."³⁹⁵ Maybe Schwerin had just been unlucky when lodgings were assigned in October 1780. Gallatin wrote that "The officers were lodge with the citizens of the town, who were obliged to provide lodgings. Some found themselves in a good situation, others in a bad one, depending on the character and the good will of their hosts." Gallatin was among the fortunate since his host William Davis welcomed him into the family. The fact that he had two lovely daughters named Polly and Betsy did not hurt either. He enjoyed their society "infiniment" and learned English on top.³⁹⁶

"Amusements are not too frequent on our little island" Schwerin had written on 26 January 1781, but that too depended on one's personality. While Fersen went "sleighting" which he found "as good as in Sweden",³⁹⁷ 22-year-old Gallatin went ice-skating almost every day on a sweet-water lake close to Newport that was frozen almost all winter long (probably Almy or Lily Pond). Occasionally, however, there was some risk involved. One day, he and his fellow officer de Martine broke through the ice but were fortunate enough to be rescued by a musician of the Bourbonnois who happened to be in the vicinity.³⁹⁸

Winter in Newport could be long and cold, "gloomy" just like the inhabitants, but when the French tried to bring some joy into their days, Newporters just peered out from behind their curtains. Lauberdière provided another example for this coldness and reserve, this cultural difference between French and Rhode Islanders. On New

³⁹⁵ Gallatin, "Garde Suisse" (August 1931), p. 329.

³⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 333.

³⁹⁷ "We have already had some very hard frosts and a foot of snow." Fersen to his sister on 13 November 1780. *Marie Antoinette, Fersen*, p. 10.

³⁹⁸ Gallatin, "Garde Suisse", August 1931, p. 334. "Les jeunes gens de Newport excellaient, en général, tous dans cet exercice."

Years's Day 1781, the "*étonnement*, the extraordinary surprise of the inhabitants of Newport when on the first of January they saw the majority of the soldiers of all the regiments mingling with each other, embracing each other, letting go and embracing again, and many officers giving each other similar marks of friendship and joy. The men, the women, the children looked out their windows to be witnesses to this new and to them singular spectacle."³⁹⁹ Each New Years' Day the officers made their obligatory visits to the general officers and their colonels without tarrying in the streets: "It was very cold", wrote Gallatin, "which made us take very big steps in the streets of the city."

By early November the infantry had settled into the houses provided for them in Newport. Gaspard de Gallatin of the Royal Deux-Ponts thought that "our soldiers were rather badly accommodated, having only houses hastily patched up with boards through which the cold entered in sundry places. Nevertheless, that was infinitely better than the tents."⁴⁰⁰ If officers were bored, there were even fewer opportunities for the enlisted men to break the monotony of life in wintry Newport once the first snow had fallen on 13 December. Much of their time was occupied with drill⁴⁰¹ and fixing equipment for the next campaign - positions that were eagerly sought because they meant extra pay.⁴⁰² That included fixing such mundane items as the *Bidon d'Homme de Troupe*, also called *petit bidon*, i.e. their water bottle or canteen. On 7 February 1781, Rochambeau gave orders that "*The regiments were to sent to M. de Villemanzuy 'tous les ouvriers ferblantiers ('tinmen') to help repair the 'marmittes (cooking pots), Bidons (water bottles) et Gamelles (mess-tins) de l'armée.'*"

³⁹⁹ Lauberdière, *Journal*, fol. 33.

⁴⁰⁰ Gallatin, "With Rochambeau at Newport," p. 336. Gallatin was quartered with William Davis, his wife, a son William Jr., and two daughters, Betsy and Polly. The house is no longer standing. The official quartering list reproduced by Simpson and Simpson, "A New Look", gives the names of only 91 (incl. naval) officers. The orders for winter-quarters can be found in the *livre d'ordre*; they concern primarily the boundaries of the encampment, guard and picket duty, and regulations to prevent fires. A copy made for Chastellux is in the Norton Autographs collection in the Houghton Library at Harvard University in Cambridge.

⁴⁰¹ No pre-1789 orderly book for a French Infantry Regiment has survived; the last known copy of such a book was destroyed in an air raid on Tours in June 1940. It was published as *Le Livre d'ordres d'un Régiment d'Infanterie en 1781 d'après un manuscrit original*. Clement de la Jonquière, ed., (Paris, 1898). Jonquière did not publish the book in its original form but instead arranged the information topically. Invaluable for the workings of an infantry regiment is Charles Victor Thiroux, *Manuel pour le corps de l'infanterie: extrait des principales ordonnances relatives à l'infanterie française & le plus journellement en usage*. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1781).

⁴⁰² The various *ordonnances* regulating service in winter-quarters for the infantry were the *Ordonnance du Roi concernant l'infanterie française et étrangère* of 25 March 1776, the *Ordonnance du Roi pour régler l'exercice de ses troupes d'infanterie* of 1 June 1776, and the *Règlement provisoire sur le service de l'infanterie en campagne* of 1778.

Since the work was "Très considerable" the men were to work until 9 at night, i.e., past the time when they were supposed to be in quarters.⁴⁰³

Just like for the officers, learning English stood high on the list of activities of enlisted men. Upon arrival Private Flohr had noted that "we could not talk a word with them because their language was English, but at the same time they could not talk to us." But English, or French in the case of Rhode Islanders, were not the only languages learned: enterprising New Englanders learned whatever language was required. Shortly after his arrival Flohr recorded that "We got along very well with the inhabitants though we could talk but little with them; everyone among us soldiers tried to find a girlfriend in order to learn the English language a bit that way." The soldiers were taking private lessons with the local maidens and soon, according to Flohr, "we found ourselves quite comfortable in our camp because we had in our vicinity two beautiful neighbors who lived in a windmill; one of them was named Hanne, the second Malle, who already spoke some broken German" and who undoubtedly taught the soldiers some English as well. In this context it may be well worth remembering that the French army of the *ancien régime* was a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual army. That applied to Rochambeau's little army as well: more than one quarter of his troops spoke German. For the daily routine this meant not only that orders had to be given in the language the troops understood but that drill manuals be translated as well.⁴⁰⁴ Ordinances concerning hospital service or the justice system were translated and interpreters were available as well: e.g. when the Bourbonnois provided the guard at the hospital on 20 July 1780, the Royal Deux-Ponts was to provide a man "qui parle et Comprendra le françois et L'allemand –

⁴⁰³ Keeping equipment in working order was a never-ending process. The "Journal de guerre" of Brissot de Barneville for 24 September 1780 reads: "On doit chercher du fer blanc pour renouveler une partie des bidons grands et petits et raccommoder les marmites et les couvercles."

⁴⁰⁴ The *régiments étrangers*, the foreign regiments, were not considered "German" or "Italian" in the nineteenth-century, post-French revolutionary, were not defined by nationality as such, but rather by the language of command used in these units. There are bilingual German-French editions as well as German-only translations of the 1750, 1764, 1775, and 1776, ordinances regulating drill and training of infantry, and the 1775 regulation is known to have been translated into Italian for the Royal Italian Regiment of Infantry as well. There is even an edition of the 1776 Drill manual, the *MANUEL DU CIPAYE* "adapté à la formation particulière des Corps des CIPAYES" published 1784 in Pondichery.

The most thorough discussion of this issue can be found in André Corvisier, *L'Armée Française de la fin du XVII^e siècle au ministère de Choiseul. Le Soldat*. 2 vols., (Paris, 1964), vol. 2, pp. 257-274: "Le Recrutement Etranger." The language issue is addressed on pp. 262-265.

who speaks and understands French and German. He will report to the hospital to serve there as interpreter and he will remain there until further orders.”⁴⁰⁵

Language and communications issues could arise at the most unexpected moments: on 9 August 1780, General William Heath informed Washington from Howland’s Ferry that he had supplied Rochambeau with drivers for the artillery and ammunition wagons. Since the horses did not understand French commands “it would be impossible for the Frenchmen to drive the American horses without creating the greatest confusion and disorder especially in action.”⁴⁰⁶



French Artillery Teamster

There were few if any problems communicating with Hanne and Malle, however, who had also “very quickly opened a tavern as well” next to Flohr’s encampment.

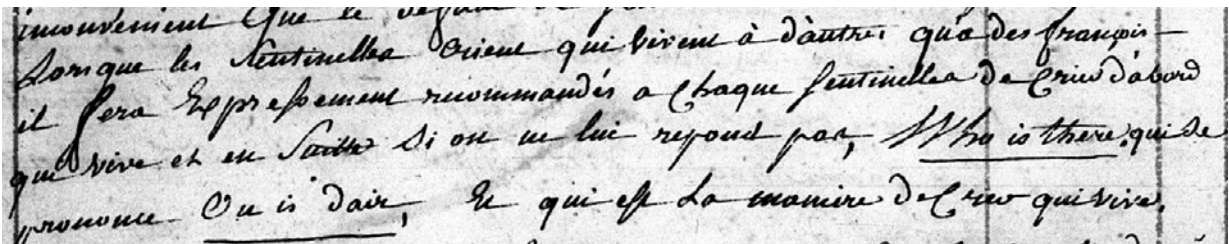
⁴⁰⁵ In his pension application (R5062) of 5 March 1833, John Hites of the Royal Deux-Ponts stated that during the winter of 1781/82 he was “employed, as an express, to carry letters to other military stations, as I understood the German, French, and English languages, and could on that account better avoid dangers, as it was thought by my officers”.

⁴⁰⁶ Heath’s letter to Washington is quoted from The Heath Papers. Part III. *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* Seventh Series, vol. 5 (Boston, 1905), p. 103.

For Heath’s impressions of French forces see his *Memoirs of Major-General William Heath by Himself* William Abbatt, ed. (New York, 1901), pp. 225. Heath learned of the 2 May departure from Brest of Ternay on 2 July. Heath, who was at Providence at the time, learned of the arrival of Ternay’s fleet at 01:00 a.m. on 11 July; he reached Newport at midnight of 11/12 July.

“All soldiers flocked to it, not only because of the liquor but also because of the two beautiful girls who provided the soldiers with many a good times.” Once the troops had entered winter-quarters on 1 November, visits to these taverns was no longer permitted, supposedly for health reasons: *que le Rhum et toutes les liqueurs qui se vendent dans les cabarets de la ville sont pernecieux à la santé du Soldat ...* – because the rum and all other liquor sold in the taverns of the town are dangerous to the health of the soldier it is forbidden under punishment of 25 blows with the sabre to drink anywhere else but with the sutler of his regiment.” Maybe Rochambeau should have permitted that contact a bit longer since the language-learning process apparently did not go as fast as one would think. As late as 15 February 1781 had to issue these instructions for the picket posts:

whenever a sentinel shouts qui vivent at someone other than a Frenchman it is expressly recommended to each sentinel to first shout qui vive and afterwards if he does not get a response, Who is there which is pronounced Ou is dair, which is the way to shout qui vive.



*incovenient que le regent
Lorsque les sentinelles voient qui vient à d'autre qu'à des françois
il fera d'abord apparemment recommander à chaque sentinelle de crier d'abord
qui vive et en suite si on ne lui repond pas, Who is there, qui se
prononce Ou is dair, ce qui est la maniere de crier qui vive.*

Livre d'ordre 15 February 1781

The order prohibiting purchase of liquors from private sellers outside camp was repeated on 3 January 1781 with the admonition to strictly enforce it because “le jour des roy”, i.e. Epiphany, was coming up. “No disorderly conduct was to be tolerated during the celebrations (gaité) of the day. While the locals ignored the day, some rejoicing with subsequent disorder seems to have occurred nevertheless: on 9 January 1781, Rochambeau learned that some soldiers had gotten into a fight and ordered their arrest and punishment “suivant la rigueur des ordonnances”. In future would the soldiers who fought not only get punished but their whole company would be confined to their rooms and their officers put under arrest “pour très longtems – for a very long time.”

Less than a week later Rochambeau had to enforce his order. The chasseurs of the Saintonge had gotten into a fight with a corporal of the company of Captain Joseph de Bedée de Bois Bras. Both companies and their officers were put under arrest and

ordered to stay in their rooms “until new orders”. These incidents show how quickly the tensions could erupt into violence. The inevitable boredom of winter quarters and confinement in close quarters certainly played a role and some causes for the friction were inevitable, but others were not. Corporal punishment was rare in the French army and if at all carried out by blows with the flat of a corporal’s sabre.⁴⁰⁷ While in Rhode Island, however, the officers of the Bourbonnois in particular had a metal rod made which they substituted for the sabre “pour punir leurs malheureux Soldats - to punish their unfortunate soldiers” in a way that added injury to insult: the men were beaten on the buttocks as if they were “school boys”. Lauberdière claims to have seen repeatedly how soldiers of the Saintonge and Bourbonnois spit blood after such a beating.⁴⁰⁸ This form of punishment, detested by the enlisted men, by the corporal’s meting it out, and by many officers alike, even played a role in the suicide of Captain Forest.

If such treatment was uncommon, unknown and completely unnecessary in the French army, a second big cause for complaint could not easily be solved. French soldiers enlisted for periods of four or eight years. Within weeks of their arrival in Newport the terms of soldiers began to expire.⁴⁰⁹ Some re-enlisted voluntarily,

⁴⁰⁷ A breakdown of punishments can be found in *Le Livre d'ordre*, pp. 84-92. The maximum number of blows was 50 for stealing from the hospital, missing roll-call in the evening or degrading one’s equipment 30, and selling a piece of the uniform was punished with 25 blows; corporals and sergeants were not subject to this punishment. Punishment with the cat-o-nine tails as in the Continental Army was unknown in the French army.

⁴⁰⁸ Relations between the officers and soldiers seem to have been tense throughout the stay in the New World. When the *Bourgogne* carrying a detachment of the regiment hit a reef and sank off the coast of Venezuela in February 1783, the officers saved themselves first; some soldiers claimed their comrades were pushed off the boats and rafts by the officers and left to drown. Upon arrival in Venezuela the survivors of the wreck mutinied though the unrest could be put down without bloodshed. Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 108. In 1789/90, the Bourbonnois had the highest desertion rate of any of Rochambeau’s units. Ibid. p. 144.

⁴⁰⁹ Initial enlistment terms were for eight years with a 50 livres enlistment bonus and a 30 livres *pour boire*. An eight-year extension was rewarded with a 100 livres bonus, after sixteen years the soldier was to receive 120 livres, and after 24 years the bonus rose to 150 livres. After eight years a soldier could re-enlist for four years at a time at half the bonus. The ordonnances allowed for an unspecified extension of service during a military campaign; once the campaign was over the soldier was supposed to receive his discharge. Since this was not feasible during the American deployment, Rochambeau re-enlisted the men whose terms were up and who did not want to re-enlist for one-year terms. Soldiers whose *congé de semestre*, the six-month leave they had a right to after eight years of service, had expired without the men having been able to go on leave, were paid a compensation the equivalent of a re-enlistment. The 20 grenadiers and 24 fusilier and chasseurs per company were to go on *congé de semestre* from 1 October to 15 April were also compensated similarly. *Manuel pour le corps*, pp. 167 *et passim*. See also the relevant sections in *Ordonnance du roi, portant règlement sur l'administration de tous les corps, tant d'infanterie*,

others after pressure from NCOs and officers. Some, however, expected to be discharged and either be transported back to France or be allowed to settle in the New World. Since Rochambeau was losing men by the hundreds already he could hardly afford to agree to the demands for discharges, at least not during the first few months in Rhode Island before the arrival of replacements. The number of these men held back “en violation du pacte fait avec eux – in violation of the agreement made with them” was large enough and they complained loudly enough to find mention in accounts of officers such as Lauberdière.⁴¹⁰

When Rochambeau wrote to Barras from New York on July 1781 that no man had been left behind “except ten love-sick soldiers of the Soissonnois who returned to see their sweet-hearts at Newport” and asked Barras to send them to New York, he made light of a more serious problem.⁴¹¹ Professor Scott’s research has shown that desertion rates lay well below the French annual average of 5%, but a deserter was much more difficult to replace in America than in France. The reasons to desert are as varied as those for enlisting; generalizations about causes of desertion are difficult and dangerous.⁴¹² In the case of Rochambeau’s forces, ethnicity and religion played a role it would not have played in Europe: in the fall of 1780 and prior to their departure for New York, few Catholic Frenchmen would venture out into New England. Neither did many members of the Royal Deux-Ponts – during the first two months in Rhode Island Rochambeau had not a single deserter. Between September and the end of December, only 30 men deserted French colors, among them five members of the Royal Deux-Ponts, eighteen from Lauzun’s Legion and only seven

que cavalerie, dragons & hussards : sur l'habillement, sur les recrues, rengagemens & remontes : la discipline, la subordination, la police intérieure : les récompenses, les punitions : la nomination aux emplois vacans : la formation des troupes en divisions : les congés, les semestres : les revues des commissaires des guerres, & celles des officiers généraux : du 25 mars 1776.

Initial enlistment terms were for eight years; another eight-year term was rewarded with 100 livres, after sixteen years the soldier was to receive 120 livres, and after 24 years the bonus rose to 150 livres. After eight years a soldier could re-enlist for four years at a time at half the bonus.

⁴¹⁰ All in all Rochambeau discharged 110 men, about 2% of the total, in the New World plus 30 that had been recruited in America; following their return to France the regiments discharged 830 men in the second half of 1783. Another 45 soldiers were dropped from the contrôles without reasons given and sixteen retired with military pension. Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 103.

⁴¹¹ Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 55.

⁴¹² An in-depth study of desertion of French forces in American does not exist; for Crown Forces see Arthur N. Gilbert, “Why Men Deserted from the Eighteenth-Century British Army” *Armed Forces & Society* vol. 6 (Summer 1980), pp. 553-567; for the Continental Army see the overview in Robert Fantina, *Desertion and the American Soldier, 1776-2006* (New York, 2006); the War of Independence is covered on pp. 9-28.

from the other three infantry regiments and the Auxonne artillery. Two more hussars were executed after failed desertions. Three of the five deserters in Royal deux-Ponts and four of the eighteen deserters in Lauzun's Legion had been recruited in Philadelphia. During these first few weeks a pattern was established that would hold for the remainder of the stay of Rochambeau's forces in America. By the time Rochambeau forces broke camp in June 1781, another thirty-two had deserted: 13 from the Royal Deux-Ponts, 10 of them American recruits, and nine from Lauzun's Legion with one American recruit.

The temptation to desert increased exponentially, however, as the regiments marched south. It increased across the units around New York but rose almost exponentially as the Royal Deux-Ponts and Lauzun's Legion marched through Pennsylvania. Flohr wrote, half of the regiment met friends and relatives anxious to help a fellow countryman disappear.⁴¹³ Desertion, like emigration, is based on a combination of push— living conditions, arbitrary punishment,⁴¹⁴ desire to escape the military life, and pull factors, specifically in the New World the pull of freedom and the possibility to establish an independent life on land held free from centuries-old fees and obligations.⁴¹⁵ For hundreds of landless sons of impoverished peasants in the Royal Deux-Ponts in particular, the strangely wonderful New World of German-speaking Pennsylvania exerted a powerful temptation to desert.⁴¹⁶ Of 316 deserters from Rochambeau's corps who avoided recapture, 104 came from the Royal Deux-Ponts alone, another 186 deserters were German-speaking subjects of the king of France (mostly from Alsace and Lorraine) serving primarily in Lauzun's Legion. It should be noted, however, that 35 of the 104 deserters from the Royal Deux-Ponts and 46 of the 131 deserters from Lauzun's Legion were deserters from among Britain German auxiliaries. Nevertheless, these two units provided 235 deserters, more than 75% of the 316 deserters of Rochambeau's forces. The remaining three infantry regiments and the artillery account for the remaining 81

⁴¹³ In his *Journal de Guerre*, Lauberdière wrote that "it had always been the goal of our generals to hurry the march of the troops through Philadelphia to prevent desertion."

⁴¹⁴ Hugau accused Captain Louis Henry de Beffroy, the aide-major and commanding officer of the First Escadron of Hussars "of "throwing soldiers in jail indiscriminately and for all kinds of reasons, humiliating the poor soldiers with punishments, treating them ignominiously, handing out three punishments at a time to the same person, prison, standing at the stake, and beatings with a cane." Massoni, *Détails*, p. 159.

⁴¹⁵ When the *chasseur* Jean-Claude Passant of Lauzun's Legion threatened to desert, he told Hugau that he "would rather stay with his girl-friend (*maitresse*) in a country that offered him the sweetness of liberty." Passant, however, did not act on his anger but returned to France where he was discharged in October 1783. Quoted in Massoni, *Détails*, p. 161.

⁴¹⁶ Congress used the promise of free land, with mixed results, to encourage Britain's German auxiliaries to desert. See Daniel Krebs, *A Generous and Merciful Enemy. Life for German Prisoners of War during the American Revolution* (Norman, 2013), pp. 188 *et passim*.

deserters of the *expedition particulière*.⁴¹⁷ These figures suggest that few Frenchmen were prepared to venture into a country inhabited by locals some of whom were anxious to make a livre or a louis d'or, by returning deserters to their units. Here too Americans seem to have made a distinction between Frenchmen and Germans: as they entered New Jersey from Suffern "the inhabitants would ask you if you wanted to stay with them and promised to hide you until the French were gone!"

Deserters had a six day grace period to return to the colors without fear of punishment and returns to the colors even after many years were not uncommon and even encouraged by general pardons issued at infrequent intervals by the crown. In July 1785, French consul Martin Oster wrote from Virginia that he had granted passports to 13 deserters who wanted to return to France under an amnesty granted by the king on 17 December 1784, and valid for six months beginning on 1 January 1785.⁴¹⁸ The decision to returning to the colors could have many causes, in the case of "Lewis Luandres" in the spring of 1788 it seems to have been sickness and poverty.⁴¹⁹

By orders of the overseer of the Poor of Mill Creek Hundred
1788 For keeping Lewis Luandres a Sick French Soldier from the beginning of April
to May twentieth being seven weeks at 15 sh the first five week 3/15/0 and at 7 sh
the last two weeks at 7/6 = 15 sh
For one gallon wine by order of the doctor 0/6/0
For one day with a horse helping him out of the County 0/5/0
For cash given him at his going 0/7/6
For the overseers at the poor 0/10/0
Total 5/18/6
Joseph Ball

In at least one known case the local community provided funds to rid itself of a deserter that had fallen on hard times. Jacob Burke, born Johann Burg in Birckenfeld in Baden, had enlisted as a 20-year-old in the Royal Deux-Ponts in April 1778, but

⁴¹⁷ Desertion figures from Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 103 and Scott, "Rochambeau's Veterans: A Case Study in the Transformation of the French Army." *Proceedings, the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850* (Athens, 1979), pp. 155-163, p. 156, as well as Samuel F. Scott, "The Soldiers of Rochambeau's Expeditionary Corps: From the American Revolution to the French Revolution." in: *La Révolution Américaine et l'Europe*, Claude Fohlen and Jacques Godechot, eds., (Paris, 1979), pp. 565-578.

⁴¹⁸ J. Rives Childs, "French Consul Martin Oster reports on Virginia, 1784-1796" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 76, (1968), pp. 27- 40, p. 37. Unfortunately Oster does not provide the names of these men.

⁴¹⁹ Executive Papers, Treasurer 1788, Delaware Public Archives, Dover, Delaware.

deserted (in Newport ?) on 22 July 1781.⁴²⁰ The date of his marriage is not known but in the fall of 1790 he and his American wife Rebecca Pariel moved from Newport to North Providence with their three children. Afraid that the property-less couple might become a charge to the town he was warned out but somehow managed to remain in Providence. In October 1803, however, he was convicted for the rape of Elizabeth Stafford of Coventry, Rhode Island and sentenced to death. Since Elizabeth Stafford was known as “infamous for lewdness and disregard to truth, so that her testimony is not entitles to credit”, Burg, with the support of 202 Rhode Islanders, asked that his death sentence be commuted to “voluntary exile or some other punishment.” Within days “An Act for the Relief of Jacob Bourke” suspended his execution for seven months during which he as to be deported “to some part of Germany”, albeit “free of expense to this State”. The exact date of his departure is unknown but must have been some time before November 1804 when he disappears from the records.⁴²¹

Many of those who successfully integrated into American society, and who lived long enough, applied for pensions under the federal pension acts of 1818, 1820 and/or 1832. Almost all of their applications were denied because they had not served in the Continental Army and, since most of them were deserters, could not produce any proof of service or discharge papers. Upon retirement in France, a few former soldiers returned to the United States. Among them were men such as Flohr or Michael Joseph Plattner aka Paul de St. Pierre, the Catholic priest of the Royal Deux-Ponts, but some Frenchmen such as Caesar Duvall of the Saintonge as well.⁴²² On 2 January 1841, a 102-year-old veteran with the anglicized name of Joseph Morgan who claimed to have served in the Saintonge Regiment applied for a pension in Platte County, Missouri. At first glance his account of his services seems

⁴²⁰ The date is difficult to read in the contrôle. It could also be 1784, in which case he returned to the United States following his discharge.

⁴²¹ Burg is listed as “Bourg” in the contrôle of the Royal Deux-Ponts. His story is retold in Ruth Wallis Herndon, *Unwelcome Americans: Living on the Margin in Early New England* (Philadelphia, 2001), pp. 150-154.

⁴²² His pension application in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia, SC is transcribed in the Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Roster website, search by name. Duvall took a circuitous route to South Carolina: after the surrender of Cornwallis “this declarant marched to Boston and embarked on the fleet to sail from that place to Jamaica for the purpose of attacking the British but was unfortunately taken prisoner with many others by the British frigate and conveyed to Jamaica and confined in prison for three months and a half. On the making of peace, this declarant was released from confinement and he sailed to Port au Prince, San Diego, then to France and then to America. He landed in Charleston and from there removed to Newberry District South Carolina about the year 1789, where he has resided ever since.” The account perfectly credible and is confirmed in the account of Flohr.

highly questionable: Morgan claimed to have been taken prisoner on the *Ville de Paris* in the Battle of the Saintes on 12 April 1782.

After the Battle of York Town this Affiant state he Imbarked on the Fleet under the Command of Count Le Grass [sic: Comte de Grasse] and sailed for Jamaica he states that he was drafted out of the Troops under the Command of De Rochambeau and was put on board of the Ville De Pary [sic: Ville de Paris] under the Command of Count Le Grasse who was on board of the said Valle De Parry in person and had under his Command Ten ships of war and Two Scouting Friggets and set sail for Jamaica for the purpose of attacking the same in aid of the Spaniards The Expected to meet with the Spanish Fleet on their way but instead of which they met with the English Fleet of war Commanded by Admiral [Sir George Brydges] Rodney with whom they had a hard Battle and was defeated [Battle of the Saintes, 9 - 12 Apr 1782]; had some of our ships taken prisoners among the number Ville De Parry the ship Count Le Grasse was upon and your affiant Admiral Rodney discharged Count Le Grasse and his men. said he could not keep them. sent them home to France upon Count Le Grasse pledging his honor that he would not fight any more against England during the war. This was in the Fall as well as this affiant now recollects and the next Spring [15 Apr 1783] peace was made between England and the United States When your affiant got Back to France he landed at Bordaux [sic: Bordeaux] where your affiant received his discharge which your affiant states he has lost Your affiant states he Remained in France about a month when he set sail in a merchant ship bound for Philadelphia landed at Philadelphia in the latter part of the Fall in the same year after peace was made Remained there all winter the next Spring Removed to Franklin County in the State of Pennsylvania where he settled in Chambersburg.⁴²³

Yet his story was true: As it turns out, four soldiers of the Saintonge had deserted during the siege of Yorktown to join Lord Cornwallis and were captured on 19 October 1781. They were sentenced to death by hanging but only one of them, suffered this penalty. The other three were pardoned to serve on the vessels of Admiral de Grasse for an undetermined term. Morgan had been one of these men.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Pension Application of Joseph Morgan, R7382.

⁴²⁴ Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 83. The original correspondence is in Rochambeau Papers vol. 2, pp. 56-57 and vol. 12, p. 227, Library of Congress.

Rochambeau showed no mercy with the actually five, not ten, “love-sick soldiers of the Soissonnois who returned to see their sweet-hearts at Newport” or with any of the other deserters – three from Lauzun’s Legion and one each from the Royal Deux-Ponts and the Saintonge - during the crucial weeks of the march to White Plains.⁴²⁵ On 20 June 1780, *The American Journal* had carried an advertisement for two deserters from the Soissonnois Regiment.

Forty Silver Dollars Reward.
DESERTED, this Day, from the Soissonnois Regiment of his Most Christian Majesty, encamped at this Place, a Soldier, named **PIERRE LE LARGE DOMBE**, a Native of France, Twenty-six Years of Age, 5 Feet 10 Inches high, has Chestnut coloured Hair and Eyebrows, blue Eyes, and is round favoured. — Also another Soldier, named **JEAN CEZARD**, a Native of France, Twenty-five Years of Age, 5 Feet 10 Inches high, has brown Hair and Eyebrows, grey Eyes, is round favoured, and slightly marked with the Small-Pox.
 Whoever shall apprehend the said Deserters, and deliver them to either of the Officers of the said Regiment, or confine them in either of the Gaols in the United States, and give Notice thereof to either of said Officers, or the Commanding Officer of the French Troops at Newport, or Providence, shall receive the above Reward, or **TWENTY SILVER DOLLARS** for either of the above Deserters.
 Providence, June 18, 1781.

On 4 July 1781, Jean Cezard was sentenced to death by hanging for his desertion on 19 June 1781.

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|--|
| <i>François & Louis Roy fils aînés Claude & Jeanne Chénard D^{ns} Cezard Guadalupe de 1781</i> | <i>né le 10 Mars 1755 de France de 26 ans de 22 ans, l'un de 5 pieds 5 pour les cheveux & les yeux bruns les yeux plus levés & ronds l'autre levé & ronds Cézard sur la joue droite une autre sur Menton.</i> | <i>12. 5. 1773.</i> | <i>Arresté le 19 Juin 1781 jugé le 24 Juin 1781 condamné à être pendu.</i> |
|---|--|---------------------|--|

⁴²⁵ On 26 June, 1781, Pierre Colet of the Soissonnois was sentenced to eight years in chains for his desertion on 5 June 1781. That same day Nicolas le Blanc of the same regiment was also sentenced to eight years in chains for his desertion on 20 June 1781.

On 4 July 1781, 22-year-old Corporal Jean Nicolas Carrey was sentenced to death by hanging for his desertion on 19 June 1781.

| | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|--|
| Jean Nicolas Carrey fils de fr. Jean Claude et de Jeanne Claude Carrey est Carrey Caporal du 6 avril 1780 | natif de Montluel p ^{re} de France fondé p ^{re} de Sainc agé de 22 ans taille de 5 pieds 8 pouces 9 lignes Sous-fer grenadier du 6 avril 1780 | 25 juillet 1777 | Deserte le 19 juin 1781 - Jugé à la guill. 1781 à la guill. |
|---|--|-----------------|--|

On 4 July 1781, François Roy, who had enlisted in December 1772 was sentenced to death by hanging for his desertion on 19 June 1781.

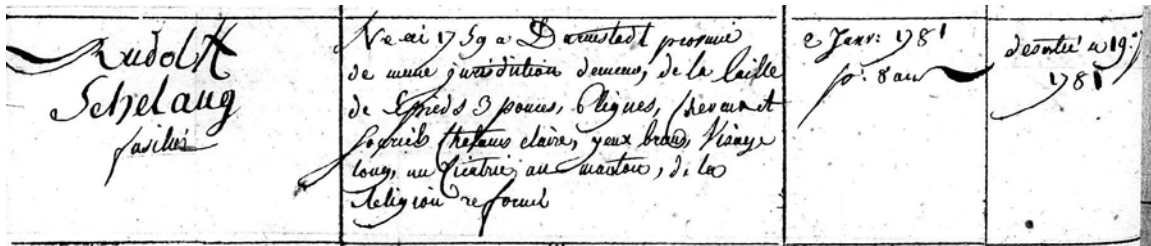
Joseph Martel, who had enlisted in the Soissonnois in February 1773, was one of two who got away. He was sentenced to eight years chains on 28 October 1781 "par contumace" - in absentia.

| | | | |
|---|---|----------------|--|
| Joseph Martel fils de François de Jeanne Marie Goujon est Martel | natif de Montluel p ^{re} de France fondé p ^{re} de agé de 22 ans taille de 5 pieds 8 pouces 9 lignes Sous-fer grenadier du 6 avril 1780 Sous-fer grenadier du 6 avril 1780 | 4 février 1773 | Deserte le 19 juin 1781. Jugé à la guill. 28 oct. 1781 - Jugé à la guill. à la guill. pour 8 ans |
|---|---|----------------|--|

The other was Dombes, who is also mentioned in the newspaper advertisement. According to the regimental contrôle he rejoined his regiment almost two years later on 20 March 1783 in Porto Cabello in Venezuela and was discharged without punishment on 1 May of the same year in St. Domingue, modern-day Haiti. How he got to Venezuela in 1783 after having deserted in Providence on 19 June 1781 remains unknown.

| | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Grenadier du 5 mars 1780 Augustin Laroche est Cap ^{te} du 15 avril 1780 Dombes Cap ^{te} de grenadier du 15 avril 1780 | Sort de Choigny du 15 avril 1780 | 11 janvier 1773 | Deserte le 19 juin 1781. Jugé à la guill. le 20 mars 1782 - Jugé à la guill. 1782 |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|

The deserters from Lauzun's Legion – Jacob Brosch of the First Escadron of Hussars, Jean Kinee of the Second Escadron and Christian Schmidt from the artillery company, all men recruited in America, Brosch as late as 6 May 1781 – got away.



Rudolf Schelau of the Royal Deux-Ponts, who deserted on 19 June 1781, had also been recruited on 2 January 1781 only. Even Paul LeVol of the Isle de France, who had enlisted as a 34-year-old shortly before departure from France on 2 March 1780 escaped re-capture. No matter their fate, however, many if not most of the men who deserted had, at least in their own minds, every right to leave the colors: they had enlisted for right years and their time had expired. They were, to quote Lauberdière, held "in violation of the agreement made with them".⁴²⁶

During winter quarters the enlisted men had time on their hands, but what they had very little of was money: the soldier of the *ancien régime* everywhere was notoriously underpaid. When salaries for the troops were increased by 50 percent for the *expédition particulière*, a fusilier received 9 sols 6 deniers per day or 14 livres 5 sols per month/171 livres a year.⁴²⁷ The better-paid grenadier made 11 sols per day, 16 1/2 livres per month or 198 livres per year, as did a hussar. A sergeant-major, the highest-paid NCO, had 486 livres per year. Before departure, the rank and file received one month's pay plus 18 livres from the *masse générale* to equip themselves; another 18 livres from the *masse* were distributed upon arrival in Newport.⁴²⁸ But they also had stoppages taken from their pay. The *ordonnance* of 20 March 1780, set food costs at 2 sols for bread and 1 sol 6 d for beef per day. This meant a monthly food bill for every NCO and enlisted man of

⁴²⁶ Another big burst of desertions came in late July and early August 1781 outside New York City. About two dozen men deserted, eight of them from Royal Deux-Ponts, incl. one American recruit, and about a dozen from Lauzun's Legion. A number of them immediately signed up with Crown forces, e.g. Victor Clement, 25 years old at the time of his enlistment on 12 April 1780, six days after the troops had embarked on 6 April 1780, deserted on 10 August 1781 from the artillery of Lauzun's Legion. Clement came into the British lines on 25 or 26 July 1781 and immediately enlisted in the King's American Dragoons from where he deserted on 29 October 1781. The muster rolls identify him as a "Foreigner" and the register says "French deserter." He disappears from the incomplete rolls of the unit by early 1782. The muster rolls for the King's American Dragoons are in RG 8, "C" Series, vol. 1901, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

⁴²⁷ For administrative purposes the French military counted every month as having 30 days.

⁴²⁸ All contributions to the *masse générale*, increased from 36 livres for the French infantry and 72 livres for the Foreign infantry to 48 and 84 livres to account for the anticipated high expenses of the American campaign, were covered by the crown.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3 livres | for bread |
| 2 livres 5 sols | for beef |
| 1 sols 6 deniers | for 1 pound of salt per month |

5 livres 6 sols 6 deniers⁴²⁹

Also increased were the deductions for the *masse de linge et chaussure*, the regimental fund to pay for a soldier's uniform and for his shoes. NCOs contributed 16 deniers per day to this *masse*, corporals and enlisted men half as much. That meant additional stoppages of 2 livres for a sergeant and 1 livre for each hussar, fusilier, grenadier, or *chasseur*, leaving a fusilier or *chasseur* with 7 livres 18 sols 6 deniers per month, a grenadier or hussar with 10 livres 3 sols 6 deniers per month, or 122 livres, 2 sols per year.⁴³⁰ Since wages had been doubled for the American Campaign, a soldier stationed in France received around 60 *livres* in cash wages per year, one fourth the wages of a domestic servant and half the annual monetary value of a slave's labor to his owner which was set by the *Parlement* of Paris throughout the 1760s and 1770s at 120 *livres*, again not counting expenses for food and clothing.⁴³¹ To put this figure into perspective it may be worth mentioning that Axel von Fersen estimated that it cost him 20 livres a month to keep his dog!

No wonder that the soldiers anxiously sought opportunities to earn extra income, especially since it could be three times their regular pay, viz Rochambeau's order of 26 July 1780 stipulating that every enlisted man on work detail cutting firewood was to be paid an extra 20 sols, one whole *livre*, per day without deductions.⁴³² That was three times the regular daily pay of 6 sols 9 1/2 deniers of a grenadier or hussar. By late September the soldiers excluded from these lucrative assignments – hussars detached for scouting, reconnaissance or courier duties, grenadiers and chasseurs detached for the 50-man strong guard at head-quarters &c - began to grumble. When one officer, three NCOs and 22 men per regiment were detached to begin preparing houses for winter quarters on 19 September, a task that did not warrant additional pay, the *chasseurs* had had enough. Apparently they, and their officers, complained loudly enough since on 8 October Rochambeau decreed that because the chasseurs, who received the same pay as fusiliers but so far had not yet had the opportunity to earn additional pay, should be chosen first next time the opportunity arose. Rochambeau was as good as his word: until the defensive works

⁴²⁹ Officers had their own butchery on Thames Street near the pier of Samuel Freebody.

⁴³⁰ This compilation of a soldier's income is based on *Manuel pour le corps*, pp. 178-190.

⁴³¹ Peabody, *Slaves in France*, p. 91.

⁴³² *Livre d'ordre*, 26 July, 19 September, and 8 October 1780.

at Howland's Ferry and Butts Hill Fort were finished in late February 1781, the chasseurs of the also received the opportunity to earn extra pay as well.⁴³³ But a look across the battlefield shows that his British and German enemies were even worse off. A common soldier in the British army received 8 pence a day or £1 pound per month, a little over 23 livres. Stoppages (2d. per day "for cloaths, &c." and stoppages for "furnishing stockings, shoes &c. when the regimental ones are worn out") reduced his wages so much that e he received less than a French trooper.⁴³⁴

But a livre was not a currency commonly used in Rhode Island, where account ledgers were kept in pounds and shillings and pence. But even there Rhode Island invoices and bills pose their own problems. The British pound, minted in sterling silver and identified by the symbol £ for the Latin *librum*, was divided into 20 shillings (symbol: s) of 12 pennies (symbol: d for Latin *denarius*) each or 240 pennies to the pound. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries British-minted specie or "hard" money was rare in America, and even in Rhode Island, the most commonly circulating coin was the Spanish milled dollar of eight reals, also called a piece of eight. Minted in silver, it was similar in size and weight to the German *thaler* or the French *écu* of 6 livres. A little less than a troy ounce of British sterling silver (.925 fine silver, valued at 62d. or 5s. 2d.), a Spanish dollar was worth 54d. or 4s. 6d. sterling in England. In the colonies, however, where the demand for silver coinage far exceeded the available supply, silver coins traded at a premium; the premium above the 54d. level was termed the "crying up" of coinage. In order to limit this crying up, Queen Anne issued a proclamation in 1704, passed into law by parliament in 1707, which specified that a full weight Spanish dollar would pass in the colonies at 72d. or 6s., a third above the sterling rate. Since 5s. were called a *Crown* in Britain and Spanish milled dollars circulated at exchange rates between 4s. 6d. and 6s., milled dollars were also known as *Spanish crowns*. French *écus* of 6 livres, almost exactly 5s., came to be called *French crowns*. During the Revolutionary War, New England, including Rhode Island, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia

⁴³³ Defenses consisted of a seven-gun battery to protect the ferry crossing and the Sakonnet River. There was also a gun battery on the Tiverton side of the river. "The redoubt still exists on Butts Hill (aka Windmill Hill) behind the American Legion Post on Sprague Street, along with nearby markers. Probably used by French troops in 1781. A museum and/or visitor center is planned in the future." <http://www.northamericanforts.com/East/ri2.html> Here also an excellent overview of the forts in Narragansett Bay with information concerning French involvement in their construction and/or manning.

⁴³⁴ Deductions from the pay of a British soldier can be reconstructed from John Williamson, *A treatise on military finance: containing the pay, subsistence, deductions and arrears of the forces on the British and Irish establishments; and all the allowances in camp, garrison and quarters, &c. &c. : with an enquiry into the method of cloathing and recruiting the Army: and an extract from the report of the Commissioners of Public Accounts, relating to the office of the Pay-master-General* (London: Printed for T. Egerton, 1782), p. 73.

adhered to this "Proclamation Rate" of a one third "up-crying" and currency issued at this rate was known as "Current Money" or "Lawful Money," abbreviated as L.M. or L. Money. This made 4s. 6d. British equal to 6s. Rhode Island or, expressed in terms of the value of £1 (240 d.) British = £1 6s. 8d. (320d.) Rhode Island.⁴³⁵

Since specie money had an intrinsic value in itself based on weight and purity of the metal used, it did not really matter whether the coin bore a picture of George III, Louis XVI, or Carlos III. As far as the soldiers in Newport were concerned, a Spanish milled dollar at 6s. Rhode Island Lawful Money was the equivalent of 5 livres 8 sols. If the *sergeant-major* was left with 37 livres 13 sols 6 deniers per month after all deductions, a sergeant with 28 livres 13 sols 6 deniers, a corporal with 15 livres 3 sols 6 deniers, a grenadier had all of 10 livres 3 sols 6 deniers per month, just about 9s. or 41 sols or 2 livres 1 sol every six days. That was not much if we remember that the daily wage rate for a hired hand a day's worth of work was 3 s in Providence in 1780/81⁴³⁶ or 69 sols. But even so for the people in Newport it meant that every two weeks a grenadier was paid 5 livres 1 sols 9 deniers. Some of this money was spent in the market and the taverns of the town.

Compared to skilled labor, this was very little indeed. In the autumn of 1783, Dr. Isaac Senter paid a carpenter working on his barn 8 shillings per day. On the other hand, on 20 March 1781, Samuel Freebody recorded in his ledger book "I writ to Mr Saml Hopkins that I was willing to give him Ten Silver Doller p year while he continewed to preach to the People at Newport."⁴³⁷ The salary of ten silver dollars for a year's worth of preaching express the depth of the poverty in Newport. Ten silver dollars were the equivalent of 54 livres, yet even a common fusilier, the lowest-paid soldier in Rochambeau's army, received 171 livres cash wages a year.

⁴³⁵ The Middle colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland set the exchange rate for a Spanish dollar at 90 d or 7 s 6 d, 66.66 per cent over sterling. To distinguish it from the "Proclamation Money," it was referred to as "Common Money" or "Pennsylvania Money," though "Lawful Money" (or "Current Money") appears in Delaware ledgers as well. New York created its own rate of 96 d or 8 s to the Spanish dollar, a 78 per cent increase over sterling.

This paragraph is based on information found at www.coins.nd.edu/ColCurrency. The best book in print by far is John J. McCusker, *Money and exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: a handbook* (Chapel Hill, N.C., Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, VA, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1978).

⁴³⁶ Daniel Rodman Ledger 1770-1781 in RIHS Mss 9001-R Box 6.

⁴³⁷ NHS, Shelf no. 10, call no. 413, Ledger Book Samuel Freebody, 1739-1792, p. 100. Hopkins was pastor of the First Congregational Church.

What was even more important was that they were paid regularly every two weeks without fail in specie, more and more with Spanish dollars as the war progressed, but during the fall and winter of 1780/1, they received their wages in French coin. The kind and denomination of French coinage had been set in an *ordonnance* of 23 May 1774. There were three kinds of copper coin: the liard at 3 deniers, the 1/2 sol at 6 deniers, and the one sol coin worth 12 deniers. There were five different kinds of silver coins: the écu of six livres, the 1/2 écu worth three livres, the 1/5 écu at 24 sols, the 1/10 écu at 12 sols, and the 1/20 écu at 6 sols. If a common hussar was used to handling an écu even if six livres were more than two weeks of wages, one of the three gold coins was less likely to pass through his hands: the 1/2 louis d'or at 12 livres, the louis d'or at 24 livres, and the double louis d'or at 48 livres. The double louis d'or at 48 livres was 18 weeks wages for a grenadier, and more than six months wages for a common fusilier.⁴³⁸

What could they buy with their money? Not much. A loaf of bread, often laced with corn-meal, sold for 1 livre 2 sols per pound in Newport, more than 3 daily wages for a grenadier. A pound of potatoes, a relatively new food for some of these men, sold for 4-6 sols a pound or 12 livres to 18 livres per bushel in Newport in the fall of 1780. 1 lb of snuff, potentially of interest to a soldier, cost 5 s in the store of Daniel Rodman on 12 July 1781. That was just about 5 livres or half a grenadier's monthly wage of 10 livres 3 sols 6 deniers. In June 1781, New England Rum, also potentially of interest to a soldier, cost 6s p/gallon, at 10 s per gallon, West Indies rum was quite a bit more expensive.⁴³⁹ That was down quite a bit from the prices in the summer of 1780, when 1 gallon New England Rum had cost £ 22 10s 6 d in July, and a gallon of West India Rum as much as £ 42 in Aaron Lopez' store.⁴⁴⁰ In the absence of detailed ledgers, however, it is unknown how much money the soldiers themselves spent in Newport.

9.7 The Visit of Washington to Rhode Island, 6-13 March 1781

In January, the Pennsylvania and New Jersey lines mutinied, and French officers were convinced that the Americans had reached the end of the line. It was partly in order to reassure his allies of the reliability of his forces that Washington decided in February 1781 on a journey to Rochambeau in Newport. Having set out from New Windsor with Major General Robert Howe and his aides Tench Tilghman and David

⁴³⁸ The *livre* as a coin did not exist; it was minted briefly in 1720 by the French East India Co.

⁴³⁹ RIHS, Daniel Rodman Ledger 1770-1781, Mss 9001-R Box 6. On 8 March 1781, 1 bushel wheat cost 45 silver dollars, 1 bushel potatoes was 3s on 26 May 1781, and Indian corn 4s p/bushel on 6 June 1781.

⁴⁴⁰ Aaron Lopez Blotter/Day Book for 1780, NHS Shelf no. 18, number 674.

Humphries on 2 March, spent the night at Col. Andrew Morehouse' of the Dutchess County militia on the Fishkill-Hopewell road, near the Connecticut State line. From there he rode via Bulls Falls, Litchfield, Farmington to Hartford Ferry, and arrived in Hartford for a meeting with Governor Trumbull and his son Jonathan Jr. on 4 March. Escorted by the younger Trumbull, Washington rode into Lebanon in the evening of 4 March where he spent the night in the home of Jonathan Trumbull Jr. Before leaving the next day, Washington reviewed Lauzun's hussars.⁴⁴¹ From Lebanon, Washington, who was in a hurry to get to Newport, hired a guide who took the party due east to Preston, Connecticut, Voluntown, Hope Valley and Usquepaugh on the old Kingstown Road to Little Rest, and a tavern run by Colonel Thomas Potter in what is today Kingston at the intersection of RI-SR 108 and 138, where he spent the night of 5/6 March 1781.⁴⁴² The next day, 6 March, Washington and his military family took the Narragansett ferry to Jamestown and Newport. Here a "Poor Woman at Newport" was given \$75, and \$1,450 was paid for board at Newport. Upon arrival he boarded the *chevalier* Destouches' barge that took him to the *duc de Bourgogne*.

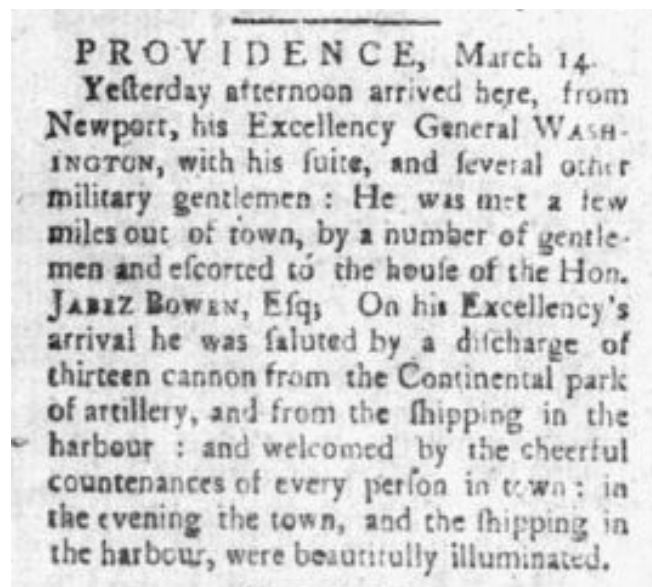
Newport wanted to honor the commander-in-chief. As early as 6 February, the Town Council Minutes record that since Washington "will soon Honor this Town with his Presence it is voted that the Town be illuminated from 7 o'clock untill Nine." The town would furnish the candles to illuminate the "Church Lanthorn and the poor in Congress, Lewis & Thames Street be supply'd with candles, for sd Illumination, from the Town Treasurer." A committee was formed "to Patroll the Streets during the Illumination, & confine each disorderly & unruly Person." And another committee was charged with draw up an address to the general.⁴⁴³ Following dinner with the admiral, Washington arrived in Newport in triumph. On 6 March Rochambeau ordered that "the town [be] illuminating this evening to celebrate the arrival of His Excellency General Washington, officers will have lampions or candles placed in the windows of the houses they occupy; the same will apply to windows of enlisted men's quarters, where feasible, and expenses are to be reimbursed." In the evening a banquet was held in the hall of the Colony House.

⁴⁴¹ While in Lebanon Washington offered the Governor's 41-year-old son the position as his private secretary. Trumbull's "Minutes of Occurrences respecting the Seige [sic] and Capture of York in Virginia, extracted from the Journal of Colonel Jonathan Trumbull, Secretary to the General, 1781." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* vol. 14, (April 1876), pp. 331-338, begin with 12 August 1781, and end with an entry for 4 November 1781.

⁴⁴² See French E. Chadwick, "The Visit of General Washington to Newport in 1781." *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* 6 (February 1913), pp. 1- 19. Baron Closen, who stopped at Little Rest on 5 March 1781, on his way to Newport to announce the arrival of Washington, admonished the eight hussars stationed there to guard Washington "carefully during the night, as there were many Tories in the neighborhood."

⁴⁴³ NHS, Town Proceedings vol. 1, 24 November 1779 – 17 April 1818.

Washington stayed for week and watched the departure on 8 March of the French fleet under Charles René Dominique Gochet *chevalier* Destouches with 1,500 French troops under the *baron* de Vioménil for the Chesapeake.⁴⁴⁴ Vioménil was to join forces with Lafayette in an attempt to capture the traitor Benedict Arnold.⁴⁴⁵ Following consultations with Rochambeau over plans for the 1781 campaign, Washington departed again on 13 March "at 10 O Clock for head Quarters, attended out by Genl Rochambeau and the Officers of the Army, he has paid every attention & marks of respect since his arrival in Town, he proposes to go through Providence."⁴⁴⁶ Travelling via Bristol Ferry and Warren, Washington reached Providence where he spent the nights of 13/14 and 14/15 March.⁴⁴⁷ Early in the morning of Thursday, 15 March, Washington and his military family rode on toward Dorrance's Tavern, about 26 miles from Providence. Rather than spend the night at this well-known inn after a journey of only 26 miles, Washington pushed on through Canterbury and Scotland to Windham and Lebanon, where he spent the night after 60 miles on horseback.⁴⁴⁸ The visit was covered widely in the local newspapers:



Newport Mercury 17 March 1781

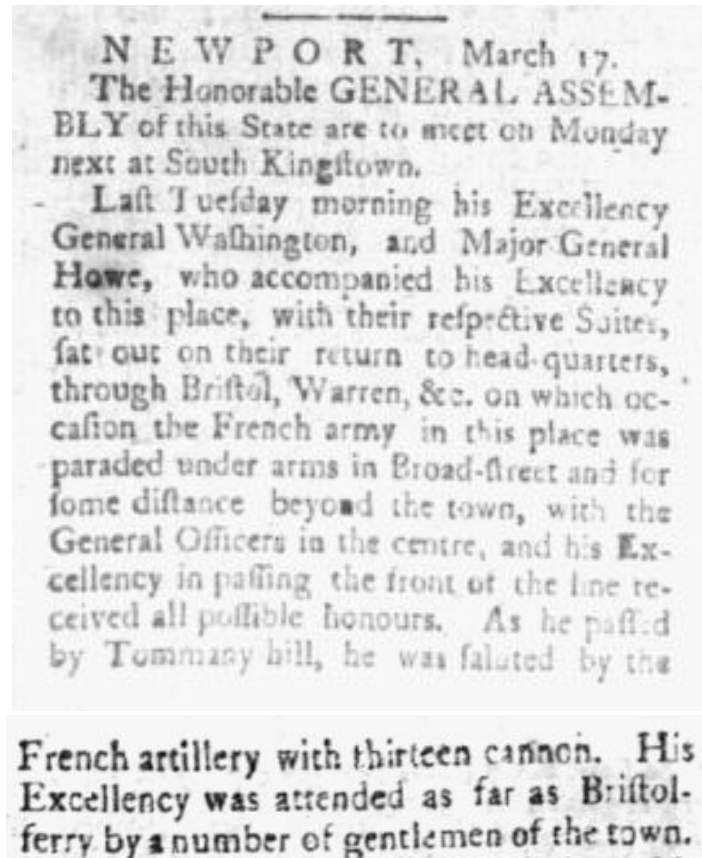
⁴⁴⁴ Deployment of French forces to the Chesapeake does not constitute part of this report.

⁴⁴⁵ Following the death of Ternay, Destouches assumed temporary command of the French fleet in Newport from 15 December 1780 until the arrival of Jacques Melchior Saint-Laurent, *comte* de Barras on 8 May 1781. Destouches returned to Newport on 26 March.

⁴⁴⁶ NHS Box 49, Vernon Papers, folder 5.

⁴⁴⁷ Providence Town Papers vol. 6, January 1781 to August 1782, p. 44 lists £ 2 10/ 8d expenses for 38 candles to give to poor for illuminating town during Washington's visit there in March 1781.

⁴⁴⁸ A note of thanks for Rochambeau by his aide-de-camp Tench Tilghman is dated "Lebanon, le 16 mars 1781."



Newport Mercury 17 March 1781

9.8 Rochambeau's Journey to the Wethersfield Conference, 19-26 May 1781

By 22 March Washington and his family were back in Newburgh. The visit to Newport had brought few if any results. The high hopes connected with the arrival of French forces had yet to materialize. Ever since their arrival in Newport nine months earlier, America's allies had been encamped in Newport while Cornwallis was marching almost at will across the southern colonies. Almost despairingly Washington wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens on 9 April 1781: "We are at the end of our tether, and ... now or never our deliverance must come."⁴⁴⁹ The campaign of 1781 would have to produce results, but no plans could be made before the return of Rochambeau's son returned from France. Finally, on 10 May 1781, the *vicomte* arrived with much-needed cash but also with the news that the second division would not be coming after all. Rochambeau was advised to draw up plans for the campaign, possibly in cooperation with Admiral de Grasse, who had left Brest for the Caribbean on 5 April, and who might be able to provide naval support.

⁴⁴⁹ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 21, p. 439.

Now that Rochambeau knew what his resources for the summer campaign would be, there was no time to lose. Throughout the spring Washington had talked about an attack on New York,⁴⁵⁰ By 13 May, Washington had received word of the arrival of the *vicomte* and Admiral Barras, Ternay's replacement. Rather than meet in Hartford, which was bustling with legislators assembled for their annual meeting, Washington suggested the quiet village of Wethersfield a few miles south of the capital. The day was to be 21 May,⁴⁵¹ but just as Rochambeau and his party were about to leave Newport, British vessels once again appeared off of Newport and forced Barras to remain behind. Since he wanted to have a second general officer present, Rochambeau asked Chastellux to accompany him to Wethersfield.

If eyewitness accounts about the Hartford Conference at least exist, we know much less about proceedings at Wethersfield. Rochambeau most likely traveled the same route he took to get to the Hartford Conference, but in the case of Wethersfield we do not know who accompanied Rochambeau and Chastellux on the way. None of the seven aides who left diaries, journals, or letters -- his son,⁴⁵² Baron Closen,⁴⁵³ Axel von Fersen,⁴⁵⁴ Mathieu Dumas,⁴⁵⁵ Cromot du Bourg,⁴⁵⁶ the *marquis* du Bouchet,⁴⁵⁷ and the *comte* de Lauberdière⁴⁵⁸ -- mention Wethersfield on their itineraries. Though it is unthinkable that the generals rode to Wethersfield alone, we do not know who their aides were at the conference.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁰ See, e.g., his letters to Rochambeau of 8 and 10 April 1781, in Washington, *Writings*, vol. 21, pp. 435/36 and pp. 441/442.

⁴⁵¹ *Diaries of George Washington*, vol. 2, p. 213.

⁴⁵² See Rochambeau, *Journal*, pp. 218/19.

⁴⁵³ See Acomb, *Closen*, p. 79.

⁴⁵⁴ See Fersen's letter of 3 June 1781. *Lettres*, p. 117.

⁴⁵⁵ See Dumas, *Memoirs*, pp. 50/51. Dumas called the town "Westerfield."

⁴⁵⁶ Cromot du Bourg, "Diary," pp. 211/12.

⁴⁵⁷ See *marquis* du Bouchet, *Journal d'un Emigré* in the Division of Rare and Manuscripts Collections at Cornell University, esp. pp. 212/13.

⁴⁵⁸ Lauberdière, *Journal*, p. 50.

⁴⁵⁹ I have been unable to get access to the letters of an eighth aide, Charles Malo François *comte* de Lameth, who may have accompanied Rochambeau and Chastellux, in the archives of the Département Val d'Oise,

J. Watson Webb, *Reminiscences of Gen'l Samuel B. Webb of the Revolutionary Army* (New York, 1882), p. 70, writes: "Tradition says, that the suites of the two commanders consisted of sixty-five persons; and that only Washington and Rochambeau, with one Aide-de-camp each, slept in the house; while the other members of the two suites were billeted upon the hospitable villagers." The villagers may have been "hospitable," but refused the bills offered by the state as payment for expenses. On 18 May, the American deputy quartermaster in charge of accommodations had to appeal to the General Assembly for "real" money to cover expenses. "As no Person or Persons in that town can be found ... to make the necessary

On Saturday, 19 May 1781, Rochambeau and Chastellux set out for Connecticut. Rochambeau, as usual, is rather terse in his 1781 *Memoir*: "Thus when the Comte de Rochambeau had decoded his dispatches, he did nothing more pressing than to suggest a conference with General Washington which was set up at Weathersfield (sic), near to Hartford, for May 23. The Comte de Barras was not there."⁴⁶⁰ The first night was again most likely spent with Governor Bowen in Providence, the second night of 20/21 May, at White's Tavern in Andover.⁴⁶¹

On Monday, 21 May 1781, Washington, who had arrived at Wethersfield on the 19th and whose suite included Generals Knox and Duportail, rode up to Hartford to welcome Rochambeau and Chastellux. While the Americans were lodged in the home of Joseph Webb,⁴⁶² the French lodged nearby at Stillmann's Tavern.⁴⁶³ In the terse words of Washington's diary: "21st (Monday). The Count de Rochambeau, with the Chevlr de Chastellux, arrived about Noon -- the appearance of the British fleet off Block Island prevented the attendance of the Count de Barras."⁴⁶⁴

In the evening of the 21st, Washington and his staff, Governor Trumbull, Jeremiah Wadsworth, and probably also their French guests, attended a concert at the Wethersfield Congregational Church. The next day, Tuesday, the two delegations met at the Webb House. Washington's diary tells us: "22^d (Tuesday). Fixed with Count de Rochambeau upon plan of Campaign."⁴⁶⁵

In celebration of the event, Washington, Rochambeau, Trumbull and Wadsworth had dinner that night (22 May) at Stillman's in the only event worth mentioning, at

supplies without some part of the payment in Specie" he urged a grant of £35 in hard money in addition to the £ 500 in state bills already appropriated. Crofut, *Guide*, vol. 2, p. 345.

⁵⁷ Rochambeau, *Mémoire*, p. 51.

⁴⁶¹ Chastellux used the opportunity to mail Washington "a confidential and rather scheming letter indicating the substance of a plan likely to be discussed at the conference." Chastellux, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 563, note 6. The letter, dated "May 21, 1781," at "White Tavern" is among the Washington Papers in the Library of Congress. Washington decided not to show the note to Rochambeau. Chastellux does not comment on the conference in his *Travels*.

⁴⁶² The Webb family papers do not mention the presence of Washington and Rochambeau. Worthington C. Ford, *Family Letters of Samuel Blachley Webb, 1764-1807* (New York, 1912).

⁴⁶³ Chastellux, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 367. Stillmann's Tavern is no longer standing. See also Sherman W. Adams and Henry R. Stiles, *The History of Ancient Wethersfield* 2 vols., (1904, repr. Wethersfield, 1974), vol. 1, pp. 475-480.

⁴⁶⁴ Washington, *Diaries*, p. 217.

⁴⁶⁵ The original minutes of the conference survive in the Rochambeau Papers in the Paul Mellon Collection at the University of Virginia. An abbreviated version can be found in Washington, *Writings*, vol. 22, pp. 105/06.

least as far as Governor Trumbull was concerned, among all the important decisions of that day: "Fair - dined with General Washington, Rochambeau, &c at Stillman's."⁴⁶⁶ The next day, "23^d Count de Rochambeau set out on his return to Newport, while I prepared and forwarded dispatches to the Governors of the four New England States calling upon them in earnest and pointed terms, to compleat their Continental Battalions for the Campaign."⁴⁶⁷ Rochambeau and Chastellux got no further than Hartford where a big reception was waiting for them at Collier's. Again Governor Trumbull's diary: "Wednesday, twenty-third. Fair-dined at Colyer's with the Generals-supra public expense. Guards. Artillery."

On 24 May the French continued their journey for Newport. Even if they had set out early in the morning from Hartford on horseback, they could not have reached Providence by nightfall. Following the pattern established on previous journeys, they may have stopped once again at White's Tavern in Andover on the evening of 24 May 1781. Though there is no documentary evidence for such a stop, it is also suggested by the fact that the two generals were back in Newport only on 26 May after another night spent in or near Providence.

The time for action had arrived. The campaign of 1781 would have to produce results. Rochambeau's son returned from France with sorely needed cash on 10 May 1781, (Rochambeau needed between 375,000 and 400,000 livres per month to keep his troops paid and supplied) but also with the news that the second division would not be coming after all. Rochambeau was advised to draw up plans for the coming campaign, possibly in cooperation with Admiral de Grasse, who had sailed from Brest for the Caribbean on 5 April and who might be able to provide naval support. At Wethersfield in late May 1781, Washington and Rochambeau decided to join the forces on the North River, possibly for an attack on New York City.

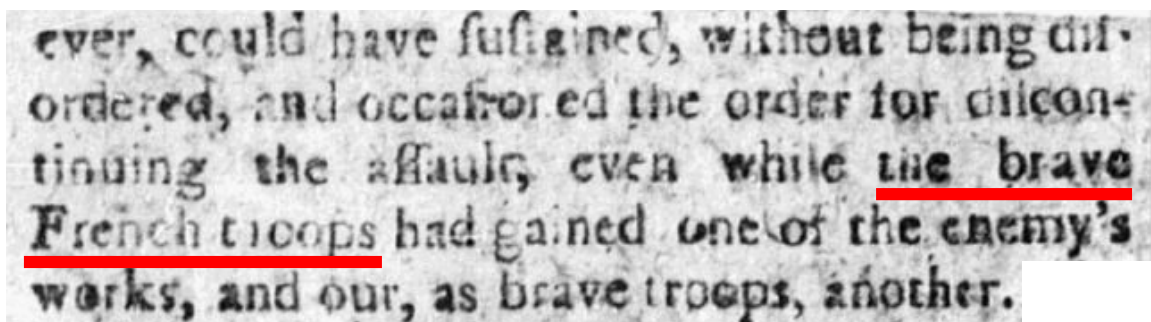
⁴⁶⁶ All quotes from the Trumbull Diary in CTHS.

⁴⁶⁷ Washington *Diaries*, p. 218. Washington's "Circular to the New England States of May 24, 1781, is printed in Washington, *Writings*, vol. 22, pp. 109/11.

THE MARCH TO PHILIPSBURG, 11 JUNE TO 6 JULY 1781

10.1 Preparations for the March/Departure from Newport

The joy Newporters had expressed in July 1780 was heart-felt, not only because Crown forces had destroyed “about three hundred Dwelling houses”, left the town “in ruins”, destroyed its trade and “cut down and laid waste ... the beautiful Rows of Trees which lined the Roads” around Newport.⁴⁶⁸ Yet in spite of the decades-old anti-French, anti-Catholic and culture of Newport, Newport was probably still the best community in the New World for a process of “getting to know each other” to begin. Since the signing of the French alliance in February 1778, a slow change in attitude toward the French had begun, exemplified in the very first issue of the *Newport Mercury* after the evacuation of the town by British forces.⁴⁶⁹ On 5 January 1780, the paper printed what would have been unthinkable only a few years earlier: a praise of French soldiers. Reporting on the siege of Savannah, the *Mercury* told its readers of the “heavy and incessant front, flank and cross-fire, as no troops what –



ever, could have sustained, without being dis-
ordered, and occasioned the order for discon-
tinuing the assault, even while the brave
French troops had gained one of the enemy's
works, and our, as brave troops, another.

On 16 July, General William Heath informed General Washington that "The French troops are landed and encamped in a fine situation South East of the Town. The troops make a good appearance. The Legion under the command of the Duke de Lauzun, (the officer who took Senegal last year) is as fine a Corps as ever I saw; it is about 600 Strong."⁴⁷⁰ In a letter of 8 August 1780 to Abraham Barker of Tiverton, Major Lyman opined that: "The most perfect harmony subsists between the French and Americans."⁴⁷¹ Echoing Lafayette, Fersen reported to his father on 8 September, maybe somewhat overly enthusiastic that "there has not yet been a single complaint

⁴⁶⁸ *Literary Diary*, vol. 2, p. 427.

⁴⁶⁹ T. Cole Jones, "Displaying the Ensigns of Harmony": The French Army in Newport, Rhode Island, 1780–1781" *The New England Quarterly* vol. 85 no. 3 (September, 2012), pp. 430-467.

⁴⁷⁰ *The Writings of George Washington*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., 39 vols, (Washington, DC, 1931-1944) vol. 19, p. 211, footnote 66.

⁴⁷¹ Daniel Lyman Papers, Mss 546, RIHS.

against the troops. This discipline is admirable. It astonishes the inhabitants, who are accustomed to pillage by the English and by their own troops. The most entire confidence exists between the two nations."⁴⁷² The traditional enemy as friend?

Maybe the *Newport Mercury* had gotten ahead of itself when it labelled France "the most polite, powerful and generous Nation in the World" upon the arrival of Rochambeau's forces in July 1780. But as high-ranking officers in Rochambeau's staff were quartered with locals and ordinary Rhode Islanders came in close contact with their French allies over the next weeks and months, an enormous cultural shift took place as mutual inter-personal contact helped further to overcome prejudice, ignorance and hostility.⁴⁷³ Blanchard's first encounter with a Newporter occurred on 12 July 1780 when a young lady served him tea: "I entered the house of an inhabitant, who received me very well."⁴⁷⁴ Thereafter "We lived on good terms with the inhabitants."⁴⁷⁵ Artillery officer Clermont-Crèvecœur, who had initially thought the locals "little disposed in our favor," noted in his journal that "We were received as brothers rather than foreigners. We took up quarters in town to the great delight of the residents, who lodged us very well. [...] Few members of the army had cause to complain of their lodging or their hosts."⁴⁷⁶ Only a few weeks earlier, Clermont-Crèvecœur had complained that the people "would have preferred ... to see their enemies arrive."⁴⁷⁷ What was happening?

In spite of its long-standing anti-Catholic, anti-French history, Newport, as Cole Jones has pointed out, was nevertheless an ideal location for the two nations' first long-term encounter. "[W]ithout Newport's preexisting commercial experience with the French West Indies, its tradition of religious toleration, and the economic depression brought on by British occupation, the French presence may have been less than harmonious. Only the combination of these factors can fully explain the peaceful habitation of a Catholic army in Protestant New England."⁴⁷⁸ Visiting Newport as early as 23 August 1744, Dr. Alexander Hamilton already "found the

⁴⁷² In a letter of 8 September 1780, in Fersen, "Letters," p. 302.

⁴⁷³ See especially Warrington Dawson, ed., "With Rochambeau at Newport: The Narrative of Baron Gaspard de Gallatin." *The Franco-American Review* vol. 1, Nr. 4, (1937), pp. 330-34.

⁴⁷⁴ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 41.

⁴⁷⁵ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 44.

⁴⁷⁶ Clermont-Crèvecœur in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p.21.

⁴⁷⁷ This cultural shift is analyzed in Curtis Urban, *Adversarial Allies: The Cultural Influence of the French Military in Rhode Island during the American Revolution*. MA Thesis, Miami University of Ohio (2011). Urban focuses rather narrowly on Newport using the *Mercury* as his primary source.

⁴⁷⁸ Cole, "Ensigns of Harmony," p. 467.

people in Newport very civil and courteous in their way. ... They are not so strait laced in religion here as in the other parts of New England. ..."⁴⁷⁹

The reasons for this relatively relaxed attitude toward religion are manifold but ultimately rooted in the commercial history of Newport. The city lived off trade and for decades had been most active in the Triangular trade between England, Africa and the Caribbean, exchanging slaves for molasses and European manufactured goods. In the process it had become more cosmopolitan - and apparently also more tolerant - than neighboring cities such as the much larger Boston.⁴⁸⁰ Newport not only offered a home to the second-oldest oldest Jewish community on the North American Continent, founded in 1658 and trailing Congregation Shearith Israel in New York City by only four years, but to a wide variety of branches of the Christian faith as well. Georg Daniel Flohr was amazed at the "very many of them" and counted "Reformed, the Reformed Lutherans, Quakers, Dunker, Anabaptists, Bedists, Jews, Arianer [i.e. Unitarians], Presbyterians, Moravian Brethren, Adventists, Tertianer" and for good measure threw in the Freemasons as well. What he did not mention was that like hundreds of his fellow soldiers he too was Calvinist, what he described as "Reformed Lutherans" in his journal. This common religion may not only have played a role in the more favorable welcome of the German soldiers but of Rochambeau's forces as a whole. At least 269 (22.8%) of the men of the Royal Deux-Ponts in America were Lutheran, another 180 (15.2%) were Reformed Christians,

⁴⁷⁹ He continued that "They have but little regard to the laws of England, their mother country, tho they pretend to take that constitution for a precedent. Collectors and naval officers here are a kind of cyphers. They dare not exercise their office for fear of the fury and unruliness of the people, but their places are profitable upon account of the presents they receive for every cargoe of run good." Enforcement of British trade laws after 1763 became the single most important reason why Newport joined the independence movement. "The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton" in *Colonial American Travel Narratives* (New York, 1994), pp. 291-93.

⁴⁸⁰ For reasons beyond the scope of this study Newport never experienced anti-French riots like Boston. In the best-known incident on 8 September 1778, a waterfront brawl in Boston between locals and sailors of d'Estaing's fleet resulted in the death of the *chevalier* de Saint-Sauveur who was mortally wounded trying to protect the bakers and to restore order. He died on 15 September and was buried in the vault of King's Chapel. The most recent account by Christian McBurny, "Why did a Boston mob kill a French officer?" was posted in the on-line *Journal of the American Revolution* on 23 October 2014.

<http://allthingsliberty.com/2014/10/why-did-a-boston-mob-kill-a-french-officer/>

On 28 December 1780, the crewmen of the frigate *La Surveillante* and *USS Alliance* went at each other, again in Boston; this affair too was hushed up despite the fact that two American sailors were killed and four sailors of *Le Surveillante* wounded. In the log of *l'Hermione*, de la Touche recorded that the American sailors had tried to rob the paymaster of *La Surveillante*. *Journal de bord*, p. 94. French Consul Holker told Desandrouins "plusieurs autres histoires qui viennent a l'appui de cette observation." Gabriel, *Desandrouins*, p. 363.

and since many of the men, officers included, in Lauzun's Legion were non-Catholic as well, 15% or more of Rochambeau's forces posed no threat to the souls of the more religiously inclined Newporters at all. At least in the early days of French presence it seems that Newporters differentiated between the nationalities in Rochambeau's little army. Flohr's observation may of course only reflect national pride but according to Flohr "the American women were very flattering, and we were especially popular with the girls because we were German, and they hold the German Nation in particularly high regard. Concerning religions, there are the Reformed, which is the main religion. There are also Lutherans there too and Catholics, but very few." Clermont-Crèvecœur observed that Newport had many churches⁴⁸¹ while the *comte* de Lauberdière counted five different "religions": Anglicans, Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers and Jews, each with their own churches and ministers. Even more surprising the children "ne sont point tenus par leurs parents d'embrasser leur religion – the children are not held by their parents to follow their religion."⁴⁸²

Additionally, political-religious tensions had eased considerably in 1779 when many if not most of the often Anglican Tories had left Newport (if not all of New England) with the departing when Crown forces. These included not only the Rev. George Bisset of Newport's Trinity Church⁴⁸³ but also preachers such as the Rev. Jacob Bailey of Rowley, MA, who had thus scoffed on 5 August 1778 at the joy of his fellow New Englanders at the news of the Franco-American alliance of 1778: "To see these people who had always the greatest aversion to the manners, religion, and government of the French, now rejoicing in their alliance, and exulting in their assistance, affords a most striking instance of the perverseness of the human heart, and displays, beyond example, the obstinacy, the madness, the folly, the perfidy, of my countrymen."⁴⁸⁴ Sub-lieutenant Jean Baptiste Antoine de Verger of the Royal Deux-Ponts was not far off the mark when he observed that "The people in general are very little attached to their religion."⁴⁸⁵ Preudhomme de Borre wrote in his "Description des 13 colonies unies de l'Amérique septentrionale" that "people go to church on Sunday if they want to – quand on veut".⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ See also the descriptions in Acomb, *Closen*, pp. 51-52.

⁴⁸² Lauberdière, "Journal", fol. 56.

⁴⁸³ See Hattendorf, *Semper Eadem*, p. 133 *et passim*.

⁴⁸⁴ William S. Bartlet, ed., "The Frontier Missionary: A Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Jacob Bailey, A.M." *Collections of the Protestant Episcopal Historical Society* vol. II (New York, 1853): Letters and Journals, pp. 338 – 366, p. 360. He left for Nova Scotia on 7 June 1779.

⁴⁸⁵ Verger in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 125.

⁴⁸⁶ Quoted in Bodinier, *de Yorktown à l'an II*, p. 331.

Apparently many, too many, Newporters did go to church on Sunday: Lauberdière was one of the officers who complaint to his journal that there was nothing else anyone could do that day. Rochambeau's *Livre d'Ordre* does not contain a single entry ordering his troops to religious services other than the funeral of Admiral de Ternay; once his troops had entered winter quarters the soldiers are expressly forbidden on 14 November 1780 to enter local churches ("les Eglises du pays") during services. The captain of the Regiment Bourbonnois in charge of the picket on Spring Street was order to place a guard at the entrance to the First Baptist Church on 30 Spring Street while the Royal Deux-Ponts was ordered on 21 November to place a guard at the door of the Quaker Meeting House.

The only religion apparently "pas tolérée" was Catholicism. That, for Lauberdière, turned the facts on their heads: Newporters imagined that the French officers would be religious zealots, instead "nous l'avons rencontré chez eux – we found the zealots among them."⁴⁸⁷ It did not seem to bother him or his fellow officers: steeped in the ideas of the Enlightenment, many of them were deists at best with little love for the Catholic or any other organized religion.⁴⁸⁸ French officers recognized contradictions and discrepancies when they saw them and the opinions expressed on the privacy of their journals and letters are frequently at odds with the image they and their American hosts tried to project in public. Particularly Presbyterians and Quakers, whose simplicity was described in great detail in every primary source, came in for much criticism and ridicule. Religious tolerance had its limits. Writing about Presbyterians, Clermont-Crèvecœur lamented "the unhappy results for mankind of that religious tolerance which is said to ensure the well-being of a state but which, in my opinion, becomes on the contrary a source of evil when a sect as intolerant and fanatic as the Presbyterians dominates through sheer numbers those living peaceably within their respective faiths."⁴⁸⁹ Not that the Quakers were much better. Baron Closen is the only officer who sings their praises, for all others the simple manners, dress and life-style are but a cover and clever disguise. Lauberdière thought them "paresseux et indolents, leurs manières douces, mais leurs maxims grossières – lazy and indolent, their manners sweet but their maxims rough." For Chastellux the Quakers were hypocrites: "It is true, they spare [i.e. do not shed] the blood, especially their own, but they cheat both sides out of their money and that without the least qualms and without restraint."⁴⁹⁰ His aide-de-camp Charles-Louis de Montesquieu, a grandson of the philosopher, echoed these

⁴⁸⁷ Lauberdière, "Journal", fol. 57.

⁴⁸⁸ See Gilbert Bodinier, "Les officiers du corps expéditionnaire de Rochambeau et la Revolution française." *Revue historique des armées* vol. 3, no. 4, (1976), pp. 139-164.

⁴⁸⁹ Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 83.

⁴⁹⁰ Quoted in Bodinier, *de Yorktown à l'an II*, p. 333.

feelings. In a letter to France he wrote on 12 October 1780 that “ces honnêtes Quakers sont aussi intéressés, aussi hypocrites et aussi vicieux que le reste des humains – these honorable Quakers are as self-interested, as hypocritical and as vicious as the rest of humanity.” Generally speaking he claimed that religious tolerance “does not exist at all; even if different sects publicly exercise their religion here, each one of these sects is itself as intolerant and jealous as the other.”⁴⁹¹ Nevertheless the religious tolerance had surprised Rochambeau’s forces and private opinions expressed in letters or journals were not meant for the public: here the officers and enlisted men did their best for the sake of the alliance. The Abbé Robin as we have already seen, claimed that “every Frenchman saw the absolute necessity for obliterating these prejudices, and everyone sacrificed something to his own feelings, in order to accomplish this desired end through their good conduct and discipline.”⁴⁹² Sacrificing one’s own feeling meant primarily to keep one’s mouth shut in front of Americans.

To be true, ever so often a more cautious American voice found its way into the local paper as well, but these voices were rare. In an editorial reprinted from the 15 February 1781 *Boston Continental Journal*, an anonymous author signing as “Your Brother” warned his fellow Americans in the 3 March 1781 issue of the *Newport Mercury* of the risks of this new-found French friendship and the dangers to the country should it dare to sign a separate peace with England. By signing the treaty of alliance in 1778, the United States had bound themselves irrevocably to France, which not only “has power” but in case of a separate peace “has resentments; and we may be assured that her arms would be turned against the people that had deceived her [...] National friendship is but a creature of the imagination. National interest is the only object of our alliance.” Breaking the alliance would bring down the revenge of both Britain and France upon the young United States, who would then fight each other over “which would share the largest in the plunder” of the United States.⁴⁹³ More realistic analyses such as these were shared privately by other contemporaries who too were under no illusion as to why France and Spain had entered the war against Britain. In a letter to Silas Deane written from Williamsburg in November 1781, i.e. after the victory at Yorktown, Jeremiah Wadsworth told his fellow Connecticutian “You seem to have supposed that France and Spain shou’d have entered into the War from no motives but to obtain justice for America - I had never such an Idea, Nations have other motives for making War than releveing the oppressed; and when France & Spain engaged in the present War,

⁴⁹¹ See “Quelques lettres du baron de Montesquieu sur la Guerre d’Indépendance américaine”. *The Franco-American Review* (Winter 1938), pp. 192-204.

⁴⁹² Abbé Robin, *New Travels through North America* (Philadelphia, 1783), pp. 21 and 44.

⁴⁹³ *Newport Mercury* 3 March 1781.

they intended to humble a haughty insolent and envious Neighbour, to do this effectually they will, if wise, continue the War so as to keep America interested in every event to its close, this is dictated by sound policy and is strictly just.”⁴⁹⁴

Together with religious tolerance the freedoms given adolescent girls constituted the biggest surprise for the visitors from France. Flohr wrote that not only women but “Girls too have such freedoms there! Once they are 16 years old, father or mother must not forbid them anything any more, can’t order them to do anything any more in no matter whatsoever. If they have a lover he can be with them freely and openly without the parents being able to say anything to the girls about it.” Flohr was referring to the custom of “bundling”, a method of allowing a young man and a young woman of marriageable age to continue courting in bed, a way for the prospective couple to continue their conversation into the night. To make sure they would only converse one person could in a “bundling bag” sewn at the top so that only the head was out. Alternately a board or a long large pillow could be placed down the center of the bed cutting the bed in half, or simply laying on the bed with all clothes still on.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁴ Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Box 132, CTHS.

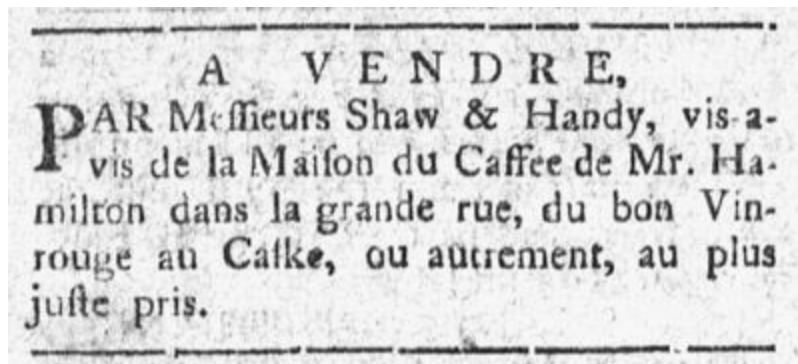
⁴⁹⁵ Bundling survived well into the 19th and even early 20th centuries. As is to be expected the couple, or at least one of them, sometimes wanted to do more than just talk. The *marquis du Bouchet* provides an account of such a bundling experience:

“The young girls in the state of Connecticut, apparently possessed of more self-confidence than those of other states, have no scruples to grant men, under certain conditions, the permission to sleep with them. In general these favors are considered on their part as a kind of engagement and preliminary to marriage, which is usually concluded soon thereafter. Now, after having engaged in Bondelage, it is generally accepted in this province, that one does not always get married afterwards; sometimes it is only the fifth or sixth bundler (=bondeleur) who is married, which is, altogether, fortunate.

When strictly observed, the rules of bundling permit innocent caresses, all the affection proper to brother and sister; anything more is rigorously forbidden. ... In this case, to the shame of a young man of the neighborhood, there was a rumor in the inn and among the confidences of the girls, confirmed by the tears of the daughter of our innkeeper, which divulged enterprises of an odious nature. Carried away by the flights of his passion which could no longer contain any desires, he had been unable to confine himself to permissible favors and would have invaded the conjugal domain, had not the girl's courageous resistance interposed an obstacle. The tribunal of public opinion held that he should be forever barred from the Temple of Hymen. The decree would have been enforced by the agreement of all the maidens concerned with the observation of the laws of bundling had he not obtained his pardon and promised before us all to take the offended girl to wife the following week.”

Denis Jean Florimond de Langlois, Marquis du Bouchet, *Journal d'un émigré; ou cahier d'un étudiant en philosophie*, the *Journal of an Emigrant; or Memorial of a Student of Philosophy*. Unpublished ms, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. For additional literature see Mary Durham Johnson, “Polly à la Française: A Study of the French Officers' Views of American Women during the American Revolution, 1776-

The most important means to further mutual understand, however, was money. Newport was a city built on trade and commerce. French officers had funds and Newport merchants were determined to get their share of it.⁴⁹⁶ If that meant advertising their wares in French, so be it. By late fall French speaking ads began to appear in the *Newport Mercury*, viz. this one on 23 November advertising, of course, “du bon Vin rouge au Caske – good red wine by the barrel”.



Newport Mercury, 29 July 1780

The economic impact of French forces and their tens of thousands of silver coins on the surrounding areas was very much appreciated by the local populations wherever French forces appeared: as they were marching through Philadelphia, George Nelson, an employee of the Quarter-Master Department recorded happily in his diary on 22 May 1781: "Laurince & I sold our Team to some French Men for £ 110 hard money." When they got paid the next day, his share was "£ 56.18.10 Hard Money being more Cash than I have been able to realize since the War."⁴⁹⁷ A few miles down the road in Wilmington, Samuel Canby expressed the hope on 11 November 1781, that: "as I apprehend from the present prospect of things in our Country that people generally will rather be encouraged to go into Business more than there has been opportunity for these several Years past as there is nothing but Specie now Circulating as a currency."⁴⁹⁸ Before departure from Dobbs Ferry, Wadsworth had asked for 400,000 livres cash to pay for the expenses of the march.

1783" *Eighteenth-Century Life* vol. 3 (September 1976), pp. 26-34, and Bernard Chevignard, "Les Voyageurs Europeens et la Pratique du 'Bondelage' (Bundling) en Nouvelle-Angleterre a la Fin du XVIIIe Siècle" *Groupe de Recherche et d'Etudes Nord-Américaines* 2 vols (Marseilles, 1986), vol. 2, pp. 75-87.

⁴⁹⁶ Some officers were not adverse to improving their financial situation themselves. The *chevalier* Lavergne de Tressan, a captain in the Saintonge, traded in European luxury goods sent to him from relatives in Europe.

⁴⁹⁷ Diary of George Nelson, AM 107, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

⁴⁹⁸ Diary of Samuel Canby, Nov 1779 to Dec 1796. Photostat from an original at Yale University in the Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington,.

Some of this money was spent in Rhode Island among a population that very much appreciated the French livres. In his 1840s memoirs, John Howland (1757-1854) of Newport still remembered how in 1782, paper money “ceased to pass, as the French Army under Count Rochambo paid all their expenses which were of a vast amount in specie, or in Bills on France, and that supplied the Circulation.”⁴⁹⁹ Yet at the same time there are surprisingly few references to French customers in the surviving ledgers of Newport businesses after an initial buying spurt as the French forces debarked. Thomas Robinson, for example, recorded in his “Journal” on 20 July 1780: “By 2 bbr Cyder sold a Frenchman @ 3 dollars = £ 1 16s”, and another “4 bbs Cyder sold a Frenchman @ 27/ = £ 5 8/” that same day. But nothing else thereafter for months.⁵⁰⁰ That was not for lack of trying: On 10 July 1780, Christopher Champlin wrote to Wadsworth from Newport that his business associate “Mr. Richard Woodman [in Wethersfield] is Instructed with Some Effects of mine for Sale - I am informed you are buying for the French Army – as my articles may command Produce in Preference to hard money or credit I presume you can afford me a good price for all that he may chuse to receive – in exchange for such of his goods as may not readily command a sale to his mind”. Champlin was willing to barter just to get into the business, to assists “in collecting large supplies for you – of this you’ll please to say - should a Garrison remain here large Supplies wou’d be wanted.”⁵⁰¹ The reason for this may in part be due to the fact that French soldiers received their food supplies regularly and did not need to purchase much locally. More importantly, however, the 13,000 soldiers and sailors needed primarily food, and Newport and Rhode Island had never been able to feed themselves. Secondly, the British occupation had devastated the city and severely disrupted trade routes and connections. Many of the “old” Newport merchant elite had left the town for good, those who were left such as Vernon or Champlin seem to have lacked Wadsworth’s trade connections into Connecticut. But even if a few large suppliers either from out-of-state such as Wadsworth from Connecticut or Thomas Lloyd Halsey from Boston were able to exclude local merchants, they did eventually share in the profits of having the French army in Rhode Island. Just not as large a share as it might have been.⁵⁰² The words that John Jeffrey wrote to Jeffrey Whiting from

⁴⁹⁹ John Howland Collection, Mss 499 page 86, RIHS.

⁵⁰⁰ Thomas Robinson Journal, 22 January 1770 to 5 March 1787, p. 290, NHS.

⁵⁰¹ A letter by Woodman to Champlin of 18 July 1780 re: supplies in Wethersfield is printed in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 7th series vol. X: Commerce of Rhode Island 1726-1800, vol. II: 1775-1800 (Boston 1915), p. 94. French sales rarely appear in Champlin’s ledgers, viz. on 20 September 1780 he entered into agreement with Ebenezer Grace from Darby in Connecticut for 200 barrels flour for the French army. Ibid. p. 108.

⁵⁰² See the Journal and Day Book Christopher Champlin 1780-1786, the entry for 4 April 1783: “Two Setts of Exchange drawn on the Treasury of Paris for Support of General

Hartford on 31 December 1781 applied to Newport as well: "Money is very scarce among the People in General, their daily Prayers are that the French Army may return soon to their part of the World that Money may again circulate amongst them."⁵⁰³ Newport had, after all, built its prosperity and wealth on trade and, as John Trevett so aptly put it after conversing with French sailors in November 1780: "Money will speak all languages."⁵⁰⁴

Was there never any trouble? Of course, but surprisingly little, and the best-known case may not even involve an American. On 6 August 1780, Ternay informed the *chevalier* Destouches, captain of the 74-gun *le Neptune*, that 15 days earlier, i.e. on 22 July, a corporal of the Regiment de Bresse accompanied by four soldiers of the same regiment had "assassin ... un chirurgien sur l'isle de conanicut." Pierre-Antoine Boncichon, the corporal in question, served in the infantry complement of *le Neptune*. Ternay had already approached two naval officers to preside at a court martial but both had declined. To not let the crime go unpunished he put the whole affair into the hands of the Army Provost Pierre Barthélémy Revoux de Ronchamp with orders for a court-martial on the island where the murder had occurred.⁵⁰⁵ Apparently unwilling to let the army carry out legal proceedings where a crew-member was concerned, Destouches at last agreed to preside over the court-martial with Navy Lieutenant the *chevalier* de Fondelin of the 64-gun *l'Eveill  * as prosecutor. Boncichon was found guilty and executed by firing squad on board the 180-ton transport vessel *Fran  oise* on 31 August 1780. Boncichon had been sentenced "  tre rompu vif - to be broken on the wheel alive", but since the navy did not have a executioner who could carry out the sentence the corporal was shot instead.⁵⁰⁶

In the log of *l'Hermione*, Captain de la Touche recorded that Boncichon had been convicted "d'avoir assassin   un chirurgien d'un vaisseau du convoi sur l'isle de Conanicut - having murdered a medical doctor of a vessel of the convoy on Conanicut Island."⁵⁰⁷ Most accounts of the event assert that since the murder had

Rochambeau's Army in America" for 15.000 and 13.000 livres =    1,207 s19 9d. Shelf no. 7, Call no. 696, NHS.

⁵⁰³ Wadsworth Papers, CTHS, Box 132.

⁵⁰⁴ John Trevett Diary, November 1780, NHS. See also Jacqueline M. Sinclair, *Captain John Trevett. His Journal, Ancestry and Descent Through Henry John Trevett* (Greenwich, CT, 1969)

⁵⁰⁵ Ternay to Naval Minister Sartine, 6 August 1780. Marine B4185, fol. 26. The letter is identified as no. 7.

⁵⁰⁶ Ternay to Naval Minister Sartine, undated but 31 August 1780 or later. Marine B4 185, fol. 32. It refers to Letter no. 7 and again informs Sartine of "un assassinat commis ... sur l'Isle de Conanicut" and the sentence passed by a court-martial on *le Neptune*. The trial record Ternay transmitted has not been found. The letter carries the number 12.

⁵⁰⁷ *Journal de bord*, p. 185.

occurred on Conanicut Island the doctor killed by Boncichon had been American and that in the name of Franco-American friendship the affair was hushed up so successfully that not even the name of the victim survived.⁵⁰⁸ De la Touche's log entry questions that interpretation especially since no other French or American primary source identifies the doctor as an American citizen.

Shortly before departure, on 1 June 1781 at 5:00 p.m., Claude Cornevin, a sergeant who had entered the artillery on 21 November 1765, was executed for trying to murder one of his officers. The reasons for the attempted murder are unclear, Blanchard, the only officer to mention the event in his journal, reports that the assassin tried to drown himself but was rescued and tried.⁵⁰⁹ Each regiment was ordered to detach one captain, one lieutenant, one sergeant and eight squads to witness and assist in the execution.⁵¹⁰

Chaque Régiment aura cet après midi à 5 heures présentes & levées pour le Capitaine un piquet composé d'un Capitaine, d'un Lt. d'un Stt. et de 8 Escouades pour assister à l'exécution d'un Sergent du Régiment Royal qui a assassiné un officier.

Detail from the *Livre d'ordre* for 1 June 1781

The execution was also recorded in the contrôle of his regiment and reported in the *Newport Mercury* but is not mentioned in any of the accounts kept by officers.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| N ^o 56. Cournevin. Claude Cournevin, fils de Claude et de Marguerite Martin. | né le 20 Mars 1765 à Châtillon. De l'artillerie, entré en 1765. Tailleur de 5. 5. 3. Châtillon. et fourche brava, fouet, les yeux rouges, gras et bien sentant, le nez court et large du bout, les lèvres épaisse, visage rond, le front couvert. | engagé le 29 Mars 1781. Auxonne. N ^o 29 Mars 1781. sergent du Régiment. engagé le 29 Mars 1781. | Exécuté à mort à mort d'honneur pour coup de fusil à la tête ou à la poitrine. 1781. |
|--|---|---|---|

Detail from the *contrôle* of the Auxonne artillery showing the entry for Cournevin.

⁵⁰⁸ For example Kennett, *French forces*, p. 57, Hattendorf, *Newport*, *The French Navy*, p. 72, quoting Kennett; Scott, *Yorktown to Valmy*, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁹ Blanchard, *Journal*, p. 115

⁵¹⁰ The ordonnance of 1 June 1776 set the strength of a fusilier company at 6 officers, 17 NCOs, 1 *cadet gentilhomme*, 1 surgeon's assistant, 116 fusiliers and 2 drummers for a total of 6 officers and 137 men. A squad or *escouade* consisted of one corporal and 11 men.

NEWPORT, June 2.
Last Tues'day arrived here from Philadelphia the Hermione and Ariel frigates.
Yesterday was executed here a serjeant of the artillery, in the French army, for attempting to murder an officer of the above regiment.

Newport Mercury 2 June 1781

The vast majority of complaints and animosities, however, concerned the use of private homes for barracks and hospitals and the damage done to these properties. No standing Army! No Quartering of troops! had been one of the rallying cries of the resistance movement, but as fall came to Rhode Island the need to house allied forces became obvious. Newporters hoped, or assumed, or maybe even were told, that they would receive rent or similar compensation for the use of their houses as quarter and barracks. As the date of departure came closer it became apparent that Rochambeau would not pay rent and compensate for damages only reluctantly. That there would be damage is understandable, even more so, if we believe William Vernon, when the renters were French. On 10 October 1780 his son Samuel Vernon told him that he "believe[d] the General takes as much care of the House as the French Men generally do, but it will sustain more damage than a Family living in it seven years. The Floors will be entirely spoiled." An angry William vented his anger to Samuel in December, telling his son that "I intend being fully paid for all damage."

If Vernon wanted to be reimbursed for damages done so did everyone else. Thomas Clarke of Newport had leased the estate of Loyalist Jahleel Brenton in March 1780 from the General Assembly for one year. Upon arrival of French forces the house was taken over and "improved as a Hospital for the Navy until some time in October and since as a Barrack for the Troops, by which means almost all the Produce of said Farm was Destroyed or Carried off by the Sailors, Soldiers or Horses belonging to the Said French." On 19 March 1781, Clarke informed the General Assembly that he had been "under an Expectation of Receiving from the French full Satisfaction for the Improvement of s[ai]d House and the Damage done." He had repeatedly applied to the French, but since "they now Refuse to pay anything

adiduate to the Damages sustained" he was petitioning the assembly to inspect the house, estimate the damages done and put pressure on Rochambeau to pay for the remaining damage. The legislature preferred not to follow this advice and instead voted the same day that Clarke "be allowed out of his rent Ten pounds in Real lawful Silver money over and above the fifty Eight Pounds Six Shilling and Eight pence that was paid him by the French."⁵¹¹

Newport Oct. 8. 1781—

After Certify. that the Damage Done to the Stores of John Malbone Esq. when in the Possession of the French Army, from there arriv-
 -als in this Town to the Present Day, in Breaking Down
 two Floors, and the Lo. of Doors Shelves &c. &c. will take
 Fifteen hundred Feet of Boards to Repair the Same, which
 including the Price of Wrought Nails &c in Repairing the Same
 will Justly and honestly Amount to Thirty Four
 Pounds Lawful money in Specie, agreeable to the best of
 our Knowledge & Judgement between man & man—

As Witness our hands

Jones Greene
 Thomas Flueger

Received by John Malbone Esq.
 Received at Newport October 7. 1781 of Messrs Wadsworth
 Agents to the French Army Thirty Four Pounds
 for the above Damages

Receipt for damages to John Malbone's stores over L 34, paid by Jeremiah Wadsworth' agent in Newport on 8 October 1781.

Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers Box 156, Folder October 1781, CTHS

⁵¹¹ Petitions vol. 18, pp. 73 RIHS.

As Rochambeau's troops were preparing to leave for Providence, Stiles Casks tried to explain to Newport's tax collectors on 8 June 1781, that he could not meet his obligation because "I . . . have not Money or goods Enough in the World Which am ready to Swear to before you or any Body—I informed you . . . that the French had my Still house, store, stable 2 men Quartered upon me and will not pay any Rents." The next day, Jonathan Easton explained that he was "obliged to put out [into the commons] part of what little live stock I had and the Remainder almost starved, the French kept there [sic] cows and horses in the meadow the whole time they stayed." Though the British occupation had been much more damaging to his fortune - they burned three of his houses, cut 800 of his trees, and left "only one house . . . crowded with British troops for near 3 years" - the French army too had deprived him of access to much-needed resources.⁵¹² It is unknown whether Casks or Easton were ever paid and/or reimbursed. John Malbone at any event was, but the damages to his store were covered by Jeremiah Wadsworth, not Rochambeau.

But paying for damages was one thing - paying rent for rooms or whole houses was something quite different. On 19 August 1780, Rochambeau had expressly forbidden any officer to take lodging in town without his prior permission, while those 91 officers billeted in houses, e.g. colonels and aides-de-camp were equally forbidden "to negotiate a price for their lodgings with their hosts before a uniform rule concerning this matter has been issued."⁵¹³ That rule, however, never seems to have been issued and French officers, as far as we know, paid no rent directly to their hosts during their stay in Newport. But many owners seem to have assumed, that they would be paid upon the departure of French forces. When they were not petitions and complaints by citizens reached the General Assembly in ever larger numbers. The legislature in turn contacted the Congressional delegates of Rhode Island on 31 May 1781 and instructed them to seek compensation for the quartering of French Army forces in the state.

When the Army of our good Ally the King of France arrived in this State - no Provision was made Either of Barracks for the Troops, Quarters for the officers, or Story for their Baggage. All the Wharves, Story, Stables Outhouses in the Town of Newport were from the urgent Necessity of the Cose immediately taken up for the Service of the French Troops, as also the best of the Dwellings some in whole, others

⁵¹² Accounts of losses during the Revolution, Stiles Casks, 8 June 1781, and Jonathan Easton, 9 June 1781, NHS.

⁵¹³ The number is that given in Alan and Mary M. Simpson, "A New Look" p. 7. The number of men actually quartered in Newport, "between 2,000 and 3,000" (p. 44) is much too low.

in great Part, for Quarters of the Officers – As soon as the Fall of the year came on and it was determined that the Army was to winter upon Rhode Island, It became necessary that covering should be provided for the Soldiery. The whole Army were quartered upon all the Inhabitants of the Town of Newport more or less indiscriminately. The whole Estate and Interest of many of the Inhabitants have been from that time entirely occupied by the French army, while the individuals have been paying taxes for those very Estates for the support of the Common Cause. In many Instances Individuals, Widows, Orphans and others have been deprived of their whole living arising from the renting of their Estates, and otherwise ingrossing them. It was at first expected by the Inhabitants whose Estates were thus taken up, That an adequate Compensation would have been allowed & paid them by Order of the King of France and many of them recd such Encouragement by the Military and Staff Officers; but they were sometime afterward informed that Quartering &c of the French Army was to be procured by Congress – But we do not learn that Congress have ever taken that Matter up, And it is with great Concern this State have Seen a Matter of so great Magnitude as yet totally neglected – That the French Army were to be provided with Quarters &c was very evident, That no one State could be persuaded to take so great, so disproportionate a Burthen upon themselves, could not be expected.⁵¹⁴

The legislature also instructed the delegates to contact the minister of France to find out whether he would pay rent and for damages since the state did not have any funds. Neither had Congress and it was only later that some Newporters were more successful in pursuing payment for their services, even if it meant application of their re-imbursements toward their tax bill. On 30 April 1782, Army Commissary de Pourcelet signed a certificate for Zephaniah Brown declaring that he/the French had occupied his warehouse in Providence “to store Provisions and other things belonging to the Army during the space of Six Months” and still owed rent of 40 Spanish Milled Dollars. That rent was to be deducted from Brown’s tax debt.⁵¹⁵

Once the French had left, the property owners returned to view their houses. Or what was left of them: sometimes it was more than just the floors that were spoiled. On 12 June, Moses Seixas went to inspect the home of Aaron and Aaron Lopez’ son

⁵¹⁴ Vault A, Box A-4, NHS.

⁵¹⁵ Revolutionary War, Military Records Mss 673, box 3 folder 129, RIHS.

Jacob at 8 Washington Square. During the winter of 1780-81, Brigadier Claude Gabriel de Choisy had lodged here with his aide-de-camp. Seixas reported that

Amongst the gone are those which held your House, etc. which was evacuated this Morning. I have been since to take a View of the house but such a collection of straw, dirt, and nastiness, I never before saw in any house that was occupied by any that *profess'd Gentility* and all that they have left poor Margeret towards cleaning it, is about a Cord of Wood. they stript the Garret of about 20 or 30 boards, most of the keys of the Stores they have carried off, with the Shelves and some of the Glass and some Timber from the Wharf. About 2 Weeks ago John Malbone¹ call'd on [me] with a petition (couch'd in decent terms) to sign in your Behalf, unto General Rochambeau for the payment of Rents contracted for, telling me he had some encouragements for adopting that mode. it was sign'd by all that had any claim on that principle which was several. I got Mr. Taber to sign it in your behalf as the properest person, and it was presented, but without any good effect, as you will perceive by the inclos'd Copy of the General's Reply, which I have just obtain'd.

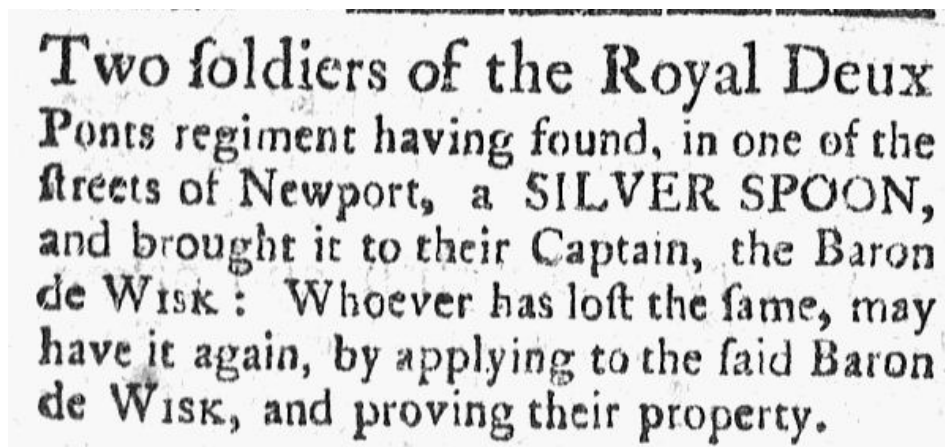
Rochambeau's reply has not survived, but since Choisy remained in Newport for a few more weeks Lopez may have received some compensation.⁵¹⁶

There were some, few problems with some naval personnel too, but again the effort to keep relations with French forces smooth is very obvious. On 24 August 1781, Governor Greene informed Ternay's successor Barras that a George Irish "complains that he hath lost from his Estate in Brenton's Neck Twenty Sheep and Lambs which he hath great Reason to think have been taken by the People

⁵¹⁶ *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 7th series vol. X: Commerce of Rhode Island 1726-1800, vol. II: 1775-1800 (Boston, 1915), p. 137. Repairs seem to have proceeded quickly since by 9 July the house was already rented to a Mr. Whitney, a refugee from Charleston, SC but a native of Norwich, CT. Before the war Aaron Lopez had been one the wealthiest men in Newport. In 1774 his household was the largest in town; it included nine males over 16 years of age and two under 16, seven females over 16 and seven females under 16, plus one Indian and five black slaves.

belonging to the Ship La Villée [L'Eveillée]. He doth Monsieur Tillée the most perfect justice in being convinced that he had no knowledge of the Affair." Based on information provided by Irish, Governor Green wrote that "I am clearly of Opinion that the People of the said Ship have through Mistake or otherwise taken his Sheep. I beg the Favor of your Excellency to inquire into this Matter, and sensible of your Disposition to do Justices have no Doubt will cause it to be done to Mr. Irish."⁵¹⁷

Mr. Irish probably received some compensation for his sheep before Barras slipped out of Newport and set sail for the Chesapeake and victory at Yorktown on 23 August 1781. For thirteen months French forces had been garrisoned in Newport. Contrary to all fears and worries those months had gone better than anyone could have hoped. The first few weeks had been difficult for reasons that could not all be laid at the feet of the French. There had been some incidents but it is important to keep in mind that it is easier to create a record for posterity for having broken the law or done an evil deed than for having been good.



Two foldiers of the Royal Deux
Ponts regiment having found, in one of the
streets of Newport, a SILVER SPOON,
and brought it to their Captain, the Baron
de Wisk : Whoever has lost the same, may
have it again, by applying to the said Baron
de Wisk, and proving their property.

Newport Mercury 2 June 1781

During those months a tremendous shift of consciousness and identity had taken place among townspeople and among many French officers as well. The *comte* de Lauberdière, in general a great admirer of Rhode Island, its citizens and their way of life and of their form of government, reflected on the fact that "J'avais toujours été imbu du principe je crois naturel à ceux qui n'ont jamais vu d'autres peuples ... that those who have never seen other peoples and never lived under a different government than their own, do not know how fortunate one can be. » the most vivid expression of this change of attitudes is perhaps the fact that in February 1783, even before the end of the war, the Rhode Island legislature voted that "all rights and

⁵¹⁷ Governor Greene Letterbooks, vol. 4, Letters from the Governor, 19 January 1780 to February 1807, RISA.

privileges of the Protestant citizens of this state ... are hereby fully extended to Roman Catholic citizens." Advances in religious tolerance are among the most importance yet least appreciated achievements of the American Revolution.

The stay of French forces in Newport added an important component to the process of the new nation's inhabitants finding themselves, finding out who they were. As French forces wound their way along the East Coast to Yorktown in 1781, this process repeated itself over and over again. Most Whigs viewed these French troops as friends and allies, but they also recognized that they were different. Getting to know other peoples and cultures also involves a process of getting to know oneself. You know who you are also by knowing who you are not. If Patriots had come to, or been forced to, recognize in 1776 that they were not Englishmen, close encounter with French forces showed them that they were not Frenchmen either. They were Americans. Through war, the establishment of their own body politic and, last but not least, encounter with others, they were defining who they were. During the summer and fall of 1781, this process of getting to know each other that had begun in Newport in 1780 repeated itself from Connecticut to Virginia. Passing through Canterbury on his way from Plainfield to Windham in late June, the *comte* de Lauberdière "spent the afternoon most pleasantly with a *country squire* (sic)" in this community of eight or ten houses. The gentleman, possibly a Tory, "had come to this place to see the French army" pass by, but had apparently arrived too late. "He has such an idea of the French" that Lauberdière had to "assure him that I really was one, he didn't want to believe me, and said to me that I had to be Scottish, that I was too white (i.e., light-skinned) for a Frenchman." The squire also thought that Lauberdière was too nice to be French: he knew that "people from that country were neither that polite nor that well mannered." Sitting most likely in what is today known as the Francis Homestead, young *comte* Lauberdière did his best to convince the gentleman that "all my compatriots use the same honesty toward all the world, even toward the English once they became our prisoners." The Connecticut Tory was pleased to hear that "since he was about to return to his neighbors and he could undeceive them as far as we were concerned, that he was delighted to have been given the opportunity to do us justice and that he would forever forget the false prejudices with which he had been filled (by the English) against us. We parted as the best of friends." And at the end of the march following Cornwallis' surrender Colonel William Fontaine of the Virginia militia wrote on 26 October 1781, that "the French are very different from the ideas formerly inculcated in us of a people living on frogs and coarse vegetables. Finer troops I never saw."⁵¹⁸ QED

⁵¹⁸ Quoted in Henry P. Johnston, *The Yorktown Campaign and the Surrender of Cornwallis 1781* (1881, repr. Eastern Acorn Press, 1990), p. 178.

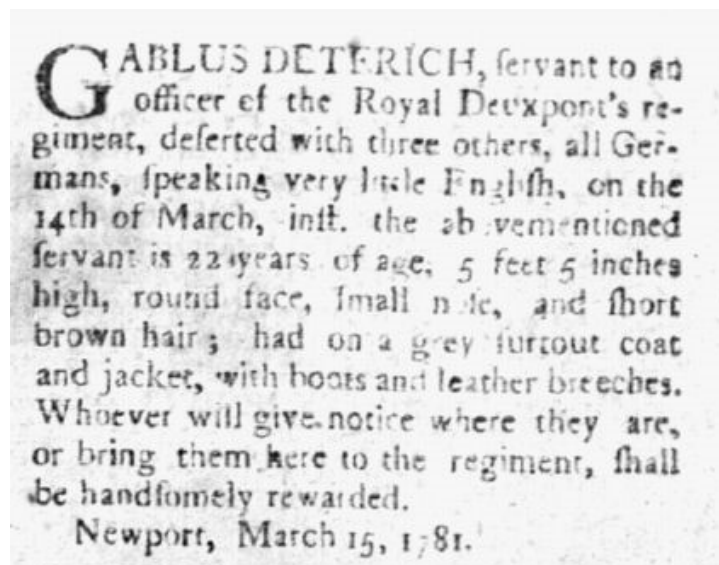
Preparations for the march to New York had been going on for months before the French forces broke camp. In April, Quartermaster-General Pierre François de Bévillie had used a visit to Washington's headquarters in New Windsor to inspect the roads from Newport to New York. Upon his return, his assistants began drawing maps and picking campsites. On 14 April, John Carter had written to Jeremiah Wadsworth: "The Quarter Master General sets off tomorrow to mark the Line of March, as soon as that is fixed the Intendant will describe the different Posts where he will want Forage, Wood, Cattle & a provided." Upon his return [from New Windsor], his assistants drew maps and picked campsites. On 25 April, Carter told Wadsworth: "Late last Night the Intendant gave me his Orders respecting the Camps as far as Hartford," and by late April the routes and campsites to White Plains were settled. That apparently was not Wadsworth's preferred route, for in a letter to Washington of 19 April, sent via Bévillie, he had suggested a route along the seacoast, but even though Washington supported such a route along the coast, Rochambeau decided upon a route to White Plains that went further inland, via Hartford and Danbury.⁵¹⁹ Concurrently Wadsworth began collecting the vast amounts of supplies needed to feed thousands of men and animals in the French columns. His agents spread out to purchase horses, hire ox-teams, and set up supply depots, and by mid-May he had also already hired "Laborers employed in building Ovens and making the necessary preparations for the accommodation of said Army on their march."⁵²⁰

As officers completed their equipment, they hired additional servants and purchased horses. Each officer whose journal has survived or who wrote letters addressing the question of servants had at least two servants, which they were not

⁵¹⁹ On 20 April, he withdrew that suggestion since he had received in the meantime a note from Rochambeau in which the general indicated his preference for a march further inland. Washington too had liked the idea of taking a route along the coast as confirmed in his letter to Wadsworth from New Windsor, dated 30 April 1781. It reads in part "Dear Sir: ... General Beville having made the tour from Rhode Island to Camp, and back again on different routes, and having taken every precaution, to obtain an accurate knowledge of the Country and roads; will be able to advise and settle with the Commanding Officer of the french Army, which will be the most convenient route for the March of the Troops, taking every circumstance into consideration. On many accounts, the March on the Sea Coast would certainly be the most eligible, and indeed I see no considerable obstacle in the way of it, except the Ferries." Transcripts of these letters are available at the internet edition of the Washington papers at the Library of Congress website.

⁵²⁰ Florence S. Marcy Crofut, *Guide to the History and Historic Sites of Connecticut* 2 vols., (New Haven, 1937), Vol. 1, p. 69. The location of the ovens is unknown. According to Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, Vol. 2, p. 12, the troops were to "draw four days' rations" in Hartford. Each division ... will be followed by a sufficient number of wagons to carry bread for four more days."

allowed to draw from the ranks. Even company grade officers below the rank of captain, who had kept only one servant during winter quarters in Newport, viz., Count Schwerin, who in spite of his financial difficulties had spent 15 *livres* in cash wages and 35 *livres* for food each month plus a clothing allowance for his servant, hired a second servant and purchased three additional horses for the campaign. Cromot Du Bourg hired two servants and purchased four more horses as did his fellow aide-de-camp Baron Closen who entered the campaign "with two servants and four horses".⁵²¹ That the officer servants were not taken from the ranks is confirmed by an advertisement in the Newport Mercury of 17 March 1781. "Gablus Deterich, servant to an officer of the Royal Deuxpont's regiment, deserted with three others, all Germans, speaking very little English, on the 14th of March, inst. the abovementioned servant is 22 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, round face, small nose, and short brown hair; had on a grey furrou coat and jacket, with boots and leather breeches. Whoever will give notice where they are, or bring them here to the regiment, shall be handsomely rewarded. Newport, March 15, 1781."



Newport Mercury 17 March 1781

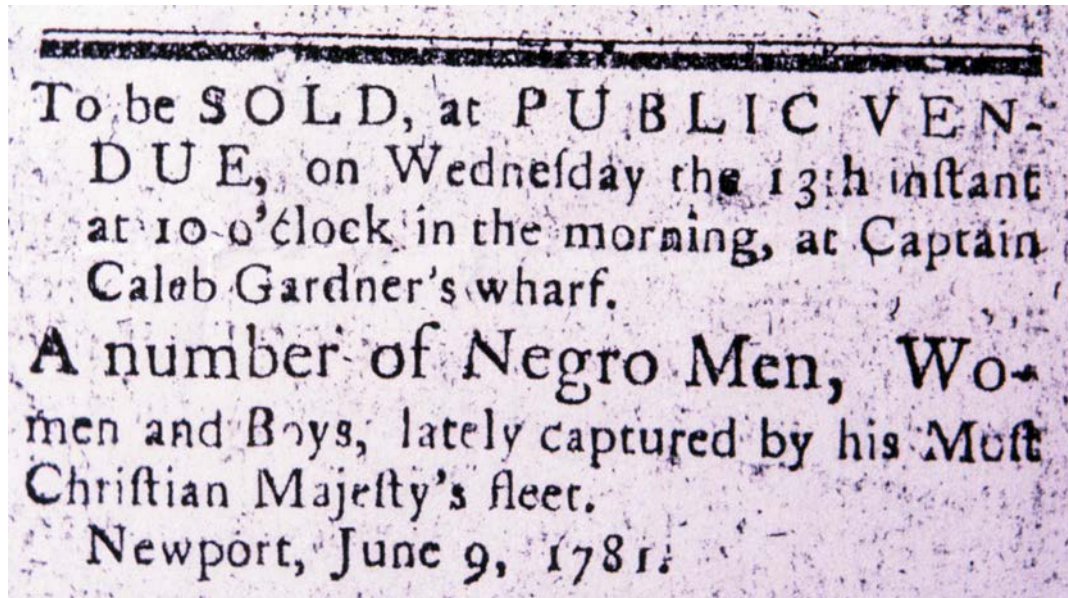
The four servants deserted together on 14 March 1781

Deterich does not appear in the contrôles of the regiment. The logistical burden of this multitude of servants on Rochambeau's forces should not be underestimated: if every officer had two servants and four or five horses, they added close to 1,000 men, the equivalent of an additional regiment of mouths to feed, and at least 1,500 horses to the columns.

Rochambeau and his fellow generals had eight, ten, or more servants, but many of them tried to acquire one of the most important status symbols of the eighteenth century: a black servant. One of Closen's servants was a black man named Peter, "born of *free* parents in Connecticut," who accompanied him to Europe in 1783. The

⁵²¹ Closen, *Journal*, p. 83 and p. 187.

last opportunity to acquire a black man – or woman – before the departure from Rhode Island came on 13 June 1781. On 9 June 1781, the *Newport Mercury* ran an advertisement that on Wednesday, 13 June, "at 10 o'clock in the morning, at Captain Caleb Gardner's wharf, A number of Negro Men, Women and Boys, lately captured by his Most Christian Majesty's fleet" would be sold to the highest bidder



In what may have been a pre-public sale, Rochambeau on 5 June 1781 acquired an unnamed African-American slave "fait prisonnier lors de la prise de 'La Molli' – taken prisoner in the capture of the 'Molli'" on 19 February 1781. The purchase price, 170 Spanish Silver dollars or about 900 livres, was a bit more than 1/3 of the 100 guineas or 2,450 livres the *marquis* de Laval had paid Wadsworth for a 10-year-old stallion in April 1781.⁵²² How did these slaves get to Newport?

On 9 February 1781, Captain Le Gardeur de Tilly had sailed from Newport for Virginia on the 64-gun *l'Eveill * accompanied by the frigates *La Gentille* and *La Surveillante* plus the cutter *La Gu pe*. His task was to assist in the capture of Benedict Arnold, who had disembarked with 1,200 men at Portsmouth on 31 December 1780, captured Richmond on 5 January 1781 and was wreaking havoc on the plantations along the James and York rivers. On 18 February 1781, Tilly's small

⁵²² Mus e de Rennes, *Les Fran ais dans la Guerre d'Ind pendance Am ricaine* (Rennes, 1976), p. 83. I have not seen this "Acte du vente d'un negre au Compte de Rochambeau, Newport 5 June 1781" which in 1976 was owned by the *marquis* de Rochambeau. The identification in the exhibition catalogue that « la Molli » was captured by Admiral Barras is wrong: the frigate *La Concorde* carrying Barras left Brest on 12 April only, arriving in Boston on 8 May 1781.

flotilla arrived off Cape Henry where it took the corsair *Earl Cornwallis* (16 guns and a 50-man crew), the *Revenge* (12 guns and a 20-man crew), a third corsair of 8 guns and a 25-man crew (possibly called *Duke of York*) as well as a sloop carrying a load of flour. On the 19th she chased and took the *Romulus* of 44 guns and a 260-man crew as well as a brick with 59 *réfugies* from Virginia. Many of the refugees were slaves who had run away from their owners in the hope of gaining their freedom upon reaching British lines. One of the 59 refugees captured on the brick, i.e. the “La Molli – the “Molly”, was Rochambeau’s slave.⁵²³ Worrying about being trapped by a larger British fleet, Tilly decided to return to Rhode Island and sailed back into the harbor of Newport on 3 March.⁵²⁴

We do not know the slave’s whereabouts between his arrival on 3 March and the sale on 5 June, and he may, or may not, have been part and parcel of those identified as “lately captured by his Most Christian Majesty's fleet” to be sold on 13 June. That fleet consisting of seven ships of the line and the recently captured frigate *Romulus* under Charles René Dominique Sochet, *Chevalier* Destouches (or Des Touches), again tasked with assisting in the capture of Benedict Arnold, had sailed from Newport on 8 March 1781, with all of Rochambeau’s grenadiers and chasseurs, almost 1,200 troops, on board, and fought a Royal Navy squadron under Admiral Mariot Arbuthnot off Cape Henry on 16 March before returning to Newport by 26 March 1781. Again it is unknown why the sale of the captured slaves was advertised almost 10 weeks later for 13 June, but it may well have been connected with the departure of French forces: around 5:00 a.m. in the morning of 10 June 1781, the first Brigade of French forces had begun to embark on vessels in the harbor of Newport that took them to Providence. Or maybe French officers had had their pick and the remaining slaves were sold on the “open market” as the case may be.

Other French officers besides Rochambeau and Closen were acquiring, or had already acquired, slaves as well. Rochambeau’s chief medical officer Jean-François Coste⁵²⁵ had bought himself a slave as well: we know that since the young man ran

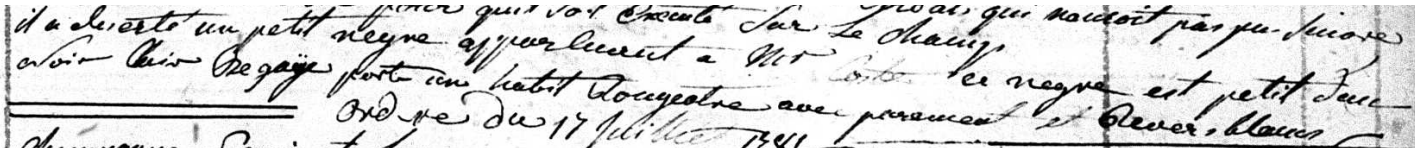
⁵²³ *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, vol. 9 no. 7 (June 1903), pp. 189/90.

⁵²⁴ See also Tilly to Washington of 15 March 1784, in which he wrote of “LEveill  et Deux fr gate avec Lesquels je me Suis Rend e Maitre Du vaisseau Le Romulusse, Le Duc De york, La Goil tte La Revange Et plusieurs Austre petits Batiments Dont je Remie Les prisoniers.” <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-01-02-0161>

⁵²⁵ See Louis Trenard, “Un d fenseur des h pitaux militaires: Jean-Fran ois Coste” *Revue du Nord* vol. 75, Nr. 299, (January 1993), pp. 149-180, and Raymond Bolzinger, “A propos du bicentenaire de la guerre de l’Ind pendance des  tats-Unis 1775-1783: Le service de sant  de l’arm e Rochambeau et ses participants messins” *M moires de l’Acad mie Nationale de Metz* vol. 4/5, (1979), pp. 259-284.

away at the encampment in White Plains. Rochambeau's *Livre d'ordre* records for 16 July 1781:

Il a deserté un petit negre appartenant a Mr Coste ce negre est petit d'un esoir Chuir
(?) Begagye porte un habit Rougeotre avec parament et Revers blancs



It has deserted a little (young) negro belonging to Mr Coste this negro is young/small, of a (?), studders, has on a reddish coat with facings and white lapels

Identifying the “Chevalier Dillon” who likely purchased a female slave (or had a black female servant) around that time is more difficult. François Théobald Dillon, born 1764, served as a sous-lieutenant in Lauzun’s Legion and aide-de-camp to Chastellux; Guillaume Henri, born 1760, served as a captain in the Legion and the third brother Robert Guillaume, born 1754, served as Lauzun’s *colonel-en-second*, his second in command. For reasons unknown the buyer, if this is what happened, had his new property checked out by Dr. Tillinghast. The slave auction took place on 13 June; Dr. William Tillinghast’s “Account Book” contains an entry for 14 June 1781 for treating “Monsr Chevalier Dilands negro Woman”. The entry is repeated on 16 June.⁵²⁶ The date may be purely coincidental, but Robert Guillaume is the most likely candidate for the “Chevalier Dillon”. Dillon had accompanied Lauzun on the Spring of 1779 campaign to Senegal where Fort St. Louis fell on 11 February 1779. In his *Mémoires Pontigaud de Moré* tells of a love-affaire of Dillon with the wife of the King of Cayor, “aussi belle que la plus belle negresse”.⁵²⁷

How did Destouches “capture” these slaves? Mostly be accident, it seems. Some, if not all, of these slaves formed part of a group that had run away from their owners in the spring of 1781 when they learned of the arrival of Crown forces under

⁵²⁶ Tillinghast Account Book 1777-1785. Vault A, Shelf no. 6, call no. 1313, NHS.

⁵²⁷ Surprised by the King’s prime-minister during a *rendez-vous* in her tent, Dillon was saved from certain death by the Queen’s confidante who threatened to shoot him (with Dillon’s pistols) if he entered the tent before he had received the queen’s permission. Pontgibaud, *Mémoires*, pp. 113/114. See François William van Brock, “Le Lieutenant General Robert Dillon” *Revue historique des armées* (1985), pp. 14-29, p. 17; an English translation was published in *The Irish Sword* vol. 14 no. 55 (1980), pp. 172-187. See also J Monteilhet, « Le Duc de Lauzun, gouverneur du Sénégal, janvier-mars 1779 » *Extrait du Bulletin du Comité d’études historiques et scientifiques de l’Afrique occidentale française* no.1 (January-March 1920), pp. 193-237 ; Lauzun’s « Journal du Sénégal » is published *ibid.* on pp. 515-562.

Benedict Arnold in Virginia. Their plight occupied the Rhode Island court system ten years later.⁵²⁸ According to court documents, the slave named Robert who initiated the legal proceedings ran away from his owner in early in 1781, leaving behind his enslaved mother and father. Robert hailed from Port Royal in Caroline County, Virginia (an incorporated town with a population of 126 according to the 2000 census on the Rappahannock River about 20 miles south of Fredericksburg). Robert and the other slaves probably hoped to obtain his freedom by serving in the British army during the American Revolution. Making his way down the Rappahannock, Robert, along with some fellow runaways, boarded one of Destouches' vessels stationed in the Chesapeake Bay. Perhaps Robert and the others thought that their chances of securing freedom would improve by boarding a French vessel but it is more likely that they mistook the French vessel for a British ship. Either way, boarding the French vessel did not mean freedom but rather more years in slavery. Destouches brought the slaves to Newport -- where based on a 1774 Rhode Island law forbidding the importation of slaves they should have been freed.

Destouches was probably unaware of that law but Rhode Island and Newport authorities should have been and thus should have prohibited the sale. They did not. Maybe they did not want to annoy their "illustrious ally." On 13 June the sale went ahead as planned. After trading bids with Henry Sherburne, Newport baker Godfrey Wainwood purchased Robert for 170 Spanish silver dollars, the same price Rochambeau had paid for his slave a few days earlier. In 1789 a dispute arose over the length of the contract Robert was supposed to work for Wainwood; Wainwood claimed nine years, Robert claimed seven years. After lengthy legal proceeding it was in the fall of 1791 that Robert was finally "[wrested] from the iron grasps of despotism and [restored] to the capacity of enjoying himself as a man."⁵²⁹

Coste's slave, as we have seen, ran away outside New York City in July 1781 and the fates of Rochambeau's and Dillon's slaves are unknown. But if any of them did accompany their owners to France they would almost certainly have become free. Even though France was actively engaged in the slave trade and permitted slavery in her colonies, in France proper slavery of any kind was illegal since the Middle

⁵²⁸ The following paragraphs are based on the description of Robert's case at http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/damiano/background%206-10.html#18 See also John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore, 2003), pp. 61.

⁵²⁹ Providence Abolition Society Minute Book, 18 November 1791, quoted at http://www.brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/damiano/background%206-10.html#18 While his case wound its way through the court system Robert lived as a free man with various families in Newport, viz. the account book of Thomas Robinson 1753-1794, p. 195 with an entry of August 1790 regarding Robert. Vault A, Shelf no. 19, call no. 490, NHS.

Ages, when King Louis X had decreed on 3 July 1315 that "According to natural law all men are born free."⁵³⁰ Louis' decree was upheld and reconfirmed repeatedly by French courts, the *parlements*, on the grounds that France, described by the *Parlement* of Guyenne in 1571 as "the mother of liberty," cannot allow slavery on her territory. In 1716, the Regency published an edict permitting colonials to bring their slaves to France under certain conditions i.e. as servants or to learn a craft, but they had to be returned to colonies within a certain number of years. If not, the slave would become free. The next decades saw numerous – failed – attempts by planters in the French colonies to tighten the slave laws in and for France proper, i.e., in 1723 and 1724, and on 15 December 1738 a Royal edict set the time limit for residency of slaves in France to three years and tightened bureaucratic controls. Since the *Parlement* of Paris which held jurisdiction over almost 2/3 of continental France did not register these decrees, they were not valid in almost 2/3 of continental France. On the contrary, the *Parlement* made it a point to manumit any slave asking for his/her freedom. Responding to complaints by planters that there was a virtual network of support for their slaves assisting them in gaining freedom the moment they stepped ashore, Choiseul in June 1763 asked Colonial administrators in the Caribbean not to allow any blacks to embark for France; on 9 August 1777, a Royal decree published expressly forbade the importation of any free black or slave into the kingdom; those who were still in France were to be sent back to colonies. This decree the *Parlement* of Paris registered and surely Rochambeau and his officers knew the law before they purchased or otherwise acquired black servants and/or – but apparently were prepared to ignore it.⁵³¹

While French forces quartered in Virginia in 1781/82, slaves frequently sought French protection,⁵³² but in at least one case a slave used the presence of French

⁵³⁰ *Ordonnances des Rois de France* (Paris, 1723) vol. 1, p. 583 : « Comme selon le droit de nature chacun doit naistre franc. »

<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1181592/f639.image> The theme is expertly covered in Sue Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancient Regime* (Oxford, University Press, 1996) and in the collection of primary sources by Pierre H. Boulle and Sue Peabody, *Le Droit des Noirs en France au Temps de l'esclavage Textes choisis et commentés* (Paris, 2014).

⁵³¹ At any given point there are probably fewer than 2,000 blacks in France, 75% or more of them living in Paris. In February 1782, Navy Minister Castries formed a legislative committee tasked to find out the numbers and status of blacks in the kingdom.

⁵³² Virginians were convinced that French officers were hiding their slaves by claiming them as their servants, trying to spirit them out of the state. In a letter to Governor Harrison of May 1782, William Dandridge claimed that one of his slaves, a "very likely and valuable fellow" was employed by a French Major who refused to turn him over since the man claimed to be a freeman, and he had therefore a right to employ him. Since then that slave had disappeared only to be replaced by another run-away. *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*

forces in Connecticut to gain his (temporary?) freedom. On 6 June 1781, Samuel Talcott Jr of Hartford sent Jeremiah Wadsworth his "Negro Man Addam". Addam had told Talcott "that A French General Lodging at Mr Caleb Bull Junr Wants to hire him as an attendant and will Clouth him and Give Good Wages he says he doth not know wheather the General Wants to Buy [him]." Talbott preferred to sell Addam – he "don't want the fellow but I want Money" and asked Wadsworth to take over the task of selling Addam. Addam took the letter and may, or may not, have returned to Bull's Tavern. He certainly did not go to Wadsworth since on 26 June Talcott told Wadsworth that Addam "hath since disappeared" and asked Wadsworth' assistance in recovering his slave.⁵³³ There is no evidence that Addam returned to his owner.

Africans had served in the armed forces of France since the late 17th century, most recently in the spring of 1779, when Capitaine Vincent was instrumental in recruiting black volunteers for Admiral Charles d'Estaing. In August 1779, the 545 black men of the Chasseurs Volontaires (and 156 white Volunteer Grenadiers) set sail for the American mainland, where they took part in the failed siege of Savannah in October. The following spring, a company of these chasseurs, some 60 men strong, were the sole French troops participating in the defense of Charleston, South Carolina, where they were taken prisoner. Quite possibly their captors sold them back into slavery in the Carribean: the sale of captured Blacks, formerly, slaves, or run-aways, was common practice on all sides. When the *comte* de Rochambeau's expeditionary corps stepped ashore in Newport in June 1780, it counted at least one black soldier in its ranks: Jean-Baptiste Pandoua from Madagascar, who had joined the Bourbonnois regiment as a musician in January 1777; he deserted on 27 October 1782 while his regiment was quartered in Connecticut.

It is unknown whether Captain Mathieu Dumas, aide-de-camp to Rochambeau and later *aide-major général des logis* (assistant quartermaster-general) owned a slave as well or whether he had hired the black man in this portrait painting by

and other Manuscripts vol. 3 (Richmond, 1883), p.183. The issue is expertly treated in Samuel F. Scott, "Strains in the Franco-American Alliance: The French Army in Virginia, 1781-82" in: *Virginia in the American Revolution* Richard A. Rutyna and Peter C. Stewart, eds., (Norfolk, 1983), pp. 80-100, and *Yorktown to Valmy*, pp. 79/80.

There is evidence that some French officers, esp. in the confusion following the surrender at Yorktown, did indeed spirit Blacks on board some of de Grasse' ships and transported them to the Caribbean where they were sold as slaves onto the sugar plantations.

⁵³³ The letter with the postscript is in Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers Box 131, CTHS. No other correspondence relating to this incident has been found. The unidentified officers most likely stayed at "Bull's Tavern at the Sign of the Bunch of Grapes" strategically located across from the State House in the eighteenth century. In January 1781 the *chevalier* de Chastellux stayed there. Chastellux, *Travels*, vol. 1, p. 229. The site at 777 Main Street is occupied today by the Fleet Bank Building but a historic marker commemorates the tavern.

Albane. When in Newport Dumas lodged with Joseph Anthony in Spring Street. (The house is no longer standing) Doniol identifies the painting as having been executed in Providence in 1780.⁵³⁴ When in Providence Dumas stayed with Deputy Governor William Bowen.⁵³⁵ His house was torn down in 1850.⁵³⁶



⁵³⁴ Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 3 p. IX, fn 1.

⁵³⁵ Dumas, *Memoires*, pp. 32-33.

⁵³⁶ Preston, "Providence", p. 8.

Other officers hired free blacks as servants, most of whom remained in the United States. If they lived long enough their names appear in pension applications of the 1820s and 1830s, viz. Jacob Francis:

On this Ninteenth day of June in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Nine Personally came and appeared before Richard Riker Recorder of said city; Jacob Francis a couloured man who made solemn oath that he is now about Sixty years of age, that during the War of the Revolution he was a servant in the French Army under the command of Rochambeau, that he was present at Little York in Virginia at the taking of Cornwallis, and although a Boy of Twelve or Thirteen years of Age he perfectly well remembers seeing Edward Coleman ... And further this Deponent saith not.
*Jacob hisXmark Francis*⁵³⁷

Baron Closen, on the other hands, whose black servant Peter had been "born of free parents in Connecticut," accompanied him to Europe in 1783.⁵³⁸

With Wadsworth and Rochambeau assembling their draft animals, the time had also come for the artillery horses to leave their quarters in Colchester. On 20 April, Lauzun received orders from Rochambeau to send 50 artillery horses from Colchester to Newport.⁵³⁹ The following day, *sous-lieutenant* Jennings de Kilmaine rode into Colchester with three hussars to supervise the departure of the horses, which took place on 21 May 1781. The first French forces to leave Newport were ten of the about fifty hussars of Lauzun's Legion quartered in the town who departed for Lebanon on 25 May 1781, "a pied," on foot, under the command of their *porte-étendard* de Vrigny and with a four-day supply of bread and meat.⁵⁴⁰ On 29 May, Lauzun sent an advance guard of 10 hussars to Hartford and asked Wadsworth to

⁵³⁷ Included in Pension Application R2160 of Edward Coleman, "a coloured man" enlisted in the Company commanded by Captain Sinclair, in the regiment commanded by Colonel Mayhem or Maiham" i.e. Hezekiah Maham, 3d SC Regt. In 1829 both men lived in New York City.

⁵³⁸ Acomb, Closen, p. 187.

⁵³⁹ Lauzun to Wadsworth, 21 April 1781. Call no. 973.3 D 49L, Connecticut State Library, Hartford. On 15 June, however, Rochambeau was still complaining from Providence that the horses for the artillery had not yet all arrived and hoped that they would join up along the route, otherwise he would have to make a two-day stop in Hartford. Rochambeau to Washington, 15 June 1781, Rochambeau Papers, Library of Congress, vol. 9, Letterbook 1.

⁵⁴⁰ The following paragraphs are based on the instructions for the Legion recorded in Rochambeau's *livre d'ordre*; for more details see my *Hussars in Lebanon! A Connecticut Town and Lauzun's Legion during the American Revolution, 1780-1781* (Lebanon, 2004). It is unknown why these hussars had to march on foot to Lebanon.

provide straw and quarters for them.⁵⁴¹ Another 31 hussars under the command of one captain and a lieutenant received orders on 3 June to depart for Lebanon the next day via Providence. On 2 June distribution of equipment for the infantry began. This included the eight-man tents for the infantry, *manteaux d'armes* or watch coats to be worn over the tunic and the equipment of a soldier doing guard duty in inclement weather, *marmittes* or large cooking pots, *gamelles* or communal eating plates, *grand bidons*, i.e., large water cans, *petits bidons* or personal canteens, pickaxes, billhooks, shovels, and axes.⁵⁴² Four days later, on 6 June in the as yet clearest indication that the campaign was about to begin, each regiment received 1,500 "cartouches à balle", about two rounds per soldier, to practice live firing the next day for the first time since their arrival almost a year earlier.

On 5 June 1781, the day the town council of Newport voted "to draw up an address of thanks, to His Excell[enc]y General Rochambeau, for his particular Attention for the Welfare of this Town during his command here," the infantry and artillery of Lauzun's Legion received orders to leave their camp at the "Pointe du Neck" and to march to Newport where they were to embark at 6:00 a.m. the next day for Providence. Here they were to wait for the arrival of the wagons to transport "les equipages" to Lebanon.⁵⁴³ In Providence they were to receive 1/2 truss of straw to sleep on and the wood they needed to cook their soup. From Providence they were to march to Waterman's Tavern in Coventry, Rhode Island, thence to Plainfield, on to Windham, and on the fourth day of the march they were to arrive in Lebanon. The hussars still in Newport, except two express riders who remained behind, were to spend the night of 6/7 June in the barracks at Poppasquash and join the infantry at Providence on the 7th where they would receive a four-day supply of meat and corn meal for their bread. The wait for the wagons took almost a week and it was already 13 June when the infantry received orders to depart for Lebanon on 14 June, where they arrived on 16 June.

As the men of the Legion wound their way to Lebanon Lieutenant-Colonel Hugau remained behind in Providence where he received orders on 13 June to march to Lebanon on Saturday, 16 June, with the replacements for the Legion from the Royal Barrois that were due to arrive that day from Boston. The 17 replacements who were sick would have to remain behind. Since it took four days to get to Lebanon from Newport, it was already Tuesday, 19 June 1781, when the whole Legion was gathered in Lebanon.

⁵⁴¹ Connecticut State Library, Lauzun to Wadsworth, 29 May 1781. Call no. 973.3 D 49L.

⁵⁴² Exact numbers are recorded in great detail for each regiment in the *livre d'orde*.

⁵⁴³ See also Acomb, *Closen*, p. 82: "On the 3rd, the 50 hussars from Lauzun's legion, who had remained in Newport, and on the 6th, all the Legion's infantry, left for Lebanon."

To the Sheriff and Town Council, Representatives of the inhabitants of the town of Newport.

GENTLEMEN,

WITH the most exalted sentiments of gratitude, I received the address you have been pleased to present in behalf of the inhabitants of this town. With peculiar pleasure I take this public opportunity of acknowledging the goodness of the inhabitants to our troops, and the wisdom of their magistrates have made my business easy—Being sensible by this mark of their satisfaction, of having complied with the orders and inclination of General Rochambeau (whose esteem for the Americans and true attachment to their cause is so well known) I think myself happy.

By your mentioning my soldierly transactions, in your army at Saratoga, you put me in mind of the most glorious event to the American arms, and impress my heart with the desire to fight again in the same noble cause. I ardently wish to be re-united in the field to my old brave fellow-soldiers, and to deserve once more their applause.

Du Bouchet, Deputy Adjutant-General of the French army.
Newport, 26th August, 1781.

To Major Du Bouchet, Deputy-Adjutant-General of the army of our illustrious ally, at Newport.

SIR,

HAVING understood you were about to leave this town, we, by the request of a large number of the inhabitants, uniting with us in the same principles of gratitude, do present you with our unfeigned thanks for your extraordinary and successful efforts, in preserving the peace and harmony so conspicuous in this town, during the time it has been garrisoned by your troops, under the command of Count de Rochambeau, a nobleman who will ever be esteemed and respected by us, and all true friends to America.

And being ever mindful of your distinguished valour at Saratoga, on the seventh day of October, 1777, when you was promoted to the rank of Major, under the command of General Gates. We wish you to add to those laurels, which you won in the cause of liberty and America.

Done at Newport, the 20th day of August, A. D. 1781, and in the sixth year of Independence.

WILLIAM DAVIS, Sheriff }
of the County. }
WILLIAM TAGGART, }
ROBERT TAYLOR, } Members of
DANIEL HOLLOWAY, } the Town
JOHN PITNAM, } Council.

Newport Mercury of 1 September 1781

By then the remainder of Rochambeau's forces was getting ready to embark on the march as well. But as the troops got ready to break camp, tensions ran high among the officers. No one wanted to share the fate of *aide-major-general* Du Bouchet, appointed chief of staff in Newport, who felt slighted, though he had served in the Continental Army, spoke English and was the perfect choice for the position. When Lauberdière offered to buy his horses since he would have no need of them, Du Bouchet took that for an insult and challenged Lauberdière to a duel. Lauberdière was "seriously wounded" in this *affaire d'honneur*, Du Bouchet was almost killed. Mauduit du Plessis, second to both of them, had to help pull Lauberdière's sword out of Du Bouchet's shoulder, where it had lodged underneath the collar bone. "For a few days" Lauberdière's life was in danger, but since he had defended his honor so valiantly in his first duel, he received "demonstrations of the most conspicuous concern ... from all his comrades and all the general and superior officers." Once the duelists had recovered, Choisy invited his officers to dinner where the two antagonists embraced. Lauberdière left Newport on 23 June; Du

Bouchet sailed to Virginia with Barras.⁵⁴⁴ Upon his departure the Newport Town Council on 20 August 1781 issued an official note of thanks published in the *Newport Mercury* of 1 September 1781 next to Du Bouchet's reply.

While some were anxious to leave Rhode Island, others would have preferred to remain. During the stay many of the high-ranking officers had established cordial relations with their hosts. The list of beautiful young ladies who had their virtues praised in the writings of French officers is long.⁵⁴⁵ Some of these family connections, renewed when French forces returned to Rhode Island in 1782, lasted into the 1790s, and were renewed when officers such as Noailles sought refuge in the United States from the carnage of the French Revolution.⁵⁴⁶ Other hearts were broken as well. Polly Scott, daughter of his landlord George Scott, where he had been quartered in 1780/81, was quite enamored with Christian de Deux-Ponts. In September 1781, Polly thanked him in less than perfect grammar and spelling for his "agreeable favor" while looking forward to the day when "my Dear friend will return to my impatience arms and I shall be once more be happy."⁵⁴⁷ She was hoping that day would come with the arrival of "the Dear winter." She was grateful for the "many proofs of the most tender love." Lucy was not going to be happy, however. Christian spent the "Dear winter" of 1781/82 in Virginia breaking the heart of Lucy Randolph.⁵⁴⁸ Following his return to Newport in the fall of 1782, Christian renewed his acquaintance. In late November 1782, Polly wrote to "Oh My Dear friend" that she "will never forget your friendship to me nor last Sutterday the 23d of november

⁵⁴⁴ Lauberdière's account is based on his *Journal* in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. On Du Bouchet see Morris Bishop, "A French Volunteer" *American Heritage* vol. 17. Nr. 5, (August 1966), pp. 47, 103-108, and my "A French Volunteer who lived to rue America's Revolution: Denis Jean Florimond de Langlois, Marquis du Bouchet" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 21, no. 3, June/July 1999, pp. 16-25.

⁵⁴⁵ See for example the description in Stone, *French allies*, pp. 256-274

⁵⁴⁶ Noailles' correspondence with the Robinson Family was published by Anna Wharton Wood, "The Robinson Family and their Correspondence with the vicomte and vicomtesse de Noailles." *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* no. 42 (October 1922), pp. 1-35. For his later career during the French Revolution see Maurice Gaignaire, "Le glorieux destin d'un gentilhomme contestataire: le vicomte de Noailles." *Revue Historique des Armées* no. 4 (1982), pp. 52-67 and Doina Pasca Harsan, *Lessons from America: Liberal French Nobles in Exile, 1793-1798* (University Park, 2010).

⁵⁴⁷ Polly Scott's two letters and six of Lucy Randolph's coded letters are part of the Nachlass Gravenreuth, Geheimes Hausarchiv, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München. Seven more letters by Lucy Randolph to Christian are in the Nachlass Christian Graf von Forbach, Freiherr von Zweibrücken, Signatur N 73, Pfälzische Landesbibliothek Speyer, Germany.

⁵⁴⁸ On Christian and Lucy Randolph see my "And is, Alas! The Hour of our Parting Come?" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 18, no. 4, (Summer 1996), pp. 46-53, and "The Prince and the Pauper: Christian von Zweibrücken and Lucy Randolph" *German Life* vol. 6, no. 2, (August/September 1999), pp. 40-42.

shall always be fresh in my memory I will set it down as the happyest day of my life. ... Due come once more & and if you cannot come at Least write me one line of comfort my heart is so full." She urged him not to "forget what you promised me:" his portrait. Polly was "sure you can find a Limner in Boston pray due it is the last favour I ask of my ... adoreable and Ammible friend."

Oh My Dear friend
 How can I survive the Loss of such a friend
 oh how have I been flattering myself with your
 Company this winter & now all my hopes are gone
 and I never expect to see you again but I will
 never forget your friendship to me nor Last
 Saturday the 23^d of November shall always
 be fresh in my memory I will set it down as
 the happyest day of my Life Little did I
 think it would be the Last I should spend
 with you and still hope it may not be
 Due come once more & if you cannot come at
 Least write me one line of Comfort my heart
 is so full I can write no more tears is the
 all relief I have sleep is a stranger to me Good
 Love no more torment more
 my Dearest and best friend Don't forget
 promised me I am sure you can find a Limner
 in Boston pray Due

None of the relationships resulted in marriage between a soldier or officer and a local woman and there is no suggestion of any illegitimate children being born. That had to wait until the next winter quarter in Virginia, where Rachel Warrington on 3 November 1782 became the mother of the *comte de Lauberdière* son.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁹ See my "The Freshest Advices" *Colonial Williamsburg. The Journal of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation* vol. 19, no. 1, (Fall 1996), pp. 14-15. On 15 August 1783, Lucy

On the Departure of the French Army from
Newport Rhode Island May 1781

53

Moved by the music's martial band I rode
to see the Troops depart
Their looks beyond their best reports
while Anguish rends their hearts.

And as they pass each weeping fair
In sighs their milder souls
for inward truth bids them declare
They wish them for their friends.

Their pleasing form in gentle air
alas! too well approved:
a modest blush forbids declare
with how much truth we have!

No more we seek with nicest care
Our ornament to please;
no more in curls or plaited hair
gather with becoming grace.

Our grand Parade no more is seen
Dressed with red, & white & ~~Jaipomais~~ Regt.
The waving plume's supports of green & ~~Jaipomais~~ Regt.
no more to bless our sight

The charms of music's power resign
Our evening hours too
where wild & blunder with furrow shine
alas! to all we bid adieu!

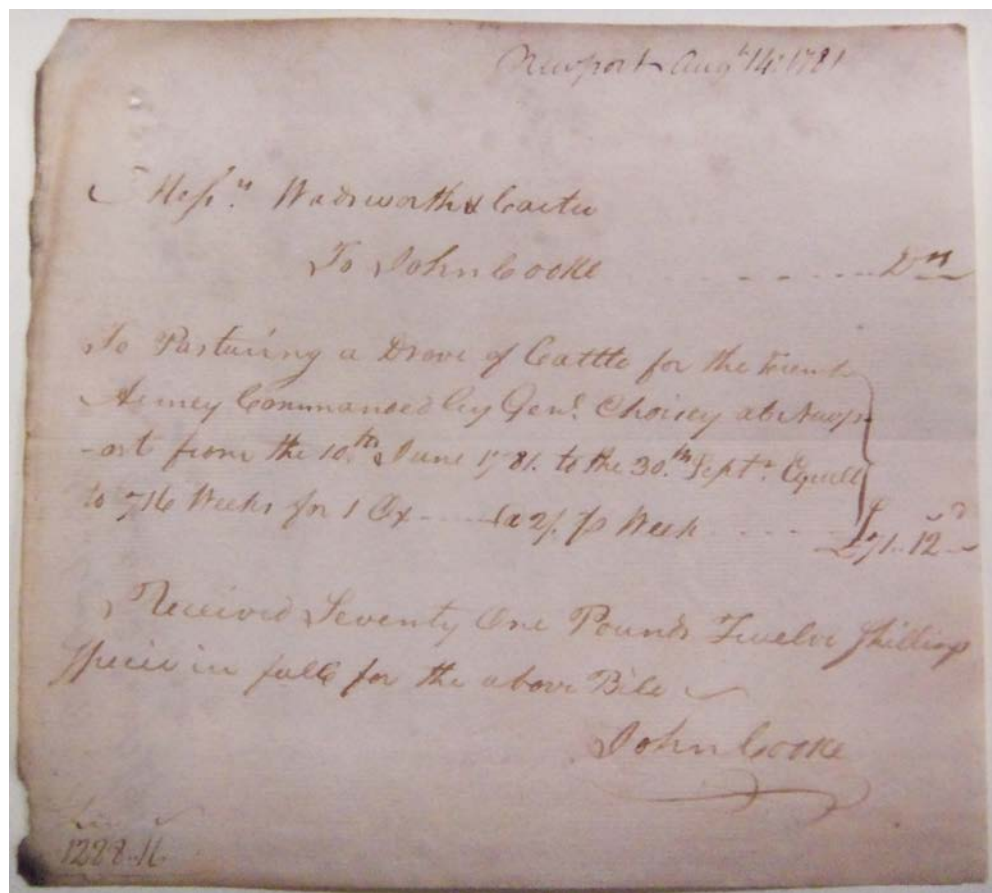
— by Miss Monford

Randolph informed Count Christian de Deux-Ponts, that Rachel had been safely delivered of "a son, whom she named Louis after his father Monsieur Lobidier." Little Louis was never acknowledged by his father. Louis/Lewis Warrington graduated from William and Mary in 1798, entered the U.S. Navy in 1800, and in 1814 was voted a Congressional Gold Medal for having captured 19 enemy vessels. He died in 1851 as Chief of Ordnance in the U.S. Navy.

Ms Mumford, possibly the daughter of Nathaniel Mumford, host of Christisan's brother William de Deux-Ponts, at 533 Broad Street, penned this poem entitled "On the departure of the French Army from Newport Rhode Island May 1781". Lauberdière copied a French translation into his journal. All in all, however, most officers would have agreed with Berthier who summed up his experiences thus:

The whole army had spent a delightful winter in Newport, and as each man got the word and prepared to leave, the pleasures ceased and gave way to regrets in which the whole town joined, especially the women.

Although Newport is largely inhabited by Tories, and the English had such a low opinion of the French that on our arrival its residents had closed their doors to us, there was now a universal sigh of regret. Everyone's feelings had changed so much that each officer was like a member of his host's family.



Receipt for supplies provided to Brigadier Choisy's forces in Providence. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS

10.2 The Detachments under Brigadier Choisy and Major De Prez

Before he could leave, however, Rochambeau still had to give his instructions to Brigadier Choisy and the detachment under his command left behind in Newport and Providence.⁵⁵⁰ On 10 July 1781, Choisy's garrison numbered 436 NCOs and enlisted men, including 34 men who remained behind with the siege artillery. 104 men under Major Louis Aimable de Prez de Crassier of the Royal Deux-Ponts guarded the stores in Providence, 25 hussars were stationed in Lebanon, another 118 men were detached to unspecified duties.⁵⁵¹ Rochambeau quite rightly feared that these assets might present a tempting target to the British. Less than two weeks after the French had left Newport, Sir Henry Clinton suggested to Admiral Rodney on 28 June 1781, "an idea, which forcibly strikes me. Barras is left in Rhode Island with seven ships, all the cannon taken out of the works, and these garrisoned with twelve hundred French and thirteen hundred militia. It is therefore become the same tempting object it was before the French were fortified or reinforced."⁵⁵² To prepare for the eventuality of a British attack, Governor Greene had called out the militia, which was slow in assembling.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Rochambeau's instructions are printed in Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 493. See also Rochambeau to Choisy, 10 June 1781, which sets the detachment left behind at "Quatre détachements de 100 hommes, un détachement de 30 hommes de l'artillerie don't 20 bombardiers, formant au total 430 hommes aux ordres de M. de Choisy." (Doniol, *Histoire*, p. 493) that was, however, before the arrival of the reinforcements from France.

⁵⁵¹ On 1 June, Rochambeau wrote "Je laisse ici 400 hommes pour la protection de l'escadre [...] aux ordres de M. de Choisy; 280 hommes pour l'expédition de M. de la Pérouse; plus de 200 soldats sont employés à conduire les chevaux de l'artillerie et aux différents services de la boulangerie et des hôpitaux." (Doniol, *Histoire*, p. 480)

On the evening of 10 July the *Romulus* and three frigates left Newport to attack a British post at Lloyd's Neck on Long Island. The French were unable to land their troops at night and when the attack was launched at daybreak of 12 July it was easily repulsed by the British, who had been warned of the attack. (Acomb, *Closen*, pp. 93-94). For an eyewitness account see the Verger in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, pp. 130-43.

⁵⁵² Clinton to Rodney, in Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion*, p. 533.

⁵⁵³ On 24 June, Archibald Crary informed the Governor from Newport that only 383 officers and men were available though "the Franch General [Choisy] Contennuos in his usual way of insisten upon the hole number being brought on and keep Complet on the Ground." Choisy, whose irascible temper was well known and feared, may not have been the right man to be left behind for the command in Newport. RISA, Letterbooks, Letters to Gov. William Greene, Volume 16, 1 August 1780 to 30 July 1781. On 24 June, du Bouchet informed the governor that 372 men, incl. 16 detached to Connecticut, of the 500 men requested, were available for duty. As their numbers continued to decline - by 6 August, only 130 of 500 Massachusetts troops to be stationed at Butts Hill were present and 391 of the 500 men from Rhode Island, Choisy wrote on 3 August to Stephen Kimball:

"Sir, By the return of the regiment under your command, I am acquainted with the desertion of 14. men, and can not express you how much I am sorry of such event. I hope, and require it, By the General's express orders, you'll be so kind as to issue orders to all

Once the decision had been made at White Plains on 14 August to change strategy and to march to Virginia instead, Rochambeau sent Axel von Fersen to Newport to inform Barras of the change of plans. De Grasse had left it open for de Barras to join him: de Grasse had once been de Barras' junior in the service and under the eighteenth-century code of honor could have refused to serve under de Grasse. In his letter of 15 August, Rochambeau informed Barras of the arrival of 2,400 Hessian recruits in New York on the 11th and, even more importantly, the expected arrival of de Grasse in the Chesapeake."⁵⁵⁴ Fersen took these letters over the 220 miles from Philippsburg to Newport in 36 hours, (!) as he told Count Creutz, the Swedish ambassador to France, from Newport at 8:00 a.m. on the 17th: "We expect the comte de Grasse at any moment; he is supposed to pull into the Chesapeake Bay to land his 3,000 troops under the command of M. de Saint Simon. We will march immediately to Virginia with our army to join up with him and to chase the English from that part of the country if we can. The escadre which is here goes to join M. de Grasse." These were French plans: "I don't know whether the army of General Washington will withdraw behind West Point."⁵⁵⁵ Heeding Rochambeau's request, Barras immediately began to embark his forces. That process was completed by 21 August

officers of your regiment, for they be Watching their soldiers. General orders me to acquaint you with his intentions on account of the Discharge of the Milicia of the State now doing Duty on Rhode Island you'll not permit and man to go home without he be relieved; General will not grant any furlough, he having the desire the act of the General Assembly for the five hundred men be under his command at Newport, be put in execution."

Stephen Kimball transmitted Choisy's request to Governor Greene with the note that "You may depend on my using every means in my power to comply with them – but fear the Militia will not be detain'd in service after the expiration of their time no other way but by the Force of the French Troops": the militia would have to be forced to remain in service. Governor Greene in turn on 14 August informed Choisy from Warwick that he had no intention of keeping the Militia but that he "thought it my duty to inform you, that the time prescribed by said Act (ordering the militia to serve that particular purpose) for them to be relieved is considered as being sacred, and that they either be relieved, or otherwise discharged punctually, by which means the greater part of them have turned out when ordered chearfully, and as the Council of War have passed Resolve ordering out 500 of them to relieve those now on duty the Eight instant should they not all be upon the ground punctually, I sincerely wish that those who have completed their Tour may not be detained." The correspondence is in RISA, Letterbooks Governor Greene, Volume 16, 1 August 1780 to 30 July 1781.

When Barras' fleet departed Newport in August, the town inserted a note in the local newspaper thanking du Bouchet. Choisy's name was pointedly excluded in the note.

⁵⁵⁴ Rochambeau's letter to Barras is printed in Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 524.

⁵⁵⁵ Fersen, *Lettres*, pp. 118-119. Cromot du Bourg suspected that something important was going on when on 15 August that "the Count de Fersen was sent to Newport with the replies, which up to this time had been carried by an American dragoon." Cromot du Bourg, "Diary," p. 305.

as Maria Robinson informed the *vicomte* de Noailles, who had spent the winter at her father's house on Washington Street: "I have just seen from my window the last remains of the French Army embark."⁵⁵⁶ Two days later, on 23 August 1781, Barras slipped out of Newport with his nine ships, including seven ships of the line. They carried 480 infantry and 130 artillery, and the siege artillery.⁵⁵⁷ He arrived in the Chesapeake two weeks later on 10 September 1781. But the bay was empty. The French fleet under Admiral de Grasse they had hoped to join was nowhere to be seen. Serving under Jean-Isaac Chadeau de la Clocheterie on the 64-gun *le Jason*, Lieutenant François-Yves de la Roche Kerandraon recorded in his log that it was only "l'onze Septembre – on 11 September that we saw several sails approaching ... we believed that they were part of the fleet of M de Grasse that we had wanted to join with a convoy of artillery and ammunition of M de Rochambeau's army; M de Barras however, not being sure of that, gave signal to form the convoy line and to hoist all sails ... and dropped anchor at 1 lieue (ca. 2.5 miles) from the cape."⁵⁵⁸

That left the small detachment of 104 men (10 July 1781) under Major Louis Aimable de Prez de Crassier of the Royal Deux-Ponts. De Prez had not waited for the departure of Barras before taking his men to Providence. On 24 August, Samuel Vernon informed his brother William that all troops were on board vessels and that their provisions had been sent to Providence," so that the Island is totally evacuated by the French."⁵⁵⁹ This scenario is confirmed in a letter from Metcalf Bowler to Governor Greene written in Providence on 24 August 1781. In it, Bowler informed the governor that de Prez had arrived in town on 23 August "to take command of the French Troops that are to be stationed at Providence to guard the Magazines &c the Major was very much Chagrind to find upon his arrival in this Town the Legislative Body had made no provision for the reception of himself, nor the troops, under his Command. As he was necessitated to make application to myself knowing I understood the French language to ask me to find for him a Nights lodging in some private House, or he should be oblig'd to take up his Lodging in the Streets."

De Prez needed barracks for the soldiers and lodgings for two more officers as well as "a number of French Surgeons" for the sick. Since Bowler's house was too

⁵⁵⁶ RIHS Manuscripts XV, p. 274.

⁵⁵⁷ Verger in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 134.

⁵⁵⁸ François Yves De la Roche Kerandraon (1758-1822) had served on the *Belle Poule* as an ensign in 1778. He lost an arm during the battle and received the St. Louis and a pension as a reward. The quote is from his "Journal de bord" in Marine B4 247, Fol. 370, Archives Nationales, Paris France.

⁵⁵⁹ Vernon Papers Box 63 Folder 6, NHS.

small to lodge these men, he had temporarily quartered him with Mr. William Waters, but told him to contact the assembly meeting in Newport for relief. The Major did just that in a letter of 25 August to the Governor. In it, he asked for quarters for himself and his detachment, which in his opinion was too small to guard the redoubt at Pontuxet as well as those at Fells Point and Betts Point. He also requested the Governor to give orders to have these redoubts be put in good order. He himself would provide every assistance necessary to place some cannon in these redoubts as well as into "the redoubt facing to the Harbour."⁵⁶⁰ A town meeting in Providence on 30 August instructed John Dermont, overseer of the workhouse, to remove the inmates and to hand the building over to De Prez to barrack his men.⁵⁶¹

William Larned Providence 3rd Sep^r 1781
 Bot of Richard Eddy
 Ten Fat Sheep for the use
 of the french Army at this Port
 @ 15/6 each £7. 15. 0
 Rec^d of William Larned Seven pound fifteen
 Shillings in full of this acc^t. R. Eddy
 139. 10

Receipt for "ten Fat Sheep" purchased for the garrison at Providence on 3 September 1780. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

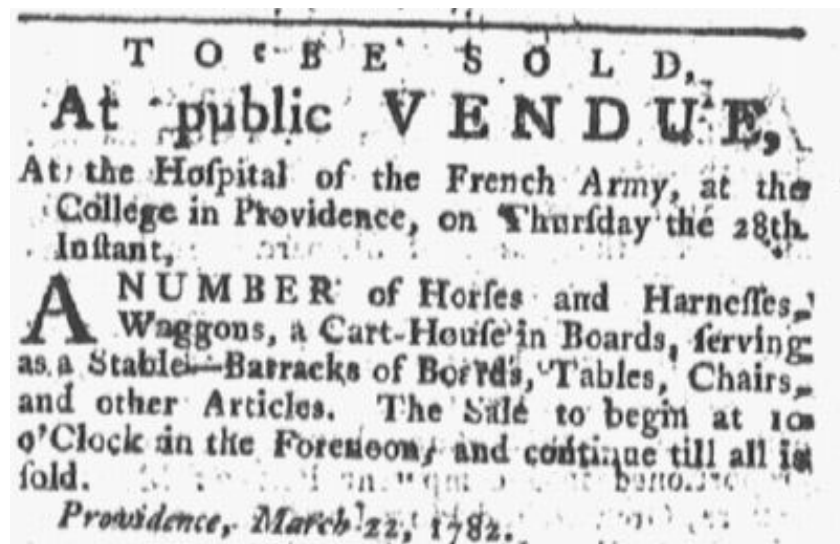
That lack of preparation is the more surprising since the General Assembly had pondered the relocation of parts of the French artillery to Providence as early as 21 March 1781, when it requested Perkins to deliver a total of 15 cannon of 24 and 18 pounds (plus carriages) belonging to the State of Rhode Island "if so many are to be found belonging to the State to be used by the french army in the fortifications in this State." In addition it had instructed him "repair the Powder House in

⁵⁶⁰ Greene Letterbooks vol. 17, 1 August 1781 to 25 July 1782, RISA.

⁵⁶¹ Stone, *French Allies*, p. 604.

Providence, and the Store upon Knight Dexter's farm in Such a manner that they will be suited to store powder in as said Building (sic) are to be appropriated for the use and Service of the french army."⁵⁶²

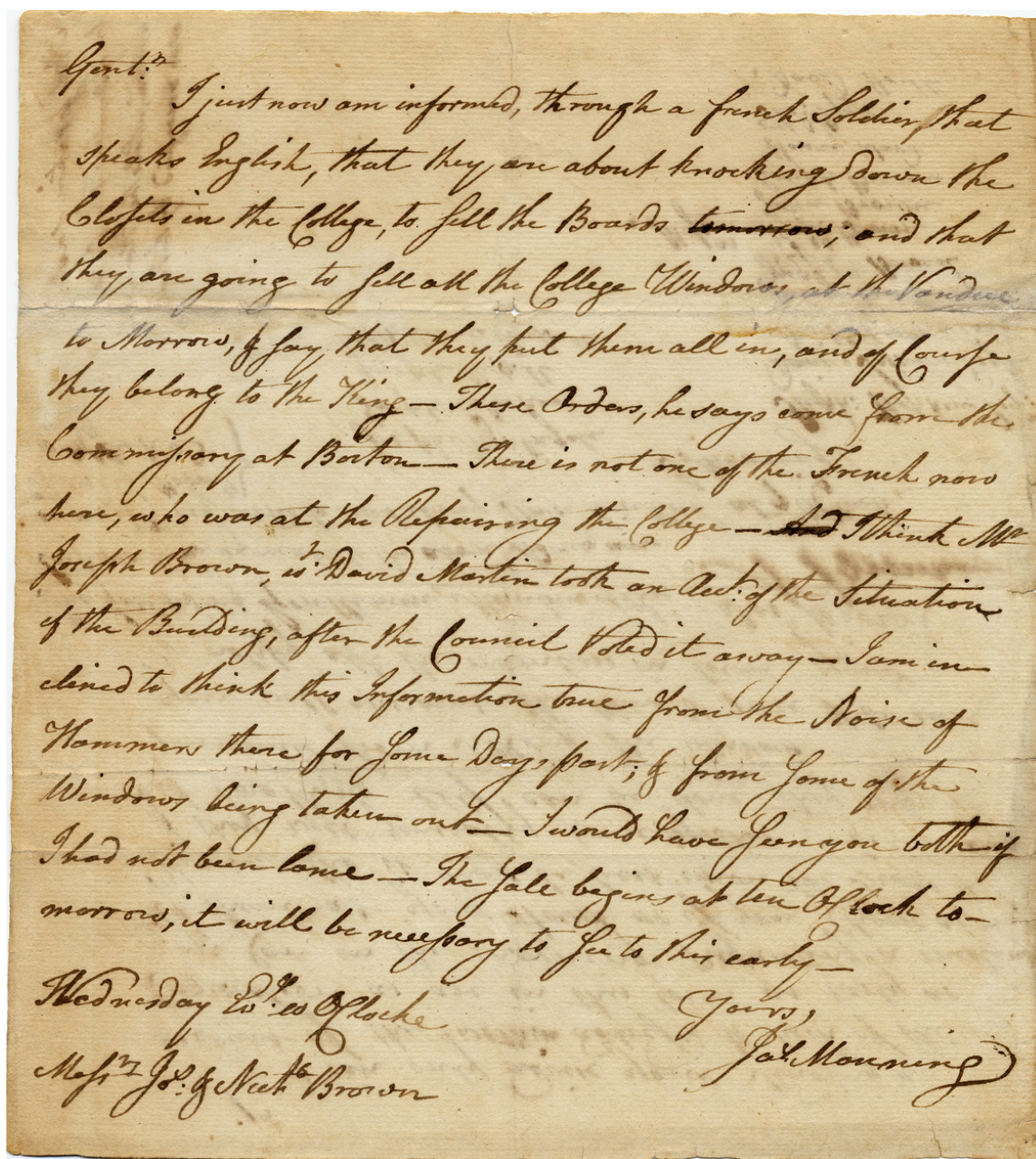
A month later, the town of Providence voted to rent a room for Captain Charles de Jumecourt of the Auxonne Artillery in the house of William Cary Whipple. Jumecourt had come to Providence to oversee the repair of Rhode Island artillery pieces and the preparations for the relocation of parts of the French artillery.⁵⁶³ It is unknown how much of this work was completed, though on 14 September 1781, Major De Prez once again addressed the governor, reminding him that he had neither received an answer to his inquiry of 25 August. Nor had he found any of the 42 pieces of artillery in Providence to arm the forts for the defense of the town. He also reminded the governor of his promise to call out the militia for both weapons drill as well as to make them familiar with the alarm plan De Prez had compiled. It is unknown whether these cannon were ever placed in the forts or whether the drills ever took place. Providencers knew that the war had once again moved out of New England, and once news of the victory at Yorktown reached Rhode Island, the urgency of preparing for another British attack was gone. In early March, De Prez received orders to remove to Philadelphia. In anticipation of the move the *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* of Saturday, 23 March 1782, carried this announcement:



⁵⁶² William Perkins Papers, Mss 9001 P. A return of 17 May 1781 showed 4 "good pieces" of 24 pounds of iron on 3 garrison carriages (but no field carriages), and 13 good and 1 damaged 18 pounders on 10 garrison and 3 field carriages in Perkins' possession. RIHS.

⁵⁶³ RIHS, Providence Town Papers vol. 6, January 1781 to August 1782, p. 34; on 20 April 1781.

The noisy preparations for the sale caused alarm among the governing body of the college. On Wednesday, President Manning wrote an anxious letter to Joseph and Nicholas Brown:



Gent:^r I just now am informed, through a french Soldier, that speaks English, that they are about knocking down the Closets in the College, to sell the Boards tomorrow; and that they are going to sell all the College Windows, at the Vandoe to Morrow, & say, that they put them all in, and of course they belong to the King— These Orders, he says, come from the Comynary at Bolton— There is not one of the French now here, who was at the Repairing the College— ~~And~~ I think Mr Joseph Brown, or David Martin took an Act: of the Situation of the Building, after the Council Voted it away— I am inclined to think this Information true from the Noise of Hammers there for some Days past; & from some of the Windows being taken out— I would have seen you both if I had not been lame— The sale begins at ten O'clock tomorrow, it will be necessary to see to this early—

Wednesday Ev: 28 of March
Yours,
Jas. Manning

Mess^{rs} Jos: & Nich: Brown

The French were literally taking the building apart. Claiming that they were property of the crown because they had installed them in July 1780 in the first place, they were now removing the windows and boards with the intent of selling them “tomorrow”, i.e. Thursday, 28 March. Responding on the reverse of Manning’s letter

the anxious Brown brother urged Manning to convoke all available board members at his, or alternately Joseph Brown's, house the next morning at 9:00 o'clock, i.e. one hour before the sale was to begin, to try "that they may at least be prevented from Selling the windows." ⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁴ "Manning, James to Brown, Joseph and Brown, Nicholas, 1782." Brown University Library, Center for Digital Scholarship; search by date. See also the "Report constituting part of the minutes for Sept. 5, 1782".

I, 241

I can only advise your sending an
 accounts of the within address to such of the
 Corporation as are in this town as early as
 you can in the morning requesting a meeting
 of them at your House or if you choose at my
 House Tho it may be best upon the spot &
 if they will generally come together I believe
 if nothing else can be done they may be
 prevented from selling the windows
 you will appoint the time & place & be sure
 to notify all the members in town your

The following Gentlemen, Members of the Jos Brown
 Corporation, agreeable to the above Advice, are
 currently requested to meet at my House this Morn^g at 9 o'clock,
 Thursday Morn^g }
 6 o'clock)

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Joseph Nightingale | J. Manning |
| Joseph Clarke | |
| Joseph Russell | |
| William Russell | |
| | Steph. Hopkins Esq ^r |
| | Daniel Lippins Esq ^r |
| | Nich ^l Cooke Esq ^r |
| | Jabez Brown Esq ^r |
| | Jos ^{ph} Brown |
| | Mys ^r Mich ^l Brown |
| | John Brown |
| | Joseph Brown |
| | Henry Ward |
| | Tho ^s Byres |
| | David Hoell |

Note position of action
 bar of members of the Corpora-
 tion, while the House
 was occupied by them
 [1782?]

1782 1 1

Either not all items were sold on 28 March (if the sale took place) or the French found more items to sell, because a week later a similar advertisement appeared for a second sale on 2 April 1782 in the *Providence Gazette*:

T O B E S O L D,
At public VENDUE,
 At the Hospital of the French Army, at the Col-
 lege in Providence, on Tuesday next,
A NUMBER of Horses and Harnesses,
 Waggon, a Cart-House in Boards, serving
 as a Stable—Barracks of Boards, Tables, Chairs,
 and other Articles. The Sale to begin at Two
 o’Clock in the Afternoon, and continue till all is
 sold.
Providence, March 30, 1782.

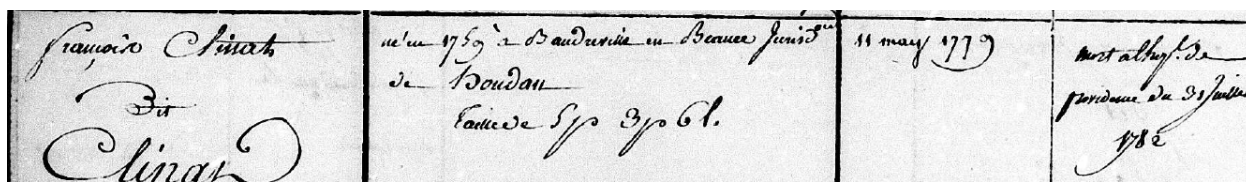
By then the College had taken possession of the building, but an inspection “*last Week, when the Commissary at War of the French Army, delivered it up, with the Keys*” showed that French had made some unwelcome improvements to the edifice. In a petition of late April for the General Assembly session meeting in Newport on 1 May 1782, the “Members of the Corporation of Rhode Island College” reported that shortly after the Continental Army had evacuated the edifice in the spring of 1780,

the Authority of this State granted it to the French Army as an Hospital who continued to hold & to use it for Y^d Purpose until the last Week, when the Commissary at War of the French Army, delivered it up, with the Keys, to his Honor the Deputy Gov^r, they having previously permitted the Officers of the French Ships, in this State, to place their Sick in it, who still continue there;⁵⁶⁵ that the Building was in good Repairs, and occupied by upwards of thirty Students when first taken for the Public Service; that great Injury hath been done to every Part of it since taken out of the Hands of the Corporation; Especially by new buildings adjoining it one an House of Office at the North End with a Vault 15 Feet deep under it; having broken down the Wall of the College to facilitate the Passage of the Invalids from the Edifice into it; from which Addition the intolerable Stench renders all the northern Part uninhabitable and the other an Horse Stable build from the East

⁵⁶⁵ If this petition was prepared shortly before the meeting of the General Assembly, “*the last Week*” would refer to the week of 22 April 1782.

Projections to ye North End by which the House is greatly weakened, many of the windows are also taken entirely out of the House & others so broken as well as the Slate on the Roof continually beat into it.

The corporation wanted the building returned, all additions removed, repairs carried out at the Government's expense and "an Order that it shall not again be appropriated as an Hospital or Barracks".⁵⁶⁶ The Assembly took up the petition and appointed Jabez Bowen, Joseph Brown and John Clark "to cause proper and suitable barracks or hospitals to be provided in the town of Providence, for the use of the troops or Mariners belonging to his Most Christian Majesty, who now occupy the said college edifice; [and] that the said edifice be delivered up to the said corporation." It is unknown where the new "barracks or hospitals" were located but even in late July there were still sick soldiers in Providence: Francois Clinat of the Soissonnois died in the hospital in Providence on 31 July 1782.



As far as "such buildings as have been erected by order of the commander of the French troops" were concerned, they would have to "be removed at the expense of the said corporation, if they think fit."⁵⁶⁷ By then Major De Prez and his detachment were long gone. When the frigate *l'Emeraude* arrived in Boston in late March 1782, with 2 million livres in specie, De Prez took the funds and his men overland to Philadelphia, where they arrived in the second week of May.⁵⁶⁸ A week later, on 27 May 1782 the naval personnel had been moved out of the building as well. But the last-minute attempt to save at least the windows had failed, and the edifice was indeed in a "deplorable Situation" as President Manning announced in his invitation to the annual meeting on 4 September in the *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* of 17 August 1782.

⁵⁶⁶ "Rough draft of a petition of the Corporation to the General assembly to deliver up the College Edifice 1780". Brown University Library, Center for Digital Scholarship; search by date. The document is misidentified; the date should read April 1782.

⁵⁶⁷ *Records of Rhode Island* vol. 9, pp. 550-51. In 1800, the college collected all of \$2,779.13 in damages.

⁵⁶⁸ On 23 March 1782, the Town Meeting called on all those who had claims on De Prez and other Frenchmen to settle their claims. Preston, "Rochambeau and the French troops," pp. 15-18.

TH E Members of the Corporation of the COLLEGE in this Town are desired to take Notice, that their Anniversary Meeting is on Wednesday the 4th of September next, at the College-Hall. The present deplorable Situation of the College loudly calls for every possible Assistance from all its friends, but more especially for that of the Corporation, which it may be in its Power to afford. The Members from abroad are all earnestly requested to be in Town the Evening before, as the Hour of meeting is appointed at 9 o'Clock in the Morning of said Day.

The young Gentlemen who propose to take their second Degree, are desired to apply without Delay to the President;

JAMES MANNING, President.

Providence, August 16, 1782.

1812

The Petition of the Members of the Corporation of Rhode Island College whose Names are hereunto annexed Humbly Sheweth

That the College Edifice was first taken in the year 1796, for the use of Barracks and an Hospital for the American troops, until the Fall before the arrival of his Christian Majesty's Fleet and Armies in this State; that by our Direction the President resumed the Course of Education in said College, took Possession of the Edifice on the 15th of May 1799, and continued to occupy it until the Authority of this State, ^{in about a month after, a short time after} granted it to the French Army as an Hospital, ~~in which it remained until the 15th of June 1800, when it was taken possession of by the French Army~~ continued to hold it for J. P. Salpe until the last Week, when the Commissary at War of the French Army delivered it up, with the Key, to his Honor the Deputy Gov^r, they having previously permitted the Officers of the French Ship, in this State, to place their Sick in it, who still continue there; that the Building was in good Repair, and occupied by upwards of thirty Students when first taken for the Public Service; that great Injury hath been done to every Part of the ~~Building~~ since taken out of the Hands of the Corporation; Especially by ~~the French Army~~ ^{the French Army} building an House of Office ^{as} adjoining to the North End with a Vault 15 Feet deep under it; ~~and~~ ^{having broken} down the Wall of the College to facilitate the Passage of the Insects from the Edifice into it; from which Addition, the intolerable Smell ~~has~~ ^{has} arisen, all the not from the Corporation, but from the French Ship, ~~which the House is greatly weakened~~ ^{as} many of the Windows, ~~as~~ ^{as} taken entirely out, & others so broken that the Storm ~~can~~ ^{can} beat in; the same Damage is caused by ~~the French Army~~ ^{the French Army} on the South side. As your Honours must be sensible that the Interests of Literature in this State, must greatly suffer, as well as the Building erected for its Preservation; and considering that there cannot be the shadow of a Reason, for detaching any longer the College Edifice from the Corporation, who now want it, to apply it immediately to the Uses for which it was erected, ~~we~~ ^{we} request your Legislature, to deliver them the House, all their Building taken down, & removed from the College Edifice, and order such repairs, as are absolutely necessary, to be made at the Public Expence; & to pass an Order that it shall not again be appropriated as an Hospital or Barracks. And your Petitioners, as in Duty bound, shall always pray &c

The Petitioners

10.3 Rules and Regulations for a French Army Encampment

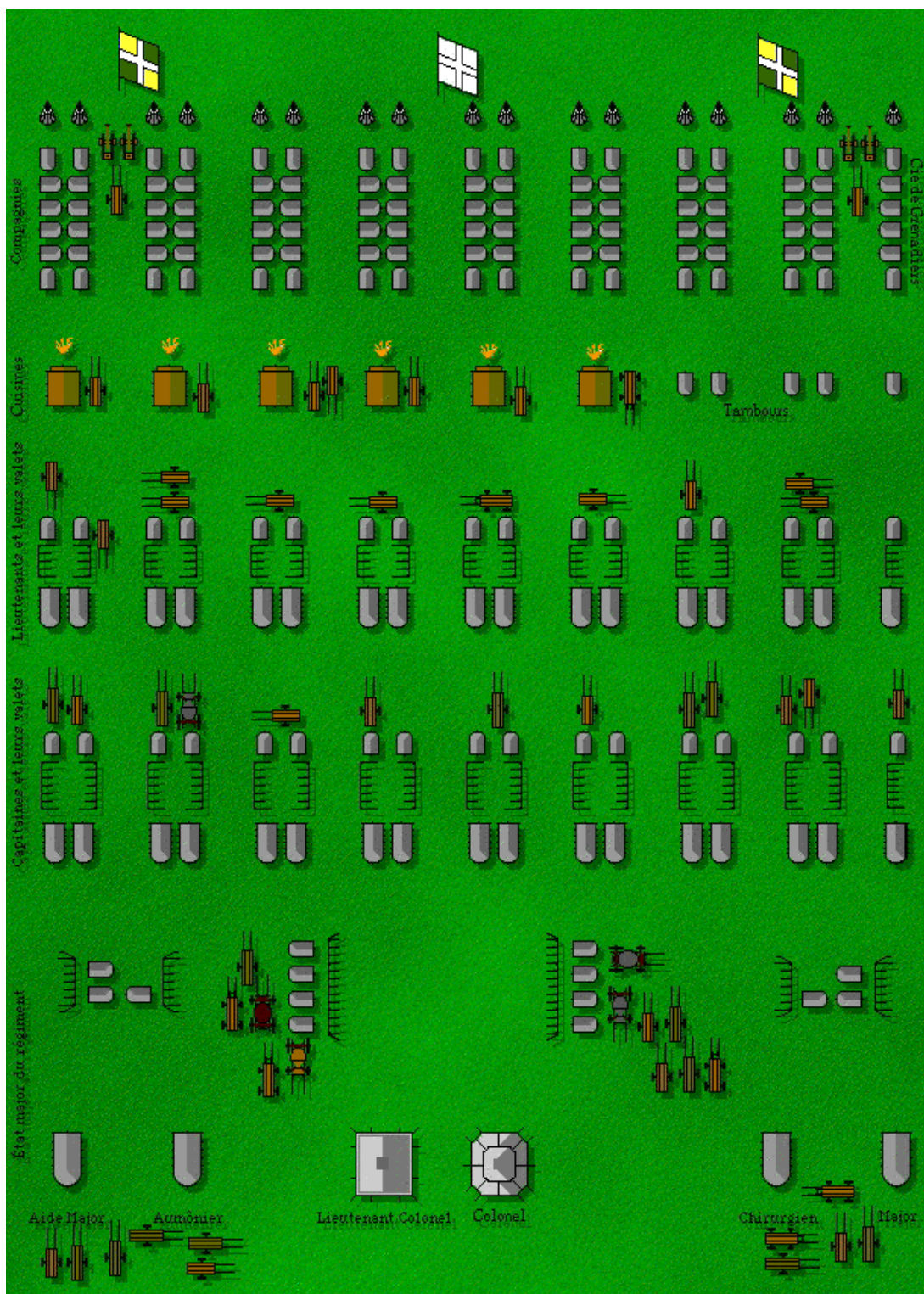
The French army had precise regulations concerning lay-out and organization, in particular the *Ordonnance portant règlement sur le service de l'infanterie en campagne* of 17 February 1753, and the *Ordonnance sur l'exercice de l'infanterie* of 5 June 1755.⁵⁶⁹ Concerning the basic camp-lay-out, the 1753 regulation states that each row of tents is made up of only one company, but the 1755 exercise manual changes that regulation in that companies are now paired to form platoons which will camp together, meaning that each row of tents is now composed of two companies except for the grenadier company in the First Battalion and the chasseur company in the Second Battalion (following the army reforms of 1776 which created two-battalion regiments), which as elite companies always camp by themselves.⁵⁷⁰ The drawing represents the battalion camping on the left (grenadiers are on the left); the second battalion camping on the right would be an exact mirror image of the drawing with chasseurs on the right. As shown in the camp lay-out, *vivandiers*, i.e., the sutlers, camped in the same row as the tambours, right after the kitchen fires but before the *officiers subalternes*.

The set-up of a French army camp was based a set of rules determined by the number of brigades, squadrons, or battalions and the seniority of regiments and of the captains of the companies. "When all regiments of infantry, cavalry and dragoons camp such that each one, following its seniority, occupies the place that it must, according to its rank, either in first or second or third line, that is called to be camped *in order of battle*, because it is the same order that they keep when they *present battle* to the enemy".⁵⁷¹ Therefore a camp was established hierarchically from the right to the left and from the rear to the front of the camp. It was made on two, three or four lines according to the lay of the land. Places were assigned by the *maréchal général des logis de l'armée*, with the cavalry on the wings, and the infantry in the middle. When the *maréchal général des logis* had determined the site of the camp he put the detachments of infantry, cavalry or dragoons that accompanied the vanguard in charge to delimit with stakes driven into the ground, the place to be occupied by each battalion or squadron, the width of streets, the place of tents. What is described here is a French infantry camp for a battalion consisting of sixteen fusilier companies of 40 men and one grenadier company of 45 men.

⁵⁶⁹ I am very grateful to M François Gousse, and Jean-Louis Vial for providing most of the information on French camps either in personal communication or from their websites.

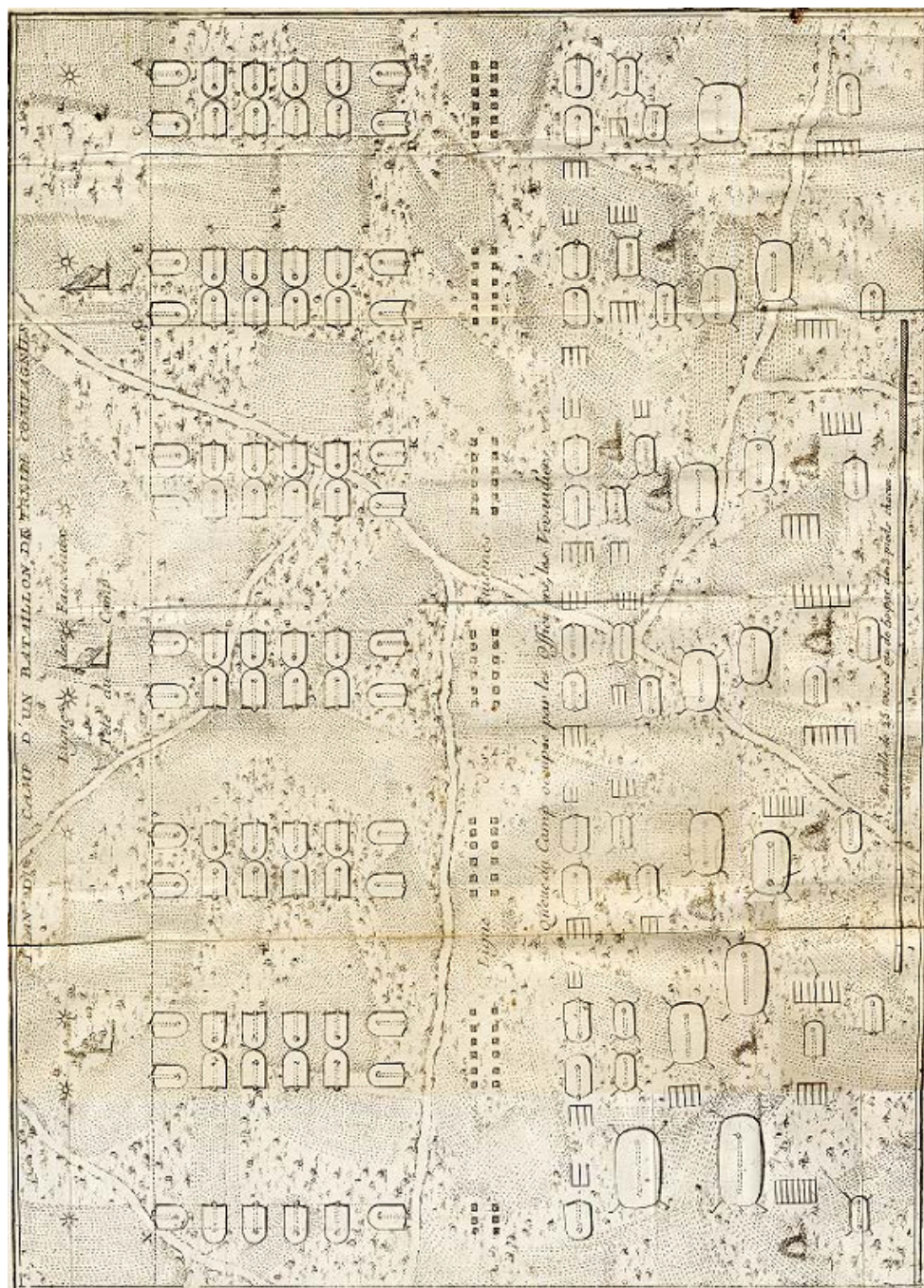
⁵⁷⁰ The *ordonnances* creating the two-battalion regiments do not address the camp lay-out it is assumed that the French army continued to pair its fusilier companies during the 1780s.

⁵⁷¹ Louis Charles Dupain de Montesson, *L'art de lever les plans de tout ce qui a rapport à la guerre et à l'architecture civile et champêtre* (Paris, 1763).



French campsite for one battalion by Jean-Louis Vial.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷² The drawing as well as the following slightly edited essay are available at http://vial.jean.free.fr/new_npi/revues_npi/1_1998/npi_198/1_inf_camp_im



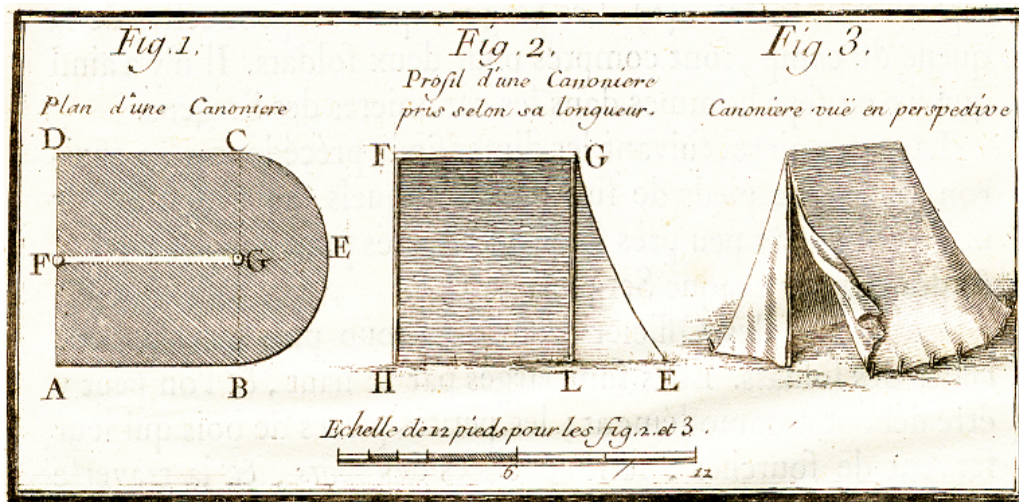
French campsite drawing for a single bataillon from Guillaume Le Blond, *Essai sur la castrametation, ou, Sur la mesure et le tracé des camps: contenant les premiers principes pour l'arrangement des troupes: la formation de l'ordre de bataille & la distribution ou construction du camp: avec un précis des différentes gardes qui en font la sûreté* (Paris, 1748)⁵⁷³

⁵⁷³ Available at <http://patricemenguy.free.fr/sujetsdubienaime/Sommaire.html> 1 pied = 12.8 inches.

In the front of the battalion were placed on the same alignment the stacks of arms, situated at almost 10 pas (9m 75 cm) in front of the line of the first tents. Stacks of arms were opposite to each company and covered with a coarse linen or drill called coat of arms (*manteau d'armes*) to protect arms from inclement weather. To construct a stack of arms the quartermaster from each company traced a circle of approximately 8 *pieds* (2m 60 cm) of circumference on ground for the guns of his company, soldiers dug around this circle a groove of approximately 3 *pouces* (8 cm) in depth and 1/2 *pied* (16.5 cm) in width, and they put earth in slope against the stack of arms, they filled in the groove with grass and drove small wood stakes of half foot in length into the middle of the groove to sustain the gun crooks and thus to insulate them from the humidity of the ground. They drove in center a stake of 8 *pieds* (2m 60) in length and 8 *pouces* in circumference along which they hung the coat of arms that formed a cone. This model of stack of arms was only built for instruction or stay camps. For temporary camps the circumference was simply fitted with branches intertwined on which rested crooks. There was one coat of arms per company and one more per battalion for the picket. The coat of arms measured 6 *pieds* high and 1 *pied* 9 *pouces* in circumference in the upper part and 19 *pieds* in circumference on the lower part of which 2 *pieds* were needed to close the opening. Tents and coats of arms were marked in black letters with the name of the regiment and the company number (as of 17 February 1753).

In the right part of the battalion camp was the grenadier company, then further at left were the colonel's company and then that of the lieutenant-colonel, called "lieutenance" in French if he commanded a company; then came the other fusilier companies. During campaigns regiments camped by brigade, a brigade being a unit of two regiments, the older regiment occupied the right and the younger regiment the left. According to the instruction on 17 February 1753, infantry tents measured 10 *pieds* 4 *pouces* (3 m 35 cm) in length with the apse, 6 *pieds* (1 m 95 cm) width and 5 *pieds* 8 *pouces* (1 m 84 cm) height, they were held up by two wooden forked stakes of 10 *pieds* and one strut of 8 *pieds* (2 m 60 cm) and stretched with 21 small stakes, the name of the regiment had to be written in black on the linen. These tents were not large yet had to lodge a *chambre* of eight soldiers, though in practice they housed fewer as there were always detached or invalid soldiers in a company. A sergeant counted for two soldiers, one camped in the first tent and the other in the last of its company. Therefore for a regiment there were 7 tents for the grenadier company, 96 tents for the sixteen fusilier companies, and 3 tents for drummers for a total of 106 tents. Since Rochambeau's 10-company infantry regiments were hardly ever at their full strength it is safe to assume a similar number of tents. The first tents of each company opened toward the head of the camp, the last toward the outside and the others toward the great streets, they were back to back keeping a

space between them of one *pas* (1 m approximately) called the small street. Only the grenadier company did not put up its tents according to this principle, but side by side looking at the exterior of the battalion camp.



French tent from Guillaume Le Blond, *Essai sur la Castramétation ou sur la mesure et le tracé des camps* (Paris, 1748), p. 333



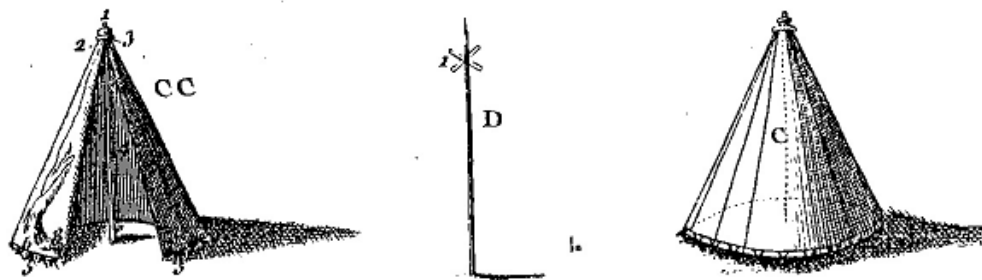
In his *Art de la Guerre* of 1748, Puységur shows this engraving with nine soldiers in a tent of 8 *pieds* square excl. the apse and 7 feet (2 m 27 cm) high.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷⁴ Jean-François de Chastenet, *marquis de Puysegur, Art de la Guerre, par Principes et par Règles* 2 vols., (Paris, 1749), vol. 1, plate X.

The *ordonnance* of 1749 established two flags per battalions, placed at 5 *pas* (5 m approximately) before the first tents, opposite the great street of the center. Each of these flags was guarded by a soldier, holding his sword in hand with a loaded gun deposited nearby on small two wooden forked stacks driven into the ground.

From January 1757 onward the infantry was provided with battalion support guns composed of one light 4-pounder *à la suédoise*.⁵⁷⁵ This piece and its limber were probably placed before the first tents on the alignment of the stack of arms of the great street, between the colonel company and that of the lieutenant. Each piece was served by a crew of sixteen gunners: eight detached from the Royal Artillery Corps, eight were pulled out the regiment plus one supernumerary. The 1774 *ordonnance* for the artillery increased the number to two Gribeauval 4-Pounders per battalion; their crews most likely camped next to their pieces.⁵⁷⁶

The arms stand was build at the right part of the battalion camp across from the tents of grenadiers, one *pas* before the first stack of arms. The arms stand was used to keep the arms of soldiers that were at work. It was built with two wooden forked stacks and one strut, sometimes covered with branches; it also served to deposit the arms of the forty eight fusiliers appointed for different services and was called a *picket*. A guard consisting of one man per company was posted at hundred *pas* before the battalion camp.



Arms Tent (*manteau d'armes*)⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁵ *Ordonnance du Roi portant établissement d'une pièce de canon à la Suédoise à la suite de chacun des bataillons de son infanterie, tant françoise qu'étrangère, qui serviront en campagne* of 20 January 1757.

⁵⁷⁶ See the *Ordonnance du roi concernant le corps royal de l'artillerie* of 3 October 1774, Titre huitième: "Du Service du Corps-Royal en campagne." It was re-confirmed in the *Ordonnance du Roi concernant le corps royal de l'artillerie* of 3 November 1776, Titre IX., Du service du Corps-Royal en campagne.

⁵⁷⁷ Joseph-Ignace-Magnus de Spahr, *Instructions militaires*, (Paris, 1753) Plate 1^e.

Kitchens for the soldiers were located 10 *pas* behind the company tents, the *vivandiers* were another 10 *pas* behind the kitchens with their horses, wagons, wood and forage arranged around their tents. There were three *vivandiers* per battalion that lodged in three tents similar those of the troops. There was one earth kitchen per company and one more for the drummers. The kitchens measured approximately 3 *pas* in length and 4 *pieds* in width, based on the lay of the land. The soldiers dug a pit of 2 *pied* 3 or 4 *pouces* deep. They were built opposite of the small street that separate companies. On the same alignment like the kitchens behind the first companies of the right were the three tents of the battalions' drummers and the sixth tent of the grenadier company. The Lieutenant's Camp was placed at twenty *pas* from the *vivandiers*, each lieutenant camped behind his company, in the interval of these twenty *pas* they placed their servants, their horses, their kitchen, their wood and forage. Twenty *pas* further back were the tents of captains and their servants similarly arranged.

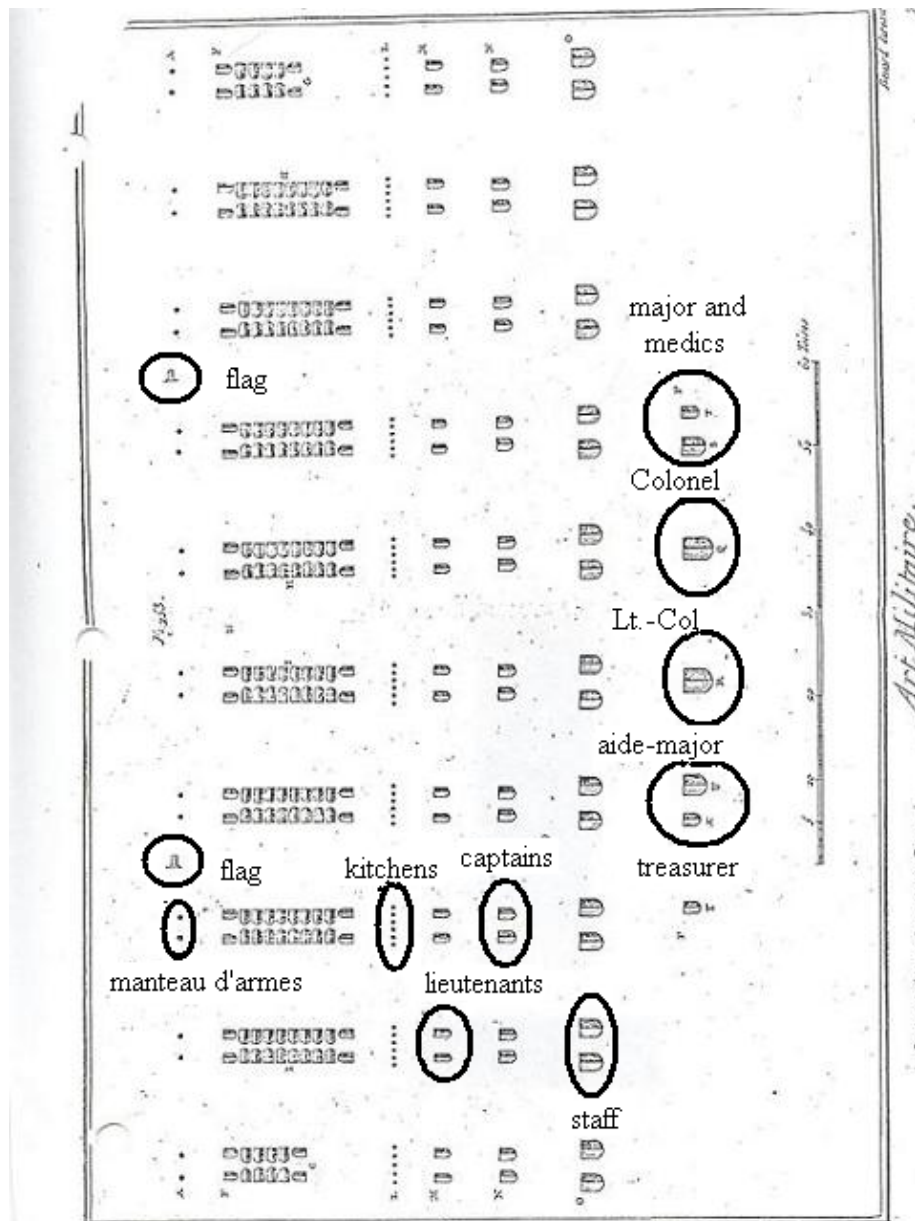
Finally in the rear of the camp, was the regimental headquarters at fifty *pas* back from the captains. The colonel and colonel lieutenant in the center, the first at right and the second at left of the interval of the middle of the battalion. In the two-battalion regiments of the *comte* de Rochambeau's army the colonel and lieutenant colonel would have moved to the rear center between the two battalions. The major at right on the alignment of the grenadier company and the aide-major at left behind the last company of fusiliers. The surgeon was located between the colonel and the major, the chaplain between the lieutenant-colonel and the aide-major. These superior officers were theoretically required to lodge in their camp, but as the itinerary of Rochambeau's forces shows usually lodged in a near-by house or tavern. They had far more spacious tents than the troops, round or square, with camp bed, chairs, tables etc. The tents of superior and subordinate officers opened toward the head of the camp; those of servants toward the rear or sideways.

Latrines were to be dug at 150 or 200 *pas* before the battalion of the first line and at 100 *pas* behind the headquarters of the last line, they had a shelter with two forked stakes of 4 1/2 *pieds* length and a strut of 12 *pieds* length.

The *ordonnance* also stipulated the establishment of butcheries, crucial for the survival for the troops, as one of the first tasks upon arrival at a new location. French forces began debarking in Newport on 12 July 1780; by 15 July 1780, Brissout de Barneville reported that "les boulangers," i.e., the bakers, and "les bouchers," i.e., the butchers "sont établis au camp".⁵⁷⁸ During an encampment they

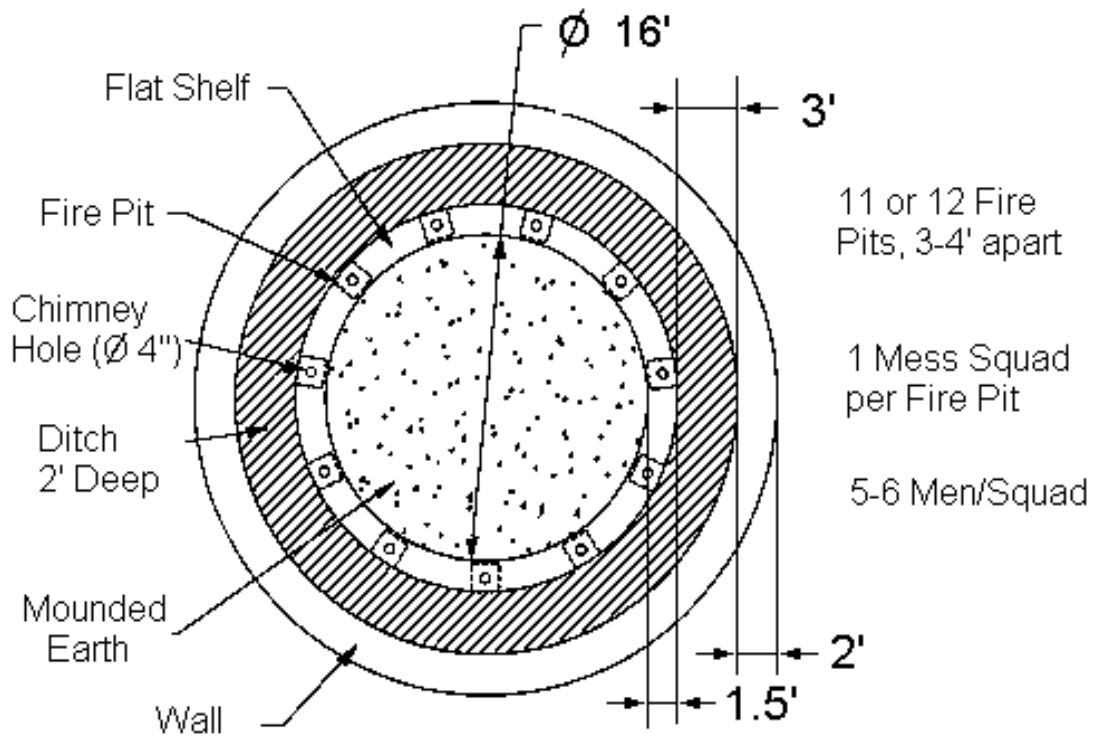
⁵⁷⁸ Barneville, "Journal", p. 254.

were to be located 50 *pas*, about 150 feet, behind headquarters. Belvoir already had “a small butchery behind the camp in the woods” which most likely was used in the afternoon of 17 September 1781 to slaughter the cattle to feed the troops.



This 180-tent lay-out of a regimental camp is about 140 toises (840 feet) wide and 80 toises (513 feet) deep plus latrines, butcheries and pasture for horses further off in the distance. The ordonnance of 1776 changed the size of a regiment but the drawing provides a rather accurate idea of the camp layout.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁹ Nicolas d'Hericourt, *Elemens de l'Art militaire* (1st ed., 1739); the description is taken from vol. 2 (1756) of the 6 vols. edition printed in Paris, 1756-1758, pp. 5-12.



Overhead view of earthen kitchen⁵⁸⁰



Camp kitchen in use

The tin or sheet iron kettles commonly used by armies in North America would be placed on two pieces of sod to allow the draught of the fireplace to escape through the chimney hole. Barrel-hoop "broilers" constructed by the soldiers may

⁵⁸⁰ The dimensions are given in Humphrey Bland's *Treatise of Military Discipline* (1762).

also have been used for that purpose.⁵⁸¹ Even though digging them for but an overnight stay may seem unnecessary, eyewitness reports confirm that these regulations were indeed followed. Capt. Samuel Richards of the 3rd Connecticut Regiment wrote that as Rochambeau's army "passed thro' Farmington in Connecticut (25-28 June 1781) I being there at the time - had a fine opportunity of seeing them ... I viewed their manner of encamping over night, the perfect mechanical manner of performing all they had to do: such as diging a circular hole & making nitches in which to set their camp kettles for cooking their food."⁵⁸²



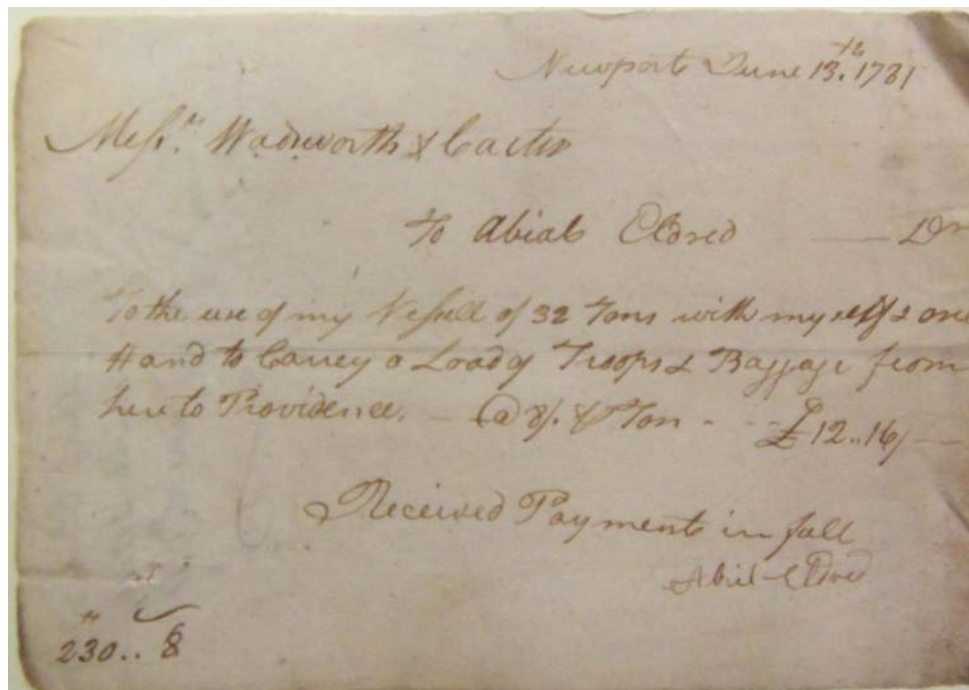
⁵⁸¹ John U. Rees "As many fireplaces as you have tents..." Originally published in *Food History News*, vol. IX, no. 2 (Winter 1997), 2, 8-9; vol. IX, no. 3 (Spring 1998), 2, and *The Continental Soldier*, vol. XI, no. 3 (Summer 1998), 26-32). Eyewitness reports confirm that French forces used these kinds of kitchens.

⁵⁸² *Diary of Samuel Richards, Captain of Connecticut Line War of the Revolution 1775-1781* (Philadelphia, 1909), p. 75.

10.4 The March to Philipsburg, 18 June-6 July 1781

Note: for road and campsite maps see Appendix 3: Road and Campsite Maps

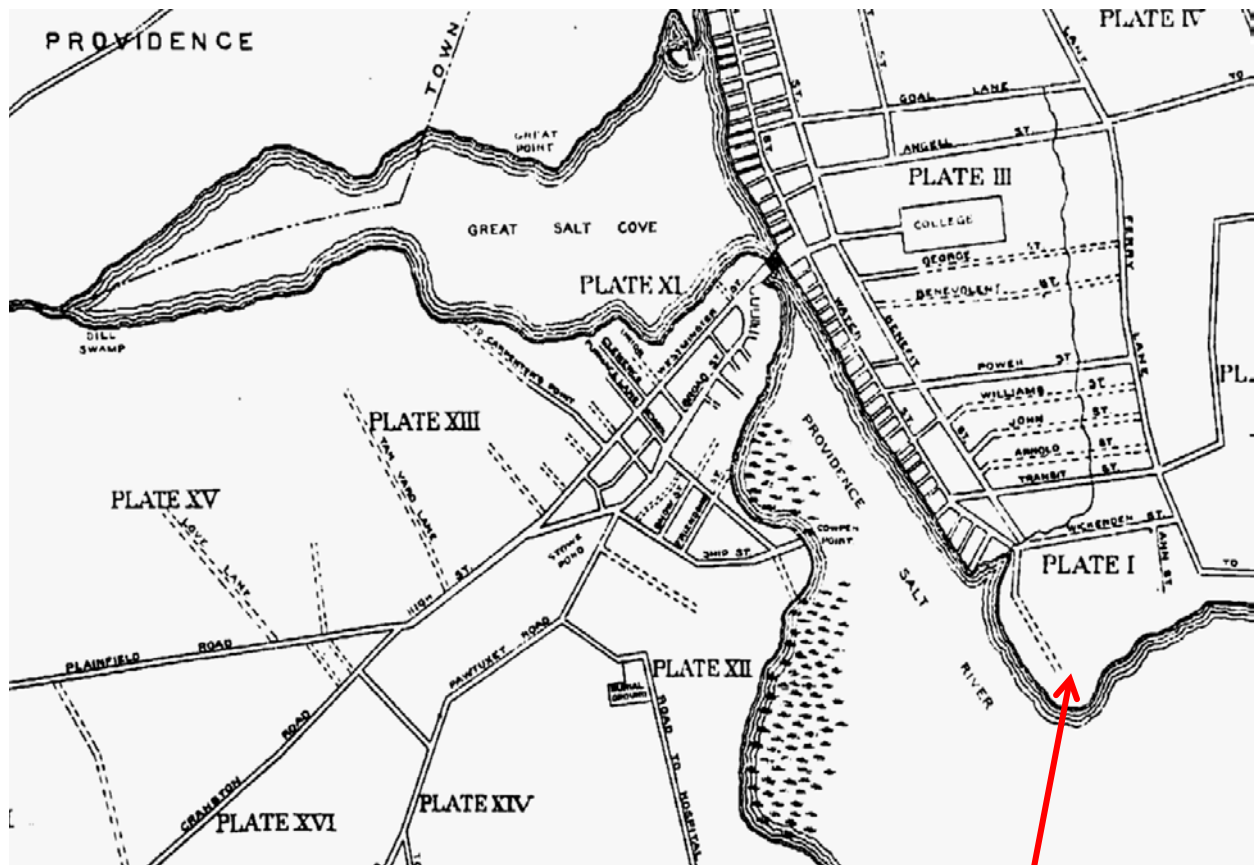
With the preparations completed, the troops received orders on 10 June 1781, to embark in two divisions on dozens of vessels -- Lauberdière wrote of "une assez grande quantite de petits batiments pour les transporter et les bagages" -- the following day that would take them from Newport to Providence. Since "several of them ran aground," reported Clermont-Crèvecœur, "most of the troops spent the night aboard these little craft, many without food. It was only the next day [12 June] with the help of the tide that the boats got up the river. All the troops disembarked on the 12th and camped beyond the town of Providence, where the army spent several days. Providence is rather a pretty town. Its environs are charming because of the varied landscape. This town seems almost deserted; there is little commercial activity. All the houses here as well as in Newport are built of wood; the streets are not paved. The air is pure and healthy, though the town is surrounded by woodlands. One sees nothing interesting here except the magnificent hospital, which has a fine location."⁵⁸³



Receipt over £ 12 16/ (or 230 livres 8 sols) to Abial Eldred for having transported French forces from Newport to Providence. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

⁵⁸³ Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 27.

Around 5:00 a.m. in the morning of 10 June 1781, the first Brigade of French forces began to embark on waiting for them in the harbor of Newport to take them to Providence. Some of the troops had to spend the night on the water, and all arrived too late in the evening, around 9:00 p.m., of 11 June to set up camp. Those that reached Providence spent the night in the Market House, others in the Old Work House on the west bank of the Moshassuk River just north of Smith Street. From there they marched the next morning to their campsite, which Berthier described as “a mile and a half out of town on the road to Hartford,” i.e., on either side of Cranston between Westminster Avenue - “the road to Hartford” - Plane and Broad Streets. “Its right flank rested on this road and its left on the Providence River. ... Providence is a small city of the second category, well built and thickly settled. In peacetime it carries on a thriving commerce because of its situation, since frigates can come up to its docks.”⁵⁸⁴



Landing Site

Henry R Chace, *Index Map and Highways and Lanes in the Town of Providence, R.I.* 1798.

⁵⁸⁴ Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 246.



Providence Landing Site

As French forces remained encamped outside Providence, a convoy of eight vessels accompanied by the 50-gun ship of the line *Le Sagittaire* carrying 592 infantry replacements and two companies, 68 men, of artillery, had arrived in Boston harbor On 7 June 1781. These replacements, which debarked on 15 June, had been drawn from the regiments of Auvergne (71 healthy plus 7 sick) and Neustrie (19 plus 28) for the Bourbonnois; Languedoc (80 plus 6) for the Soissonnois; Boulonnois (112 plus 36) for Saintonge; Anhalt (46 plus 4) and La Marck (39 plus 36) for the Royal Deux-Ponts; and Barrois (31 plus 17) for Lauzun's Legion. Informed of the arrival of this convoy, Rochambeau on 9 June had sent two captains and one lieutenant and one sergeant from each of the regiments to Boston to receive the troops. The commanding officer was instructed to leave the sergeants, and preferably the officers as well, behind in some tavern outside the city and to enter Boston alone. In the city he was to meet with Major Fleury of the Saintonge who was already in Boston on a "commission particulière". On the way back he was to "prendre de mesures pour empecher toute Communication des troupes avec la populace qui n'est ny subordonnée ny aimée des troupes."

Armée De M^{re} Le C^{te}
de Rochambeau

Hôpital de Newport

Mouvement Du 6. Mars 1781.

| Sommes des régiments | Restant le 5. Mars au soir | Entrés | Sortis | Morts | Reste | Total par Régiments | Guériss | Malades | Mourus |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-------|---------------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| Durbinois | 26 | " | " | " | 26 | 26 | 9 | 10 | 7 |
| Soissonnois | 21 | 1 | " | " | 22 | 22 | 15 | 2 | 5 |
| Saintonge | 25 | 3 | " | " | 28 | 28 | 19 | 6 | 3 |
| Royal Deux pontes | 23 | 1 | " | 1 | 23 | 23 | 13 | 5 | 5 |
| auxonne artillerie | 12 | " | " | " | 12 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 2 |
| Languedoc | 15 | 1 | " | " | 16 | 16 | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| officiers de marine | 2 | " | 1 | " | 1 | " | 1 | " | 1 |
| Expédition d'artillerie | 1 | " | " | " | 1 | " | " | 1 | " |
| Marchandise de bouche | 1 | " | " | " | 1 | " | 1 | " | " |
| Domestiques d'officiers | 4 | 1 | " | " | 5 | " | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Mort. d'insuffisance des hôpitaux | 2 | " | 1 | " | 1 | " | " | " | 1 |
| | 132 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 136 | 127 | 76 | 31 | 27 |

Le present Etat certifié véritable par le Colonel Souffignac
à Newport le 7. Mars 1781.

Signatures Commisaires
G^{ral} Souffignac.

1169
167-13

Mouvement de l'Armée de Rochambeau.

Occupation list of Newport Hospital of 6 March 1781⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁵ <http://memory.loc.gov/mss/mgw/mgw4/075/0800/0866.jpg>

The 398 healthy men joined their units, the 262 sick joined the garrison in Newport under Brigadier Claude Gabriel de Choisy. 35 men of the Languedoc for the Bourbonnois and 25 for the Saintonge are identified as "non arrivé" and presumably sick in Boston where three soldiers from the artillery replacements and an unknown number of replacements for Royal Deux-Ponts and Lauzun's Legion are known to have died. By 10 July, 86 men sent as replacements were still sick in Boston and had yet to join their units.⁵⁸⁶

Rochambeau's force encamped at Providence was quite small by European standards: on 1 March 1781 it had barely numbered 4,800 officers and men.⁵⁸⁷

| REGIMENT | PRESENT OFFICERS AND MEN OF ALL ARMS | DETACHED | HOSPITALS | | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|---|----------|-----------|------------|-------|
| | | | Newport | Providence | |
| Bourbonnois | 852 | 30 | 32 | - | 914 |
| Soissonnois | 971 | 8 | 16 | - | 995 |
| Saintonge | 882 | 2 | 26 | 1 | 911 |
| Royal Deux-Ponts | 912 | - | 21 | - | 933 |
| Artillerie | 404 | - | 9 | - | 413 |
| Mineurs | 21 | - | 2 | - | 23 |
| Workers (<i>ouvriers</i>) | 24 | 2 | - | - | 26 |
| Lauzun Infantry in Newport | 330 | 12 | 13 | - | 355 |
| Lauzun Hussars in Lebanon | 212 | 15 | 6 | - | 233 |
| | 4,608 | 69 | 125 | 1 | 4,803 |

Four months later, a review on 10 July 1781, following arrival in White Plains showed barely 4,400 NCOs and enlisted men under his immediate command.⁵⁸⁸ If we subtract the men of Lauzun's Legion, who had traveled on a separate route, the

⁵⁸⁶ Rochambeau Papers, Library of Congress, vol. 9, Letterbook 1, p. 131.

⁵⁸⁷ The table is based on information in U. S. Congress, Joint Committee on the Library, *Rochambeau. A Commemoration by the Congress of the United States of the Services of the French Auxiliary Forces in the War of the American Independence* D.B. Randolph Keim, ed., (Washington, DC, 1907), p. 366.

⁵⁸⁸ The table is based on NARA, Military Service Records, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. M246, Roll 136: Returns of the French Army Under Count Rochambeau, 1781-82 (six returns). On 1 June 1781, Rochambeau wrote to Ségur, "Il vous sera facile de juger, Monsieur que je n'aurai pas 3,000 hommes sous les armes à mener à la rivière de Nord." (Doniol, *Histoire*, p. 480)

columns that departed from Providence on 18 June numbered only around 450 officers and 3,800 NCOs and enlisted men.⁵⁸⁹

| REGIMENT AND MEN OF ALL ARMS | PRESENT NCOs | DETACHED | IN HOSPITALS | TOTAL along the route |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Bourbonnois | 811 | 156 | 63 | 1030 |
| Soissonnois | 901 | 111 | 42 | 1054 |
| Saintonge | 853 | 115 | 44 | 1012 |
| Royal Deux-Ponts | 831 | 153 | 39 | 1023 |
| Artillerie | 381 | 100 | 30 | 511 |
| Mineurs | - | 23 | - | 23 |
| Workers (<i>ouvriers</i>) | 33 | - | 3 | 36 |
| Lauzun's Legion | 581 | 25 | 6 | 613 |
| | 4,391 | 683 | 227 | 5,301 |

The actual convoy that departed from Providence on 18 June, however, was much larger. Rochambeau again hired 239 American wagon conductors "for two dollars per day," recorded Lauberdière, and 15 mostly female cooks for the 210 wagons of six oxen each in the 15 brigades of his train.⁵⁹⁰ On 9 April 1781, the Town of Providence had received a request in from "the Quarter Master General of His Most Christian Majesty's Army now in this State ... to appropriate the Market House in this Town to store the Baggage of the Army." The town complied and on 18 April assigned the upper part of Market House for the purpose. Two weeks later, Rochambeau was ready to move and on 30 May 1781, asked Governor Greene for an order "to impress all the wagons that are on Rhode Island for carrying our baggage as far as Bristol Ferry and another [order] to impress the wagons of farmers between Bristol Ferry and Providence to carry the same to Providence."⁵⁹¹ Once they had reached Providence, Rochambeau hoped to have his own wagons waiting to transport the supplies for the thousands of men and animals of his columns.

⁵⁸⁹ The table is based on NARA, Military Service Records, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. M246, Roll 136: Returns of the French Army Under Count Rochambeau, 1781-82 (six returns).

⁵⁹⁰ This includes the 14 wagons for Lauzun's Legion, though it is unknown whether that brigade was in Rochambeau's train. The names of drivers and cooks are listed in Kenneth Scott, "Rochambeau's American Wagoners, 1780-1783" *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* vol. 143, (July 1989), pp. 256-262, based on *Etat Générale des voitures attelées chacune de quatre [cheveaux] ... dont la distribution à été faite le 15th de ce mois [June 1781]* in the Wadsworth Papers in the New York Historical Society.

⁵⁹¹ *Colonial Records of Rhode Island*, vol. 9, p. 433.

Initially Rochambeau had requested 50 teams of four oxen each, but when Wadsworth insisted on at least six oxen per ton of freight, Rochambeau agreed to the six-ox teams, but wished that the 20 wagons of the general staff be drawn by four horses each.⁵⁹² By 16 April, Wadsworth had already engaged fifty teams and promised to have 150 four-ox teams ready in Providence by 15 May at the latest.⁵⁹³ By the time the campaign began, their number had increased to 239 wagon drivers and conductors and 15 mostly female cooks for 210 wagons of four oxen each (=840 oxen!) in the 15 brigades of his train.⁵⁹⁴

Dozens more "steaks on the hoof" accompanied the thousands of troops. Eighty horses drew the twenty staff wagons, the artillery added about 500 horses and Lauzun's Legion contributed the animals of the 300 mounted hussars. Almost all of the about 400 officers had at least three horses for themselves and their servants, which may have added another 1,200 animals to the columns. Eyewitnesses such as James Hopkins of Bedford remembered the spectacle for the rest of their lives.

⁵⁹² Wadsworth to Rochambeau, 16 April 1781, Wadsworth Papers, CHS, and Rochambeau to Wadsworth, 18 April 1781, Rochambeau Papers, Library of Congress, vol. 9, Letterbook 1. By 18 April, Rochambeau had requested 150 wagon teams be at Providence by 5 May, among them 20 with four horses, the rest drawn by either four or six ox-teams if case Wadsworth insisted on the larger number. Concurrently he received orders "immediately to collect at the Different Posts Hay and Grain necessary for the Subsistence of the Horses and the Cattle for their daily Consumption, about 2,400 Rations of Hay and 3,200 Rations of Grain." On 3 June, Carter informed him that 20 horse wagons and 130 ox teams would be available at Providence by 10 June.

Once the march had begun, Rochambeau very quickly (on 20 June from Windham) began to complain about slow speed and the "great inconvenience with the wagons drawn by oxen which don't arrive in camp until night and a very long time after the arrival of the troupes." Rochambeau to Washington, 20 June 1781, Rochambeau Papers, Library of Congress, vol. 9, Letterbook 1.

⁵⁹³ Wadsworth to Rochambeau, 16 April 1781, Rochambeau Family Papers, Gen Mss 146, Box 1, no. 61, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

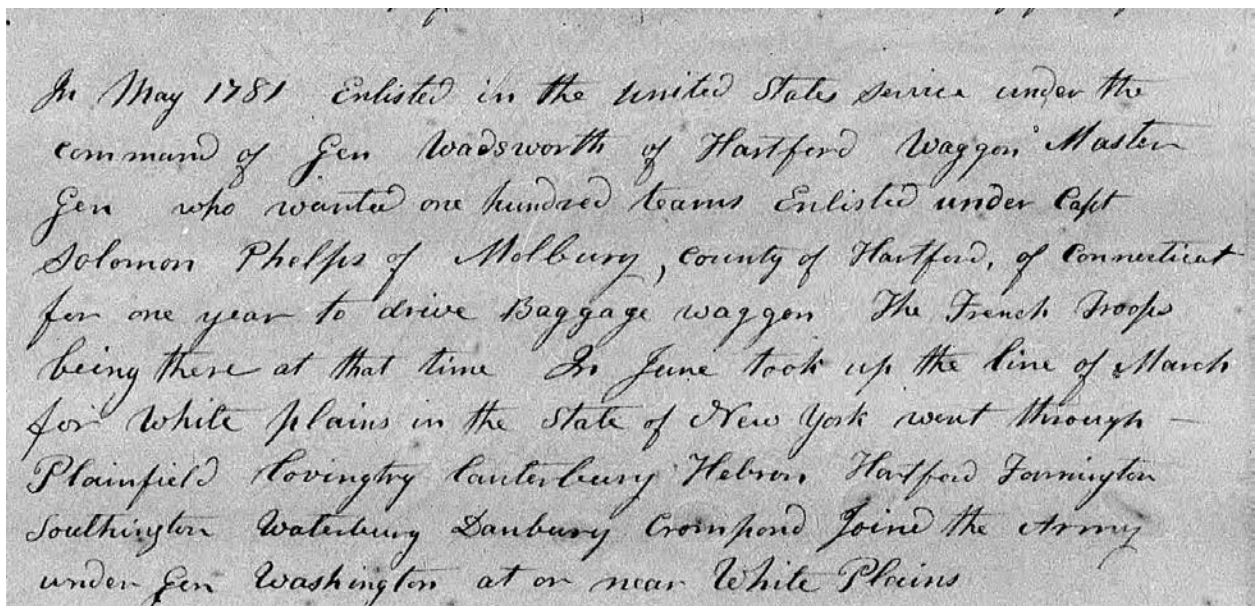
⁵⁹⁴ Lauberdière recorded that the wagons were drawn by four oxen each but the artillery pieces were drawn by horses. (fol. 60) That brings the total number of draft animals to at least 840 oxen. On 29 July 1781, Wadsworth paid Thomas Lewis for "pasturing 994 Head Cattle" at "Elijah Bronsons Pasture" in Middlebury, Connecticut. French forces had camped there from 27 June through 1 July 1781. Wadsworth's Account Book for expenses incurred during the march to White Plains is published in NARA, Revolutionary War Pensions and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, Microfilm Reel 2670.

The make-up of Rochambeau's wagon train is in "Etat Générale des voitures attelées chacune de quatre chevaux ... don't la distribution à été faite le 15th de ce mois [June 1781]" Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, New-York Historical Society, folder 11. Wadsworth's *Etat* is for horses, but Rochambeau had wanted oxen. The names of drivers and cooks are listed in Kenneth Scott, "Rochambeau's American Wagoners, 1780-1783" *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* vol. 143, (July 1989), pp. 256-262.

Hopkins recalled in the 1840s that "The French infantry next day passed towards White Plains by the West Road passing North Castle Church (I believe). Their drums were beating all day long." Benjamin Hoyt of Danbury recorded in 1830 of the return march of French forces from Danbury to Newton on 24 October 1782:

"I very well remember when the French Army under Count Rochambeau returned to Boston after the taking of Yorktown. ... When we had got on to the height of land above Deacon Hickok's we could see the Front of the Army had arrived as far as where Samuel Dibble lives and as far as we could see over Shelterrock Hill, a distance probably of two miles the troops continued to come in sight. ... I should judge now that they were 2 Hours in passing the Army and baggage waggon - which latter I think took up more space than the former I know that at the time I began to think had no End." Rochambeau was crossing Rhode Island in brigades of two regiments of 1,000 men each plus their staffs, servants, wagons and artillery supplements. If we apply a formula of 125 wagons per mile and allow for delays and gaps in the column it is not unreasonable to assume a column stretching three miles or more along the roads. Since the daily marching distance was between 10 and 15 miles, the troops at the head of the column could already have covered one quarter of their route before van left camp.

Most of the waggoners and wagon conductors came from Connecticut, viz. Ira Hayford from Farmington, who listed his services in his pension application (no. W 660) in 1832.

A photograph of a handwritten manuscript snippet on aged, slightly stained paper. The text is written in a cursive script, likely from the late 18th or early 19th century. It describes military service in May 1781, mentioning enlistment in the United States Service under the command of Gen. Wadsworth of Hartford, serving as a Waggon Master for Gen. who wanted one hundred teams. The writer, Solomon Phelps of Molbury, County of Hartford, Connecticut, enlisted under Capt. for one year to drive baggage waggon. The text continues with a list of locations: Plainfield, Lovington, Canterbury, Hebron, Hartford, Farmington, Southington, Waterbury, Danbury, Crompond, and finally joining the army under Gen. Washington at or near White Plains.

In May 1781 Enlisted in the United States Service under the command of Gen Wadsworth of Hartford Waggon Master Gen who wanted one hundred teams Enlisted under Capt Solomon Phelps of Molbury, County of Hartford, of Connecticut for one year to drive Baggage waggon The French Troops being there at that time In June took up the line of March for White Plains in the State of New York went through - Plainfield Lovington Canterbury Hebron Hartford Farmington Southington Waterbury Danbury Crompond Joined the Army under Gen Washington at or near White Plains

...ter Months -
In the year 1781 he again enlisted under Capt. Seymour of Hartford for the term of Six months for the purpose of transporting military stores from Hartford to White Plains - started from Hartford with Wine in Bottles and Boxes belonging to Gen. Rochambeau's Baggage and went to White Plains - discharged his load at said place - Lived a week while at White Plains he with others were employed gathering forage for the hosts of Rochambeau's troops - Went into his Camp - Saw the General every day for a considerable time - Staid at White Plains about three

Perez Marshall was a wagoner from Simsbury (Application W19857)

Ralph Patrick, a waggoner under Capt. Thomas Loomis (pension application S 17551), enlisted in Lebanon "on Sunday next preceding the first Monday of May" 1781, and was discharged in Williamsburg, Virginia on 8 November 1781.⁵⁹⁵ Moses Hoyt of Danbury deposed that "On the Arrival of the French Troops in Rhode Island the Deponent enlisted into Capt. Ithamer Weed's Company attached to Gen Person's

⁵⁹⁵ His application for a Federal pension no. S28837 was rejected.

Brigade of the Connecticut line as a baggage and foraging Company for the term of one Year - Mustered at Danbury or Reading and assisted the French Troops by conveying their baggage & foraging on the march from Rhode Island to White Plains in New York." (Pension Application S 10860, rejected). But there were also a few waggoners from Rhode Island: On 17 June 1780, William Giles from Greenwich enlisted as a waggoner for French forces.

"Monday Next" was 18 June. Vault A Box 44 folder 5, NHS

Over the next few days following the arrival of French forces in Providence the wagon train was assembled. On 16 June, Blanchard, who traveled with two servants ahead of the army, "set out in the morning for General Washington's camp ... stopping at the different places where our troops were to be stationed, in order to examine if anything was needed." At the same time Blanchard complained that "The Americans supplied us with nothing; we were obliged to purchase everything and to provide ourselves with the most trifling things. It is said that it is better to make war in an enemy's country than among one's friends."⁵⁹⁶ At least initially he was also traveling with Quartermaster General Bévillie, whose task it was, as Carter informed Wadsworth on Friday, 15 June "to go before to mark the Camp" for the approaching troops.⁵⁹⁷ That same day, 16 June, the replacements finally had been integrated into their units as well and on Monday, 18 June, the First Division set out for Waterman's Tavern: "the Regiment of Bourbonnois marches on 3 O'Clock on Monday morning," John Carter wrote to Jeremiah Wadsworth from Waterman's Tavern on 16 June 1781. It was to arrive at Waterman's "by 9 or 10".

⁵⁹⁶ Blanchard, *Journal*, pp. 107/8. Blanchard reached the Continental Army on 26 June 1781.

⁵⁹⁷ Carter to Wadsworth, 15 June 1780, Wadsworth Papers, Box 131, CTHS. This arrangement was maintained until all French forces had embarked in Alexandria, Virginia.

Marching with the First Division, Rochambeau had established this order:

The regiment Bourbonnois under the *comte* de Rochambeau, to leave on 18 June

The regiment Royal Deux-Ponts under *baron* de Vioménil, to leave on 19 June

The regiment Soissonnois under *comte* de Vioménil, to leave on 20 June

The regiment Saintonge under *comte* de Custine, to leave on 21 June

The eight twelve-pounders and six mortars of the field artillery were divided into four detachments with one detachment attached to each of the divisions. Each division was led by an Assistant Quarter Master General and preceded by *ouvriers*, i.e., workmen commanded by an engineer who filled potholes and removed obstacles.⁵⁹⁸ Then came the division proper. In the case of the First Division, this meant that the *vicomte* de Rochambeau led the column.⁵⁹⁹ Then came the officers and men of the Bourbonnois and the guns of the field artillery drawn by horses. The seven wagons of Rochambeau's baggage headed the baggage train, followed by the ten regimental wagons (one per company) with the tents of the soldiers and the luggage of the officers. Each captain had been allowed 300 pounds, each lieutenant 150 pounds of baggage for a total of 1,500 pounds per regiment distributed on wagons. Staff was allowed a separate wagon; a wagon for stragglers completed the regimental assignment of twelve wagons.⁶⁰⁰ Besides their muskets, the soldiers, dressed in gaiters, wigs, and tight-fitting woolen small clothes, carried equipment weighing almost 60 pounds. This regulation equipment consisted of

3 chemises = 3 shirts

1 bonnet de nuit = 1 night cap

1 bonnet de police = 1 fatigue cap

2 culottes de tricot = 2 pairs of wool breeches ("tricot" was a woolen fabric)

2 mouchoirs = 2 handkerchiefs

2 cols = 2 neckstocks

1 agrafe de col = 1 neckstock buckle

2 paires de souliers = 2 pairs of shoes

⁵⁹⁸ The first division was preceded by 30 pioneers, half of whom carried axes, the second through fourth division by 15 pioneers, eight of which had axes.

⁵⁹⁹ The Second Division was led by Captain Charles Malo *comte* de Lameth, an aide-de-camp to Rochambeau until May 1781, the third by Captain Georges Henry Victor Collot, also a former aide-de-camp to Rochambeau, and the forth by Louis Alexandre Berthier, upon whose journal this paragraph is based.

⁶⁰⁰ All numbers from Berthier, "Journal," p. 246. Closen, *Journal*, p. 84, writes: "the general allotted 14 wagons to a regiment, two for each general officer and 2 for his six aides-de-camp. He kept only 4 for himself." Scott, "Wagoners," gives each regiment 15 wagons and five each to the general officers.

2 paires de bas, dont une de laine et une de fil = 2 pairs of stockings, including one of wool and one of thread (most likely linen or cotton thread)
 2 paires de guetres blanches = 2 pairs of white gaiters
 1 paire de guetres d'etoffe = 1 pair of wool gaiters ("éttoffe" is a woolen fabric)
 1 paire de guetres de toile noircie = 1 pair of blackened linen gaiters
 1 paire de boucles de souliers = 1 pair of shoe buckles
 1 paire de boucles de jarretieres = 1 pair of garter buckles
 2 cocardes = 2 cockades
 1 sac de peau = 1 skin bag ("peau" usually refers to a tanned skin with the hair on)
 1 sac de toile = 1 cloth bag (most likely linen)
 1 peigne a demeler = 1 comb to untangle hair
 1 peigne a decrasser = 1 comb to clean hair
 1 peigne a retaper = 1 comb to redo hair
 1 vergette a habits = 1 coat brush
 2 brosses a souliers = 2 shoe brushes
 1 sac de poudre = 1 powder puff
 1 houppe = 1 tuft

Behind the regimental train followed the three wagons assigned to Blanchard, and the division's hospital wagons. Eight wagons carried the military chest under the supervision of de Baulny.⁶⁰¹ Wagons for the butchers, loaded with bread, with fodder, the "King's stock," and the brigade of wheelwrights and shoeing smiths brought up the rear. Even the Provost had his own wagon for the instruments of his trade. The make-up of the 2nd through 4th divisions followed the same pattern. Behind their QMG guide came the individual regiments, followed by a quarter of the field artillery, part of the baggage train of the headquarters staff led by the baggage of the general in charge of the division and the field hospital down to wheelwrights and shoeing smiths.

In order to avoid having to march in the heat of the day, the regiments got up early: *reveille* was around 2:00 a.m., by 4:00 a.m. the regiments were on their way. Captain Samuel Richards of the Connecticut Line, on leave at home in Farmington, Connecticut, in June 1781, recorded that "They marched on the road in open order, untill the music struck up, they then closed into close order. On the march - a quarter master preceeded and at the forking of the road would be stuck a pole with a bunch of straw at top to shew the road they were to take."⁶⁰²

⁶⁰¹ César Louis de Baulny was the chief treasurer for the French forces.

⁶⁰² *Diary of Samuel Richards, Captain of Connecticut Line War of the Revolution 1775-1781* (Philadelphia, 1909), p. 75.

There are no American eyewitness accounts for the line-up of the forces in the early morning hours or for the march of the French army through Rhode Island, but eyewitnesses such as James Hopkins of Bedford, New York, remembered the spectacle for the rest of their lives. Hopkins recalled in the 1840s that "The French infantry next day passed towards White Plains by the West Road passing North Castle Church (I believe). Their drums were beating all day long." Benjamin Hoyt of Danbury recorded in 1830 of the return march of French forces from Danbury to Newton on 24 October 1782:

I very well remember when the French Army under Count Rochambeau returned to Boston after the taking of Yorktown. ... When we had got on to the height of land above Deacon Hickok's we could see the Front of the Army had arrived as far as where Samuel Dibble lives and as far as we could see over Shelterrock Hill, a distance probably of two miles the troops continued to come in sight. ... I should judge now that they were 2 Hours in passing the Army and baggage waggons - which latter I think took up more space than the former I know that at the time I began to think had no End.

On 4 November 1782, during the return march just as the French columns were about to enter Rhode Island, Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale University, recorded in his diary: "Lodged at Bolton, where we saw the first Division of the French Army march for Providence. There were counted 170 Waggon of Artillery, filling the Rode fr. The Meeting house to & which is one Mile, besides those we passed yesterday: there were as supposed above 100, so that the Baggage Waggon & Artillery judged 300." The next day Stiles "Met & passed the 2d Div. of French Army, probably 1500 men. The whole sd. to be 4000, I judge 3000. We stopt our chaise near half an hour in passing the Troops, & afterwards above half an hour in passing 2 Divisions of Wagons, I judge 200. Some of them sd. they had 500 Waggon for whole Army."⁶⁰³ Rochambeau was marching from Providence to Connecticut in regimental columns of 1,000 men each plus their staffs, servants, animals, wagons, and artillery supplements. If we apply the above formula of 125 wagons per mile and allow for delays and gaps in the column it is not unreasonable to assume a column stretching two to three miles along the roads. Since the daily marching distance was between 10 and 15 miles, the troops at the head of the column could already have covered one quarter of their route before van left camp.

⁶⁰³ Stiles, *Diary*, vol. 3, p. 45.

Royal Warrant To Elisha Abbe
 To Removing & Transporting 201 Tons
 of hay from the Magazine at Canterbury
 to Providence Waterman's Tavern & Co
 Contin^d Money
 £923.11.11 54.053
 Rec^d. Providence July 28th 1781 of Royal Warrant by
 Three hundred Twenty three ^{Shillings} one Shilling in Specie
 and Fifty four Thousand Eight hundred and fifty
 Continental Dollars of the old Emipions. in full
 for the Above Account of Elisha Abbe

Receipt for transporting supplies from Providence to Waterman's Tavern
 Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS

The next campsite, usually 12 to 15 miles away, was reached between 8:00 a.m. and noon, and the soldiers set up their tents. Afterwards they received meat, bread, and supplies "in front of the camp."⁶⁰⁴ On 8 June 1781 – French forces were about to embark in Newport for the journey to Providence – Rochambeau in his *Livre d'ordre* set food rations for the march: "Distribution de pain demi mat[in] pour 4 jour La Ration Sera Lavenir D'une Livre de demie de Pain d'une once de Ris et d'une [livre] de viande fraiche – distribution of bread tomorrow morning for four days. The ration will be for the future 1 ½ pounds of bread, one ounce of rice, and one pound of fresh meat." One pound of fresh meat per man and day, which added up to around 4,500 lbs per day. In the 1780s the average weight of cattle in New England was around 600 lbs to 650 lbs but could go as high as 1,000 lbs. In December of 1780, David Trumbull in Lebanon bought four oxen with an average weight of 634 lbs; on 2

⁶⁰⁴ Closen, *Journal*, p. 85.

January 1781, he purchased an ox of 600 lbs, the next day he estimated the weight of two oxen at 1,050 lbs each. When Wadsworth bought cattle for French forces in Newport, Rhode Island, in July 1780, he calculated it to "average 400 lbs each of Meat Beef," i.e., slaughtered, about half the weight of a head of cattle today.⁶⁰⁵ Cattle in Maryland was smaller, which means that French forces alone – servants, wagoners and staff included – consumed daily the meat of at least 12 to 15 heads of cattle.⁶⁰⁶ On 30 June, the daily ration was set at one pound of bread, two ounces bacon ("lard") and eight ounces Indian corn ("mais"). Though it is not mentioned explicitly – there was no need to mention it since it did not change? - it seems fair to assume that the daily meat ration remained the same.⁶⁰⁷ That added up to around 4,500 lbs of bread and ca. 2,250 lbs "Indian corn" per day. Assuming that their bread was also baked from corn meal, daily consumption reached close to 7,000 lbs of corn meal.⁶⁰⁸ Since 1 bushel shelled corn yields around 40 lbs corn meal, the troops needed around 175 bushels daily.

The Règlement concernant la composition de la ration de Fourrages aux troupes à cheval du 18 September 1777 stipulated equal year-round rations per horse and day independent of whether the troops are in campaign or winter quarters:

Ten pounds of hay

Ten pounds of straw and two thirds of a bushel of oats Parisian measure

When straw is rare, the substitute can be 12 pounds of hay and only 6 pounds of straw, and when there is no straw at all the horse was to get 15 pounds hay per day.

The measurements for the military were the *Boisseau de Paris* of 12.67 liters; 2/3 of that are almost 9 liters or 0.25 bushels or 8 quarts, which is almost identical to the American feed requirements. A four horse team consumed around 80 pounds of

⁶⁰⁵ The dressed carcass makes up about 60% of the live-weight of cattle; the remaining 40% live-weight is taken up by the hide, blood, bones, horns, hoof, tallow, intestines and casings, fat and organs such as the tongue, heart, kidney and liver known as the Fifth Quarter. In December 1782, Wadsworth purchased 85 head of cattle on the hoof in Boston weighing 630 lbs on average, leaving 350 lbs of meat per animal. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, , Box 144, Folder December 1782, CTHS.

⁶⁰⁶ During winter quarters 1780/81 the 250 officers and men of Lauzun's Legion consumed over 20,000 lbs of beef and over 4,000 lbs of mutton or more than 2 lbs per head per day during the 50 days they spent in winter quarters.

⁶⁰⁷ Rochambeau used the French pound, the *livre de Paris*, at 489.5 grams, while the colonists used the slightly lighter avoirdupois pound at 453.6 grams.

⁶⁰⁸ In 1781, one bushel of wheat weighed in at 60 lbs, five bushels yielded a barrel of fine flour of 196 lbs and some inferior flour and waste. Miller Thomas Lea in Wilmington, DE estimated that 100 bushels of wheat yielded 19 barrels of fine four, 2 barrels of second quality, 3 barrels of third quality, 30 bushels of bran or 5,920 lbs flour and 90 lbs waste.

hay, twice that amount if oats were not available. If a wagon must travel for 10 days it consumed 800 pounds of hay and 320 pounds of oats, which, if those supplies would have to have been carried along, would have added up to more than half of a full wagon load of 1,563 pounds. Again the numbers are staggering: if they received their full rations the 1,500 horses alone consumed 1,000 bushels of oats daily.⁶⁰⁹

The meat was fresh: at all stops, a drove of a dozen or so oxen was waiting to be slaughtered or had been slaughtered just before the arrival of the troops.⁶¹⁰ Upon arrival in Newtown, Jeremiah Wadsworth and his agents had waiting for them 2.520 bushel of corn, 316 1/2 bushels of oats, 62 tons 5 cwt of hay, 19 tons of straw, 22 1/2 cords of wood, and 20 head of beef cattle. Until Newtown "we were much too far from the enemy to take any other precautions than those, which our own discipline required,"⁶¹¹ and the convoy proceeded "hardly militarily." The general officers lodged in a near-by tavern, the company-grade officers slept, two to a tent, with their men. The early arrival provided an opportunity to meet the locals who came from afar to see the French, and for dancing with the "beautiful maidens" of Connecticut, music courtesy of the regimental bands.⁶¹²

One question that comes up repeatedly is that of women and camp followers in Rochambeau's army. French troops were campaigning in a foreign country, far away from their home bases, which explains why there were few women and even fewer children with Rochambeau's forces. In addition women "were not considered necessary to the administration of the army," as René Chartrand has pointed out; therefore "women did not officially exist." The army very rarely approved marriages, but when it did, the women, though not allowed to live in the barracks, at least received a daily bread ration. Both Rochambeau's *French* and *Foreign* regiments brought women with them from Europe. In *French* regiments, women were but tolerated, but *Foreign* regiments such as the Royal Deux-Ponts were allowed 30 women each in the *capitulation* between the colonels of the regiments and the crown of 1 March 1760. On the march, they received 1 *sol* pay per day and a

⁶⁰⁹ One bushel of oats weighs 32 pounds.

⁶¹⁰ See the letter by Carter to Wadsworth dated, Friday 15 June 1780, in which he informed him that the next drove of oxen should be sent to Waterman's Tavern. Wadsworth Papers, Box 131, Correspondence, December 1780 to June 1781. CTHS.

⁶¹¹ Deux-Ponts, *Campaigns*, p. 113.

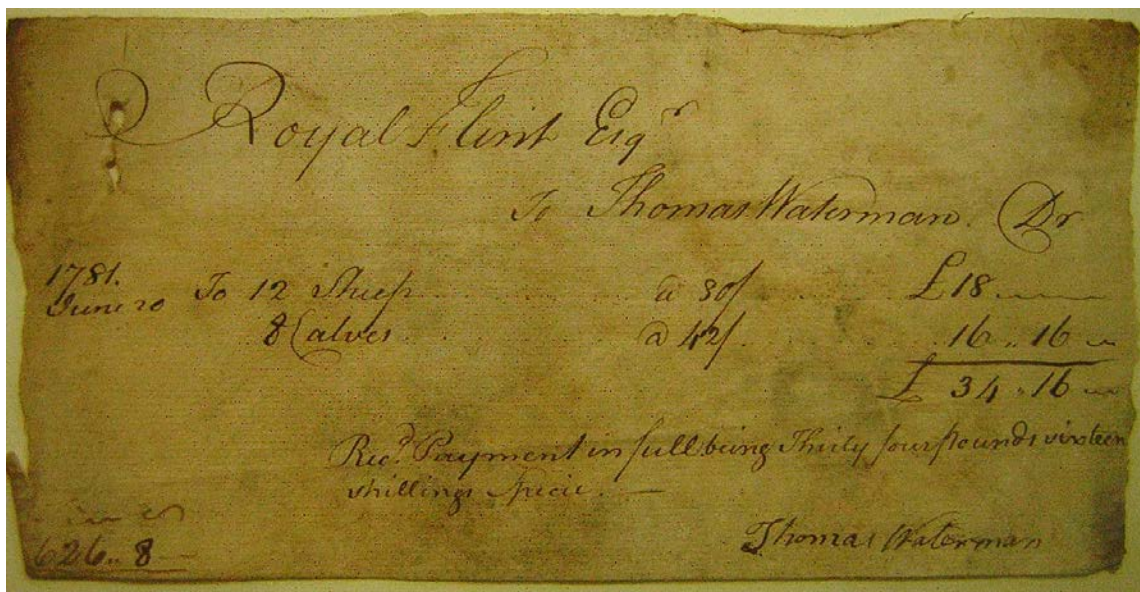
⁶¹² Rudolf Karl Tröss, "Die Regimentsmusik von Royal-Deux-Ponts vor Yorktown" in Tröss, *Royal-Deux-Ponts*, pp. 70-76, p. 70, gives the strength of the regimental band as 15 musicians. The French bands were in demand: on 13 September 1780, Ephraim Bowen invited Rochambeau and his officers to a ball in Providence. Rochambeau declined the invitation but offered to "send you the Band of Music, that you Desire." Bowen Family Papers, Mss 301 folder 11. RIHS.

bread ration. Officially Rochambeau could have only brought 30 women and their children from the Royal Deux-Ponts. The numbers in 1781 approached this total, 1/4 of whom were from the Royal Deux-Ponts.

The most reliable numbers are in the embarkation lists of 1782. When Rochambeau's infantry left from Boston on Christmas Day 1782, it embarked 25 women and 4 children:

5 women or children for the Bourbonnois
 6 women and 1 child for the Soissonnois
 5 women or children for the Saintonge
 6 women and 3 children for the Royal Deux-Ponts (at least two are girls, one but
 3 women for the artillery 4 years old)

A slightly different list in the *Archives Nationales* gives 20 women and six children for the infantry regiments plus three for the artillery, with six women and three children for the Royal Deux-Ponts. The siege artillery as well as Lauzun's Legion wintered on the American mainland and left in May 1783. An embarkation list dated Philadelphia, 4 May 1783, gives 5 women as passengers "a la ration," i.e., soldier's wives, though it is unclear to which unit they belonged. That would bring the total number of women and children in the French army to 34 women and children.



Thomas Waterman supplied 12 sheep and 8 calves to the Soissonnois Regiment on 20 June 1781. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

Following their one-day camp at Waterman's Tavern, the Bourbonnois crossed into Connecticut "one of the most productive in cattle, wheat, and every kind of commodity," so Clermont-Crèveœur, in the early morning of 19 June. From 22 June through 27 June the troops rested in East Hartford from where they marched via Farmington and Southington to Waterbury, a "village of 50-some houses," and Breakneck, an assemblage of "two or three houses."⁶¹³ They crossed the Housatonic River and continued on to Newtown, which was "full of Tories." For the first time the soldiers also "saw much poverty there among the inhabitants as well as ruined fields and houses." At Newtown, Rochambeau re-organised his troops into two divisions of two regiments and support troops each. The First Division rested at Newtown from 28 through 30 June; the Second Division arrived on 29 June to rest on 30 June.

The marching order for the Legion specified that on 21 June 1781, "Lauzun's entire Corps of Foreign Volunteers will leave Lebanon."⁶¹⁴ From Lebanon the Legion was to "proceed to camp along the Middletown road 7 miles beyond Colchester on the west bank of Salmon Brook opposite the landslide caused by flood waters."⁶¹⁵ The march was to be 15 miles, a leisurely pace for cavalry and light infantry in a screening pattern. The second day's march on 22 June took them to Middletown where the Legion remained from 22 June through Sunday, 24 June 1781. The next time we encounter them is on Monday, 26 June when Ezra Stiles reported the presence of the complete Legion, all 600 men, in New Haven. From there, Stiles informs us that "The French Troops marched at six o'clock this morn^g" for Monroe.

On 1 July, his 56th birthday, Rochambeau set out for Ridgebury, a village of maybe 80 houses. Here he received a letter from Washington dated 30 June 1781, asking him "to put your First Brigade under march tomorrow Morning (i.e., 1 July), the remaining Troops to follow as quick as possible, and endeavor to reach Bedford by the evening of the 2d. of July."⁶¹⁶ While enjoying a ball in Monroe, Lauzun received orders from Washington via his aide Lieutenant-Colonel David Cobb in the evening of 30 June to march immediately to Bedford where Washington expected him in the evening of 2 July for an attack at Morrisania. Early next morning Lauzun broke camp in New Stratford and headed for Ridgefield. On 2 July, Lauzun's Legion joined Rochambeau and his First Brigade on the march to Bedford Village, where Lauzun's troops rested briefly before setting out on a night march to meet up with American

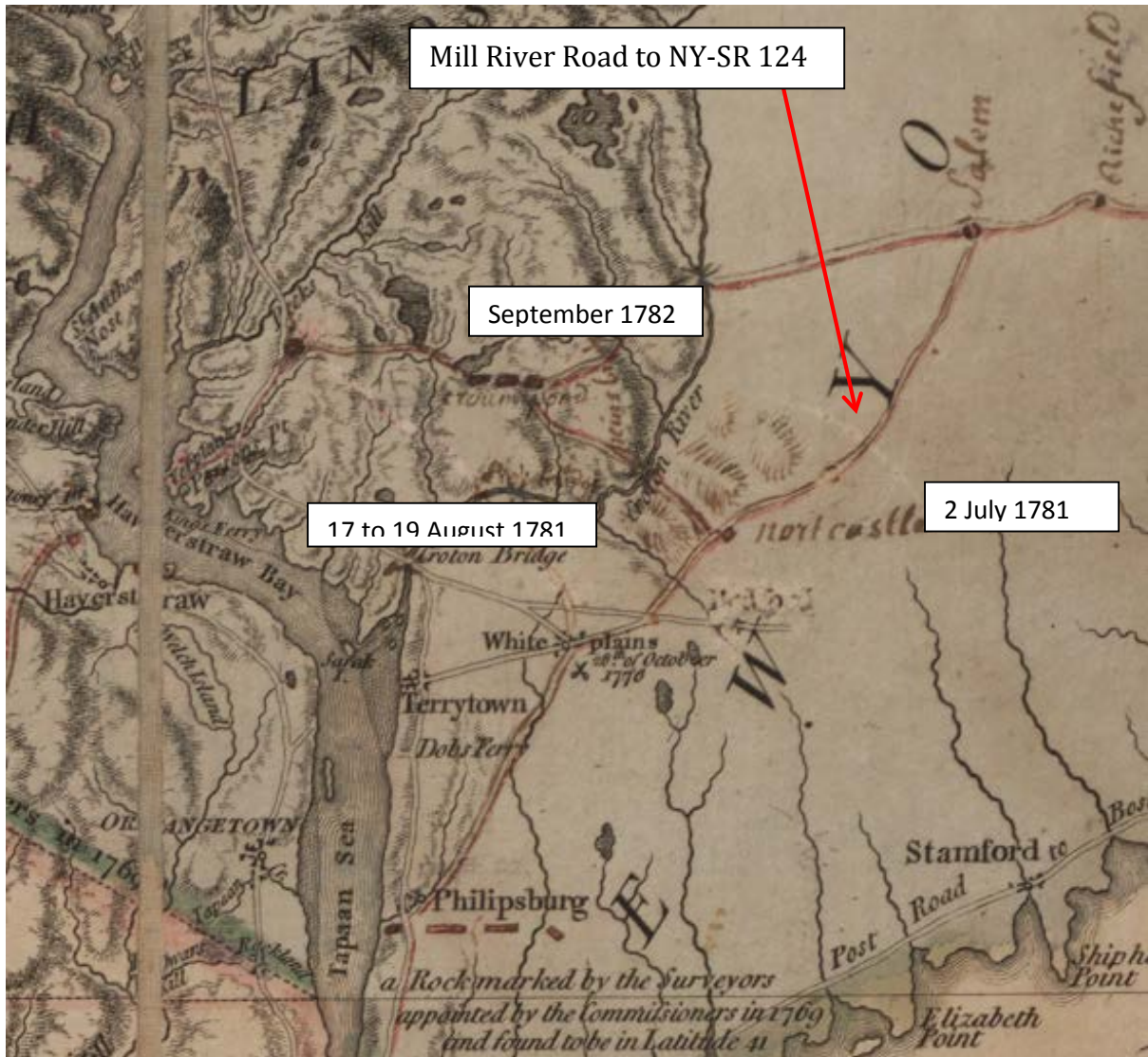
⁶¹³ Breakneck is part of the town of Middlebury, incorporated as a separate town in 1807.

⁶¹⁴ The itinerary quoted here and subsequently is taken from Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 2, pp. 16 and 17. It is based on a document prepared by Bévill.

⁶¹⁵ Major Dominique Sheldon (1760-1802) was an Englishman attached to the Legion as *mestre de camp* on 5 April 1780, not Colonel Elisha Sheldon, of the Continental Army.

⁶¹⁶ Quoted in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 31, n. 31.

General Benjamin Lincoln. Lauzun's troops were late in reaching Morrisania, the estate of General Lewis Morris, and occupied by the loyalists of James De Lancey. Once the enemy had become aware of Lincoln's movements, the two-pronged surprise attack on British posts failed. Following a brief encounter with De Lancey's Loyalists, Lauzun withdrew in the evening of 3 July. The next day his men joined Rochambeau's infantry on its march to Philipsburg where the French met up with the 4,000-man-strong Continental Army on 6 July 1781.



Detail of a map by a French officer showing the march route of Rochambeau's First Brigade from "Richefield" via South Salem in 1781. The base map is William McFadden, *The Province of New Jersey, Divided into East and West, commonly called The Jerseys*. (Charing Cross, 1777).

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT

10.5 The Camp at Philipsburg, 6 July to 18 August 1781

The Continental Army had spent a difficult winter around Morristown and in the Hudson Highlands. On 1 January 1781, the Pennsylvania Line had finally had enough and mutinied in Morristown. A settlement was reached on 9 January and the troops were furloughed until March. On 20 January about 200 men of the New Jersey Line mutinied in Pompton. This time the rebellion was put down by force and two men were executed on the 27 January 1781. As winter turned into spring, the Continental Army barely maintained its strength while Cornwallis was marching almost at will across the southern colonies. Despairingly Washington wrote on 9 April: "We are at the end of our tether, and ... now or never our deliverance must come".⁶¹⁷ The campaign of 1781 had to produce results. But the very presence of French forces and the knowledge of their cooperation in the coming campaign already lifted many spirits. On 17 May 1781, Washington's aide Tench Tilghman wrote to Robert Morris from New Windsor that he was about "to set out tomorrow with His Excellency for Weathersfield where he is to have an interview with the Count de Rochambeau. ... The expectations of the people are high and perhaps they may expect a change more suddenly than it is possible to affect one."⁶¹⁸ A month later, on 18 June 1781, Thomas Rodney, Delaware's representative to Congress, reported from Philadelphia, of "this unlimited confidence we have placed in the Court of France and indeed when there (sic) own interests is not materially in view perhaps she may do better for us than we could for our selves." If a victorious peace could be achieved, Rodney was convinced that "if they give us our rank among the nations our Own natural advantages will soon lift us above them all."⁶¹⁹

Others such as William Houghton argued caution. On 4 June 1781 he wrote to his friend Josiah Hornblower from Philadelphia:

It gives me not a little Uneasiness to find the publick Expectations so sanguine respecting the Arrival of the Second Division of the Armament at Rhode Island, because the event is so uncertain. ... The Court of France has given a Thousand Proofs of Attachment to our Cause, and of more than empty wishes for the ample Success of the Revolution. This no one can doubt, and were it not as plain as Fact can be, we know it is the Interest of that Nation. We ought therefore to be satisfied if every Thing is so constructed as best to promote, on the whole, the great End

⁶¹⁷ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 21, p. 439.

⁶¹⁸ *The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784*. E. James Ferguson, ed., vol. 1: February 7 - July 31, 1781. (Pittsburgh, 1973), p. 74.

⁶¹⁹ Historical Society of Delaware (HSD) Rodney Collection Box 6, Folder 19.

*in view. ... To such a Pitch has our Controversy involved the Nations of Europe, that let Peace be settled where it will, it will be settled there, and we know the Importance of Power and Respectability at Hand.*⁶²⁰

More immediately, however, he urged that "In the present Crisis it is uncommonly necessary to give the most ready, decided and effectual Dispatch to such Requisitions as may be made by Congress or the General. Could we raise up the Spirit of five Years ago, and keep it in Operation but a few months, if no more, what could not be done! what Terms might we not dictate to our Enemies! Could we forget the Things that are behind, and banish the Desires of idle Pomp and sordid Gain; could we honestly exert ourselves in Confidence of the Blessings of Heaven, all would soon be well."

Upon learning that the French forces had left Newport, Washington on 18 June ordered his troops quartered around West Point to leave winter camp beginning on Thursday, 21 June and to join up with Rochambeau's forces. The surprise attack in cooperation with Lauzun's Legion against British forces on 3 July having failed, the Continental Army marched to its camp at Philipsburg. On 8 July, Washington reviewed Rochambeau's troops, which, according to Lauberdière, "appeared in the grandest parade uniform. M. de Rochambeau took his place in front of the white flag of his oldest regiment and saluted General Washington. ... Our general received the greatest compliments for the beauty of his troops. It is true that without doubt those that we have with us were superb at our departure from France." The following day, Rochambeau returned the compliment. Closen too "had a chance to see the American army, man for man. It was really painful to see these brave men, almost naked with only some trousers and little linen jackets, most of them without stockings, but, would you believe it? Very cheerful and healthy in appearance. A quarter of them were negroes, merry, confident, and sturdy. ... Three quarters of the Rhode Island regiment consists of negroes, and that regiment is the most neatly dressed, the best under arms, and the most precise in its manœuvres (sic)."⁶²¹ "In beholding this army," the *comte* de Clermont-Crèvecœur "was struck, not by its smart appearance, but by its destitution: the men were without uniforms and covered with rags; most of them were barefoot. They were of all sizes, down to children who could not have been over fourteen."⁶²² The Lauberdière found the Continental Army "lined up in the order of battle in front of their camp. It was not a very pleasant sight, not because of the attire and the uniform of the regiments,

⁶²⁰ William Houghton from Philadelphia to Josiah Hornblower, 4 June 1781. New Jersey Historical Society, MG 10 Hornblower Family. Box 1, folder 3.

⁶²¹ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 89.

⁶²² Clermont-Crèvecœur, Journal, in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 33.

because at present, and ever since they have been in the war, they are pretty much naked. But I remember their great accomplishments and I cannot see without a certain admiration that it was with these same men that General Washington had so gloriously defended his country." What bothered him was that the Americans "lined up in the ranks according to seniority. This method infinitely hurts the eye and the beautiful appearance of the troops because it often places a tall man between two short ones and a short one between two tall ones." The French line in contrast was "well lined up, of an equal height, well dressed."

Rochambeau's force was small by European standards and even smaller than the army of his ally. This review of 10 July 1781, showed only 4,393 NCOs and enlisted men and 279 company-grade officers under his immediate command. Most of the detached infantry (402) were with the French artillery in Newport (34) and Providence (66) as were all the *mineurs*; 25 hussars were still in Lebanon, Connecticut and 118 soldiers at various places along the route. The sick were distributed in hospitals from Boston (79) to Providence (92), Newport (10), Hartford (15), North Castle (22) and along the road in places such as Newtown (3), Lebanon (2) and in Philipsburg (4). Fourteen of the losses were deserters. Of the 302 company-grade officers, 12 officers and a *porte-drapeau* of the Soissonnois were in Newport; one sick officer of unknown rank, one lieutenant and the officers of one company of the Auxonne artillery, i.e. one captain and three lieutenants, were in Providence; one artillery officer was in Boston. One captain and one lieutenant of the *mineurs* also had remained behind in Providence. *Sous-lieutenant* Louis Deseutre of the artillery company in Lauzun's Legion had stayed behind in Lebanon.

Strength of the French Army upon Arrival in White Plains in July 1781

| UNIT | PRESENT on 10 July 1781 | LOSSES | REPLACE- MENTS | PRESENT & UNDER ARMS | DETACHED | SICK IN HOSPITALS THE ROUTE | TOTAL 10 July 1781 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bourbonnois | 910 | 4 | 122 | 811 | 156 | 63 | 1,030 |
| Soissonnois | 985 | 16 | 85 | 901 | 111 | 42 | 1,054 |
| Saintonge | 897 | 2 | 117 | 853 | 115 | 44 | 1,012 |
| Royal Deux- Ponts | 926 | 5 | 102 | 831 | 153 | 39 | 1,023 |
| Artillerie | 408 | 2 | 105 | 381 | 100 | 30 | 511 |
| Mineurs | 23 | | | | 23 | - | 23 |
| Workers (<i>ouvriers</i>) | 26 | | 10 | 33 | - | 3 | 36 |
| Lauzun's Legion | 581 | 2 | 33 | 581 | 25 | 6 | 612 |
| TOTAL | 4,756 | 31 | 574 | 4,393 | 683 | 227 | 5,301 |

Strength of the Continental Army encamped in White Plains in July 1781

| Regiment | Commanding officer | Strength |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------|
| First New Jersey Regiment | Col. Mathias Ogden | 185 officers and men |
| Second New Jersey Regiment | Col. Elias Dayton | 226 officers and men |
| First Connecticut Regiment | Col. John Durkee | 250 officers and men |
| Third Connecticut Regiment | Col. Samuel B. Webb | 256 officers and men |
| Fifth Connecticut Regiment | Lt. Col. Isaac Sherman | 220 officers and men |
| Second Connecticut Regiment | Col. Herman Swift | 239 officers and men |
| Fourth Connecticut Regiment | Col. Zebulon Butler | 233 officers and men |
| Rhode Island Regiment | Lt. Col. Jeremiah Olney | 298 officers and men |
| First Massachusetts Regiment | Col. Joseph Vose | 200 officers and men |
| Fourth Massachusetts Regiment | Col. William Shepard | 193 officers and men |
| Seventh Massachusetts Regiment | Lt. Col. John Brooks | 192 officers and men |
| Second Massachusetts Regiment | Lt. Col. Ebenezer Sprout | 215 officers and men |
| Fifth Massachusetts Regiment | Col. Rufus Putnam | 185 officers and men |
| Eighth Massachusetts Regiment | Col. Michael Jackson | 233 officers and men |
| Third Massachusetts Regiment | Col. John Groaton | 193 officers and men |
| Sixth Massachusetts Regiment | Lt. Col. Calvin Smith | 207 officers and men |
| Ninth Massachusetts Regiment | Col. Henry Jackson | 223 officers and men |
| First New Hampshire Regiment | Col. Alexander Scammell | 214 officers and men |
| Second New Hampshire Regt. | Lt. Col. George Reid | 212 officers and men |
| Tenth Massachusetts Regiment | Col. Benjamin Tupper | 203 officers and men |
| First New York Regiment | Col. Goose Van Schaick | 438 officers and men |
| Canadian Regiment (Congress' Own) | Brig. Gen. Moses Hazen | 263 officers and men |
| 1 st Bn., Conn. State Brig. | Maj. Edward Shipman | 220 officers and men |
| 2 nd Bn., Conn. State Brig. | Maj. Elijah Humphreys | 186 officers and men |

Cavalry:

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Second Cont'l | Col. Elisha Sheldon | 234 officers and men |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|

Artillery:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Second | Col. John Lamb | 163 officers and men |
| Third | Col. John Crane | 205 officers and men |
| Corps of Sappers and Miners | Brig. Gen. Presle Duportail | 46 officers and men |
| Total: | | 6,132 officers and men |

Once Rochambeau's forces had joined the Continental Army their numbers barely added up to 10,000 troops. At almost 14,000 NCOs and rank and file, Crown forces in New York City under of Sir Henry Clinton were considerable stronger.

Strength of Crown Forces in New York City on 15 August 1781⁶²³

| Corps | Fit for duty | | | Effectives | | | Want[in]g |
|------------------------|--------------|-----|-------|------------|-----|-------|-----------|
| | S | D | R&F | S | D | R&F | R&F |
| 1st Grenadiers | 23 | 17 | 440 | 26 | 20 | 478 | |
| 2ed Do | 24 | 16 | 409 | 27 | 25 | 474 | |
| 22ed Regt | 20 | 16 | 381 | 24 | 16 | 448 | 8 |
| 37 th | 20 | 16 | 367 | 24 | 16 | 466 | |
| 38 th | 21 | 11 | 355 | 24 | 16 | 464 | |
| 42ed | 33 | 16 | 560 | 40 | 18 | 640 | 168 |
| 54 th | 18 | 16 | 386 | 24 | 16 | 453 | 3 |
| 57 th | 24 | 13 | 369 | 24 | 16 | 447 | 9 |
| 17th Drag[oon]s | 13 | 6 | 270 | 18 | 8 | 385 | 23 |
| Artillery | 24 | 14 | 363 | 42 | 26 | 938 | 176 |
| Linsing | 40 | 20 | 301 | 44 | 20 | 388 | 32 |
| Lengerke | 43 | 20 | 380 | 44 | 20 | 397 | 23 |
| Loewenstein | 42 | 19 | 325 | 44 | 20 | 391 | 29 |
| Graff | 43 | 20 | 375 | 44 | 20 | 402 | 18 |
| Du Corps | 59 | 21 | 480 | 60 | 22 | 504 | 21 |
| Landgrave | 57 | 20 | 485 | 60 | 20 | 501 | 24 |
| P[rince] Charles | 59 | 20 | 480 | 60 | 22 | 507 | 18 |
| Donop | 60 | 21 | 450 | 60 | 22 | 497 | 28 |
| Knyphau[se]n | 26 | 8 | 341 | 28 | 8 | 384 | |
| Losberg | 59 | 22 | 461 | 60 | 22 | 497 | 28 |
| Bunau | 57 | 29 | 440 | 60 | 22 | 488 | 37 |
| Jagers | 80 | 22 | 750 | 102 | 26 | 1014 | 74 |
| Artillery | 24 | 1 | 300 | 26 | 2 | 302 | |
| 3d Delancey's | 22 | 6 | 271 | 23 | 7 | 357 | 173 |
| 1st N.J. Vol[unteers]: | 22 | 9 | 262 | 24 | 9 | 400 | 130 |
| 3rd N.J. Vol[unteers]: | 22 | 10 | 224 | 23 | 10 | 398 | 132 |
| Loy[a]l Amer[ican]s | 13 | 6 | 170 | 20 | 7 | 292 | 238 |
| K[ing]sAm: Dra[goon]s | 7 | 3 | 137 | 7 | 3 | 145 | |
| Amer[ican]: Leg[io]n | 8 | 8 | 150 | 8 | 8 | 171 | |
| Guides & pion[eers] | 7 | 2 | 93 | 12 | 2 | 177 | |
| Hussars | 3 | 1 | 45 | 3 | 1 | 50 | 6 |
| Det[a]chm[en]ts | 26 | 2 | 268 | 33 | 2 | 352 | |
| Total | 999 | 419 | 11088 | 1118 | 472 | 13807 | 1398 |

⁶²³ *The Diary of Frederick Mackenzie* (Harvard University Press, 1930), p. 588.

Naked and hungry, yet confident and cheerful -- such were the allies to whom Rochambeau had joined his forces, but the attack on Sir Henry never materialized. While New York may have been their primary objective, the generals always kept their options open. In the same letter of 13 June, in which Washington had reminded Rochambeau "that New York was looked upon by us as the only practicable object," he had also suggested that "should we be able to secure a naval superiority, we may perhaps find others more practicable and equally advisable." The only person who could provide that naval superiority was Admiral de Grasse, but the decision of where he would sail was de Grasse's. On 28 May, Rochambeau, who had never liked the idea of attacking New York, wrote to him: "There are two points at which an offensive can be made against the enemy: Chesapeak and New York. The southwesterly winds and the state of defense in Virginia will probably make you prefer the Chesapeak Bay, and it will be there where we think you may be able to render the greatest service. ... In any case it is essential that you send, well in advance, a frigate to inform de Barras where you are to come and also General Washington."⁶²⁴ As he weighed the odds of a successful siege against New York, after the Grand Reconnaissance of 21-23 July, Washington's thinking increasingly turned to Cornwallis. On 1 August he wrote that he "could scarce see a ground upon wch. to continue my preparations against New York, and therefore I turned my views more seriously (than I had before done) to an operation to the southward."⁶²⁵ For the time being, all he could do was wait for news from de Grasse, who would determine the point of attack. When the frigate *Concorde* brought news on 14 August that de Grasse was headed for the Chesapeake they quickly shifted gears.

10.6 The Decision to March to Virginia, 14 August 1781

The campaign might yet produce results. But as de Grasse would only stay until 15 October there was no time to lose. The possibility of a southern campaign had always been an option, and Washington wrote in his diary: "Matters having now come to a crisis and a decisive plan to be determined on, I was obliged ... to give up all idea of attacking New York; and instead thereof to remove the French Troops and a detachment from the American Army to the Head of Elk to be transported to Virginia for the purpose of co-operating with the force from the West Indies against the Troops in that State."⁶²⁶

⁶²⁴ Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 475. The rank of *Admiral* did not exist in pre-revolutionary France. The office of *Amiral de France* was abolished in 1627, but reestablished in 1669. Louis-Jean-Marie de Bourbon, *duc de Penthièvre* held the office from 1734 to 1789. De Grasse' rank was *lieutenant general des armées navales*, which corresponds to Rear Admiral.

⁶²⁵ Washington, *Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 249.

⁶²⁶ Washington, *Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 254.

But if Cornwallis was going to be the new target, a decision would have to be made quickly, and it was, for if Washington had learned anything in his years as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army it was that he had to be flexible. On 15 August, the day after the decision to march to Yorktown had been made, Washington recorded in his Diary that he had "Dispatched a Courier to the Marquis de la Fayette with information of this matter -- requesting him to be in perfect readiness to second my views & to prevent if possible the retreat of Cornwallis toward Carolina. He was also directed to Halt the Troops under the Command of General Wayne if they had not made any great progress in their March to join the Southern Army." The following day he learned much to his relief in a letter from Lafayette, "that Lord Cornwallis with the Troops from Hampton Road, had proceeded up York River & landed at York & Gloucester Towns where they were throwing up Works on the 6th. Inst."⁶²⁷ Cornwallis had done exactly what Washington would have wanted him to do, and Lafayette, who had shadowed Cornwallis across Virginia since late April, now had but one task, and that was to keep Cornwallis at Yorktown until the arrival of Washington and Rochambeau. From now on, Lafayette had only one assignment: to make sure that Cornwallis would not leave the trap Washington was trying to set for him. On 15 August, the day after the decision to march south was made, he wrote to Lafayette from Dobbs's Ferry, that "you will immediately take such position as will best enable you to prevent their retreat thro' North Carolina." That same day of 15 August, Rochambeau informed Barras in Newport that the arrival of 2,400 Hessian recruits in New York on the 11th and, even more importantly, the expected arrival of de Grasse in the Chesapeake."⁶²⁸ Axel von Fersen, who took these letters over the 220 miles to Newport in 36 hours, (!) wrote to Count Creutz, the Swedish ambassador to France, from Newport at 8:00 a.m. on the 17th: "We expect the comte de Grasse at any moment; he is supposed to pull into the Chesapeake Bay to land his 3,000 troops under the command of M. de Saint Simon. We will march immediately to Virginia with our army to join up with him and to chase the English from that part of the country if we can. The escadre which is here goes to join M. de Grasse." These were French plans: "I don't know whether the army of General Washington will withdraw behind West Point."⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ Washington, *Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 254. Washington's letter to Lafayette is in Washington, *Writings*, vol. 22, p. 501-502. "You will be particularly careful to conceal the expected arrival of the Count, because if the enemy are not apprised of it, they will stay on board their transports in the Bay, which will be the luckiest Circumstance in the World."

⁶²⁸ Rochambeau's letter to Barras is printed in Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 524.

⁶²⁹ Fersen, *Lettres*, pp. 118-119. Cromot du Bourg suspected that something was going on when on August 15 "the Count de Fersen was sent to Newport with the replies, which up to this time had been carried by an American dragoon." Cromot du Bourg, "Diary," p. 305.

When news that Cornwallis was digging in at Yorktown reached Franco-American headquarters later that week on 16 August,⁶³⁰ Cornwallis had done exactly what Washington and Rochambeau would have wanted him to do. Rochambeau informed Ségur that with a British garrison of 11 to 12,000 men, "nothing could be done any more against" New York. In the hope that "Lord Cornwallis has not yet decamped from Portsmouth and has not evacuated all of Virginia," Washington would take some 2,000 Americans and all the French forces to Virginia.⁶³¹ That day, Wadsworth wrote to his wife from Philippsburg: "My dear, I am well in Camp. Count Pherson will call on his return he must not come to this place but to King's Ferry where he will find or hear of the French army. Keep This [to] your selfe as it is a secret."⁶³² The next day, 17 August, Washington informed de Grasse that "it has been judged expedient to give up for the present the enterprise against New York and to turn our attention towards the South ... For this purpose we have determined to remove the whole of the French Army and as large a detachment of the American as can be spared, to Chesapeake to meet Your Excellency there." Concurrently he also asked de Grasse to send "all your frigates, transports and Vessels proper for the conveyance of the French and American Troops" to Head of Elk.⁶³³

Once the decision to march to Virginia had been made, Washington chose the Light Infantry Battalion under Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Scammel consisting of two companies of a Captain, two subaltern officers, four sergeants and fifty rank and file each from the Connecticut Line and two companies Light Infantry from the New York Line commanded by Alexander Hamilton.⁶³⁴ In addition he picked the two regiments of the New Jersey Line, the two regiments of the New York Line, the Canadian Regiment (Congress' Own) under Brigadier General Moses Hazen, the First Rhode Island, and Colonel John Lamb's Second Continental Artillery to march

⁶³⁰ Washington, *Diary*, vol. 2, p. 255. "16th. Letters from the Marqs. de la Fayette & others, inform that Lord Cornwallis with the Troops from Hampton Road, had proceeded up York River & landed at York & Gloucester Towns where they were throwing up Works on the 6th. Inst."

⁶³¹ Rochambeau's letter to Ségur is printed in Doniol, *Histoire*, vol. 5, p. 526. Rochambeau's numbers were low: on August 15, Mackenzie recorded the strength of the British army in New York as 12,506 enlisted men of all ranks total fit for duty out of a total strength of 15,397. Mackenzie, *Diary*, p. 588.

⁶³² Jeremiah Wadsworth to Mrs. Wadsworth, August 16, 1781. Wadsworth Papers, CHS. The next day, Lauzun recalled the hussar posts stationed between Hartford and Newport.

⁶³³ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 23, pp. 7-11.

⁶³⁴ General Orders for 31 July 1781 stated that the light infantry companies "of the first and second regiments of New York (upon their arrival in Camp) with the two companies of [New] York Levies under command of Captains Sackett and Williams will form a Battalion under command of Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton and Major Fish.

with him to Yorktown. The remainder of the Continental Army, also almost exactly 2,500 men, stayed behind under the command of General Edward Heath.⁶³⁵

Strength of the Continental Army on the March to Yorktown

| Regiment/Unit | Commanding officer | Strength |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Commander-in-Chief's Guard | Captain Caleb Gibbs | 70 officers and men |
| Rhode Island Regiment | Lt.-Col. Jeremiah Olney | 360 officers and men |
| First New York Regiment | Colonel Goose Van Schaick | 390 officers and men |
| Second New York Regiment | Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt | 420 officers and men |
| Combined New Jersey Regt. | Colonel Mathias Ogden | 330 officers and men |
| Canadian (Congress' Own) | Brigadier Moses Hazen | 270 officers and men |
| Light Infantry Regiment | Lt.-Col. Alexander Scammell | 380 officers and men |
| Second Continental Artillery | Colonel John Lamb | 200 officers and men |
| Corps of Sappers and Miners | Captain James Gilliland | 50 officers and men |
| Artificer Regiment | Lt.-Col. Ebenezer Stevens | 150 (? Unknown) |
| Total: | | 2,650 officers and men |

Not all of these troops, however, left on the same day from White Plains or took the same routes to the rendezvous in Trenton. The First New Jersey under Colonel Mathias Ogden, the Second New Jersey under Colonel Elias Dayton, and Moses Hazen's Canadian Regiment ferried to New Jersey during the night of 18/19 August to positions near Springfield.⁶³⁶ The Second New York Regiment was ordered to remain behind until 34 flatboats were finished and ready for use in the campaign. That detachment caught up with the Continental Army at Trenton. This left Washington with about 1,600 officers and men who departed with him from White Plains for Peekskill. Rochambeau's forces were considerably larger. A review of 1 August 1781, shows 4,240 non-commissioned officers and enlisted men present.⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ This table is based on Charles H. Lesser, *The Sinews of Independence. Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army* (Chicago, 1975). The monthly strength reports are those for July; no reports for August have survived. The artillery had departed from West Point on 15 July and arrived at Philipsburg on 27 July.

⁶³⁶ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 23, p. 25, and *Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 255.

⁶³⁷ The table is based on National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Military Service Records, Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783. M246, Roll 136: Returns of the French Army Under Count Rochambeau, 1781-82 (six returns), Washington, DC.

Strength of the French Army on the Eve of Departure from Greenburgh

| UNIT | PRESENT on 10 July 1781 | LOSSES | REPLACE- MENTS FROM FRANCE | PRESENT & UNDER ARMS | DETACHED | SICK IN HOSPITALS ALONG THE ROUTE | TOTAL on 1 August 1781 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------|--|---------------------------------|
| Bourbonnois | 1,030 | 1 | | 787 | 178 | 64 | 1,029 |
| Soissonnois | 1,054 | 2 | 4 | 896 | 116 | 44 | 1,056 |
| Saintonge | 1,012 | 1 | 32 | 851 | 115 | 77 | 1,043 |
| Royal Deux- Ponts | 1,024 | 1 | 20 | 842 | 172 | 29 | 1,043 |
| Artillerie | 511 | 1 | | 239 | 240 | 31 | 510 |
| Mineurs | 23 | | | | 23 | - | 23 |
| Workers (<i>ouvriers</i>) | 36 | | | 32 | - | 4 | 36 |
| Lauzun's Legion | 612 | 5 | 4 | 593 | 13 | 2 | 610 |
| TOTAL | 5,302 | 11 | 60 | 4,240 | 857 | 251 | 5,350 |

Note: The return of 10 July 1781 gave the total strength at 5,301 rather than 5,302; for unknown reasons the strength of the Royal Deux-Ponts is given here as 1,024 rather than 1,023 as recorded in the return of 10 July 1781.

Most of the detached infantry (326) were still with the French artillery in Newport (34) and Providence (66) as were all the *mineurs*; 140 artillerymen are listed as detached to Dobbs Ferry and 152 soldiers at various places along the route. The replacements were men that had arrived sick in Boston in early June and who were well enough to join their regiments. The sick were distributed in hospitals from Boston (74) to Providence (58), Newport (39), Hartford (3), North Castle (16) and along the road - *ambulante* - in unidentified places (63). It is unlikely that many of these men joined their units prior to departure from Phillipsburg on 18/19 August. Some may have, however, but there were also deaths in the French army in August, e.g. three in the Royal Deux-Ponts, desertions, e.g. two in the Royal Deux-Ponts, and executions, e.g. one in the Royal Deux-Ponts and one in the Bourbonnois, as well in the days leading up to departure for Virginia. Six of the losses between 10 July and 1 August were deaths; all five losses in Lauzun's Legion were the result of desertions.

The table lacks the precise break-down in the margin detailing how many officers were detached to serve where, but the increase to 312 company-grade officers now listed is explained by the addition of two captains and eight lieutenants to the artillery who must have arrived sometime after 10 July 1781 when the previous roll had been compiled. Barring any new information it seems fair to assume that the 12

officers and a *porte-drapeau* of the Soissonnois were still in Newport and the captain and four lieutenants of the Auxonne artillery still in Providence together with the two *mineur* officers. The sick artillery officer in Providence and the artillery officer in Boston had probably joined their companies in Westchester County. The same holds true for *Sous-lieutenant* Deseutre of Lauzun's Legion, who departed from Lebanon on 1 (or 2) July once the last accounts connected with the winter quarters of the Legion there had been settled, leaving Brigadier (= Corporal) Claude Bonnor of the First Escadron of Hussars in charge of the 12 hussars riding courier service between Hartford and Newport.⁶³⁸

Preparing and executing the march tested the resourcefulness of the Quarter-Master General Department to its limits. Since speed was of the essence, logistical planning and preparation for the march had to be kept to a minimum. On 17 September, Washington announced the schedule for the French army: it was to leave Philipsburg on Saturday, 18 August, and reach Trenton on Thursday the 29th. Washington explained "I have named no halting day because we have not a moment to loose."⁶³⁹ To ensure the success of the operation, the army staffs had three equally important tasks that needed to be tackled concurrently as well:⁶⁴⁰

- 1) to prepare the logistics for the march
- 2) to spread a cover of secrecy and deception over the movements of the allied armies to hide their true destination from Sir Henry Clinton
- 3) to establish a chain of observation posts on the New Jersey side of the Hudson to keep an eye on British forces in the city

The last task was the easiest. On 17 August, Colonel Elias Dayton received orders from Washington to "detach from the [New Jersey] Brigade ... a Capt[ain]. and 50 [men], with Orders to patrol the Country between Closter and the New Bridge, the Officer must not consider either of these places as his post, but continue to range the intermediate space untill he receives further Orders." During the night of 18/19

⁶³⁸ Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, Box 29 (Old Box 145) folder 7, January-October 1782.

On 17 August 1781, Lauzun recalled the hussar posts stationed between Hartford and Newport and asked David Trumbull in Lebanon to pay their bills and to send them on to Kings Ferry. Courier service between Hartford and Litchfield was provided by the Second Continental Light Dragoons, and between Washington's Headquarters at New Windsor and later at White Plains by Timothy Pickering's Quartermaster Department.

⁶³⁹ Washington, *Writings*, vol. 23, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁰ For a detailed analysis of the troop movements, routes and logistical issues see my *The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route in the State of New Jersey. An Architectural and Historical Site Survey and Resource Inventory* (Trenton, 2006).

August, Dayton's and Hazen's units were ferried across the Hudson at Dobbs Ferry and the next day ordered "to the Heights between Chatham and Springfield." Colonel Sylvanus Seely with a battalion of the New Jersey State Troops, which the New Jersey Legislature had authorized the governor to call up on 27 June for a period of service of up to three months, was "to remain at Dobbs's Ferry [and to] keep scouts and Patroles towards Bergen, and to take every precaution ag[ains]t a surprise."⁶⁴¹ In order to cover the area between Sneed's Landing in the north and Dayton's detachment between Closter and New Bridge in the South, Washington ordered Colonel Scammel with his Light Infantry to take up positions near Kakeat, modern-day New Hempstead in New York State. These detachments had orders to keep Washington informed of activities within British lines. Behind this screen of forces stretching half-way along the New Jersey shore, the Continental Army and its French allies hurried across New Jersey for Philadelphia.

Secrecy and deception were vital, and in both armies as few officers as possible were informed of the change in plans. All armies need bread to survive, but especially in the French army, bread constituted and constitutes an important ingredient of a meal. The establishment of large bakery operations could be interpreted as a sign that the army was going to stay in a given location for a while. In the context of the 1781, the bake ovens in Chatham, though necessary to feed the army on the march, also served an important function in the scheme of confirming in Clinton in the conviction that New York was the intended target of the campaign.

On 19 August, Washington had informed Dayton that "There will be a French Bakery established at Chatham. You are to furnish a small Guard for it, and give them any assistance they may want." In his *Diary* entry for the same date he added that Dayton was to "cover a french Bakery at the latter place to veil our real movements and create apprehensions for Staten Island."⁶⁴² In his Journal, the *vicomte* de Rochambeau recounted that "in order to disguise our movements and to convince General Clinton that we were going to join action with Monsieur de Grasse on the right bank of the North River in order to take Staten island and make it easy for the fleet to force its way past Sandy hook, we had Villemanzy, commissaire des guerres, leave at once to establish a bakery at Chatham, New Jersey, which is only three leagues from Staten Island. His work was protected by a small body of

⁶⁴¹ The letter is available on-line edition in the Washington Papers published by the Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html>. Search by date.

⁶⁴² Washington, *Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 255. On the ovens, which stood "East of River on the Union County Side of the Passaic, just south of the turnpike," see John T. Cunningham, *Chatham at the Crossing of the Fishawack* (Chatham, N.J., Chatham Historical Society, 1967), p. 37. They were not dismantled until 1835.

Americans until the arrival of our advance guard. He was let into the secret and he was told that it was our intention to nourish the army from that bakery in its march to Philadelphia, but that we must persuade the enemy by all kinds of pretenses that the chief object was an attack upon Staten Island. He did so well with this that he caused himself to be fired upon by the English batteries in trying to collect the bricks which were at the mouth of the Raritan."⁶⁴³

At the same time, these ovens, which produced much-needed bread for the French army, represented a potential target for a raid, and needed protection. On 28 August, Rochambeau requested military protection for the ovens, which Washington readily granted and informed the Frenchman from Chatham that he "will agreeable to your request, order a Detachment of Troops for the purpose of covering your Bake house in this place." Later that day, Antoine Charles du Houx, *baron de Vioménil* repeated this request to Washington from "Whippany's Camp at 8 O'clock in the night". In his letter, Rochambeau's second in command asked Washington "to protect our Bakers in Chatam till we could be done with them. The Intendant told me today that it is a strong *nécessité* to keep them till the Second of September on purpose for to be able of giving bread to the army which would not be able to get any. I have the honores to beg your Excellency to give the orders that the use necessary to protect our establishment in Chatam till the day mentioned." The following day, Washington assured Vioménil that "A Detachment of Militia consisting of a Sub: and 25 Men, are already ordered for the Protection of your Bakery; about 400 more Men will lye near this Place which I think will be full Security so long as you mention."

If the attack on New York City was going to come from the New Jersey side of the Hudson, the allied armies would need boats. Washington integrated that aspect of an assault on New York into his plan as well. "During the passing of the French Army I mounted 30 flat Boats (able to carry about 40 Men each) upon carriages--as well with a design to deceive the enemy as to our real movement, as to be useful to me in Virginia when I get there", he recorded in his *Diary* on 21 August.⁶⁴⁴ Letters were written and sent via the most dangerous routes with the full intent that they be captured,⁶⁴⁵ and different rumors as to the purpose of the troop movement were spread. In addition, "Contracts are made for forage to be delivered immediately to the French Army on their arrival at the last mentioned place. Here it is supposed that Batteries are to be erected for the security and aid of the Fleet, which is hourly

⁶⁴³ Jean-Edmond Weelen, *Rochambeau. Father and Son. A life of the Maréchal de Rochambeau and the Journal of the Vicomte de Rochambeau* (New York, 1936), pp. 224/5.

⁶⁴⁴ Washington, *Diaries* vol. 2, p. 258.

⁶⁴⁵ One such example is given in Lossing, *Field Book*, vol. 1, p. 781.

expected." And though "some were indeed laughable enow", these ruses achieved their purpose, for as Colonel Trumbull recorded, "by these manœuvres and the correspondent march of the Troops, our own army no less than the Enemy are completely deceived".⁶⁴⁶

In his diary entry for 15 August, James Thacher of the Light Infantry also provides a vivid impression of the speculations circulating in camp at the time. "The real object of the allied armies in the present campaign has become a subject of much speculation. Ostensibly an investment of the city of New York is in contemplation - preparations in all quarters for some months past indicate this to be the object of our combined operations. The capture of this place would be a decisive stroke, and from the moment such event takes place, the English must renounce all hopes of subjugating the United States. But New York is well fortified both by land and water, and garrisoned by the best troops of Great Britain. The success of a siege must depend entirely on the arrival and cooperation of a superior French fleet, The enemy have a garrison on Staten Island, which is separated from Long Island only by a strait of two miles wide. The capture of this garrison would be a brilliant affair, and would essentially facilitate our operations against New York. General Washington and Count Rochambeau have crossed the North river, and it is supposed for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy's posts from the Jersey shore. A field for an extensive encampment has been marked out on the Jersey side, and a number of ovens have been erected and fuel provided, for the purpose of baking bread for the army. From these combined circumstances we are led to conclude that a part of our besieging force is to occupy that ground. But General Washington possesses a capacious mind, full of resources, and he resolves and matures his great plans and designs under an impenetrable veil of secrecy, and while we repose the fullest confidence in our chief, our own opinions must be founded only on doubtful conjectures."⁶⁴⁷

The only one who was deceived for long was Sir Henry in New York City, even though the intelligence service his adjutant Major John André had built up since the summer of 1780 kept him well apprised of developments on the American side.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁶ Trumbull, "Minutes," p. 332.

⁶⁴⁷ Thacher, Journal, p. 269.

⁶⁴⁸ This is not the place to discuss why Clinton did what he did in July and August 1781. In justification of his actions Clinton would later write that the intercepted letters "gave me to understand that the enemy had in a grand conference come to a resolution of attacking New York with all the force they could collect." Quoted in Kennett, *French Forces*, p. 107. Suffice it to say that some of his subordinates such as General Robertson were baffled by the inactivity displayed by the Commander in Chief who was usually well informed of Franco-American plans. When Clinton suspected on 2 September that he was no longer the target

André's execution had been only a temporary setback; his successor Major Oliver de Lancey, son of the loyalist general, with a staff that included, among others Major Frederick Mackenzie and Captain George Beckwith, expanded and refined the system considerably. Clinton's spies had penetrated deep into the heart of the American camp: on 16 August, two days after Washington and Rochambeau had read de Grasse's letter informing them of that fact that he was sailing to the Chesapeake, and when all but a handful of high-ranking officers were ignorant of the change in plans, one of Clinton's spies informed Colonel Beverly Robinson that the French admiral was on his way north with 28 ships of the line. Clinton read the letter on 17 August, when no French or American soldier had yet taken down his tent, but the Royal Navy did not set sail from New York to meet the challenge until 31 August, a full two weeks later.⁶⁴⁹

Clinton never had to wait more than 24 hours to know where the enemy armies were located, and some of his subordinates such as Mackenzie suspected on 21 August already -- the French had not yet reached the Hudson -- that the combined armies were on their way south: "I think it probable that if M. de Grasse does come, he will endeavor to go into Chesapeake. In this case their design is the destruction of Lord Cornwallis's Army." The next day he wrote: "I am strongly of opinion that the design of the enemy is against Lord Cornwallis. Should M. de Grasse come to America, and take possession of the Chesapeake with a Superior fleet, it will be impossible for us to give Lord Cornwallis any assistance."⁶⁵⁰ The ovens in Chatham briefly confused the diarist, but by the 29th Mackenzie accurately predicted Franco-American plans. By 2 September "there seems to be no doubt but the enemy intend turning their utmost force against Lord Cornwallis". But on that 2 September the deciphered copy of Rochambeau's report to La Luzerne of 27 May arrived in New York, confirming Clinton's fears that he would be attacked rather than Cornwallis.

When word of the arrival of de Grasse's fleet in the Chesapeake Bay reached New York in the evening of 3 September -- Washington and Rochambeau would not find out until two days later in the afternoon of 5 September -- Mackenzie worried that unless the French were beaten by the Royal Navy under Admiral Graves, "there will

of attack, it was too late: the Continental Army had already marched through Philadelphia. For Clinton's point of view see *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents*. William B. Willcox, ed., (New Haven, 1954).

⁶⁴⁹ See Roger Kaplan, "The Hidden War: British Intelligence Operations during the American Revolution." *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 47, no. 1 (January 1990), pp. 115-138.

⁶⁵⁰ Mackenzie, *Diary*, p. 595.

hardly be a possibility of relieving" Cornwallis.⁶⁵¹ But Clinton still did not make a move: It was not until 6 September that he finally convinced himself that Cornwallis was in grave danger. By then it was too late. Colonel Ludwig Johann von Wurmb, commanding officer of the Hessian *Jäger* in New York, wrote to War Minister Friedrich Christian Arnold Freiherr von Jungkenn in Kassel on September 7: "May the almighty God favor our fleet that it will defeat the enemy so that we can come to the assistance of Lord Cornwallis; otherwise our situation will look bleak."⁶⁵² Two days earlier, around 9:30 a.m. on 5 September, the look-out on the French frigate *Aigrette* cruising off Cape Charles reported approaching sails from east-north-east. By the end of the day, de Grasse had drawn Graves' ships far enough south to allow Barras' fleet to slip into Chesapeake Bay with the siege artillery. The Battle off the Virginia Capes had inflicted enough damage on Graves' ships to send him back to New York a few days later. Cornwallis was trapped, and the next time a British fleet approached Yorktown, Cornwallis had surrendered.

As the allied armies were crossing into New Jersey in mid-August, the thought of a decisive defeat of Cornwallis crossed the minds of few of the officers and men on the allied side. But as they got closer to Philadelphia did it become clear that New York was no longer the target of the campaign. On 26 August he had not yet been able "to make up my mind as to the object of our march." But at Whippany on 27 August, William de Deux-Ponts "learned, under the strictest secrecy from one of my friends, well informed, that all the manoeuvres by which we threaten New York are only a feint, that Lord Cornwallis is the real object of our marches, and we are going to direct then toward Virginia."⁶⁵³

On 29 August, Cromot du Bourg wrote in his diary that "Judging from the direction of our march, there is reason to believe that we shall not make any attempt on New York, nor yet on Staten Island. ... I am satisfied we are about to pay a visit to Cornwallis, who, it is said, is entrenched at Yorktown."⁶⁵⁴ Around 4:00 a.m. on the 31st, he received the order to deliver a letter to Rochambeau in Philadelphia "before dinner, if possible." The road to Princeton led "through some very disagreeable woods", though the town itself, in which Lauberdière counted about 80 houses, "is well built and pleasantly situated." Like all officers whose accounts have survived, Cromot du Bourg took the opportunity to further his military education by

⁶⁵¹ Ibid., p. 611. Mackenzie provides a good synopsis of the rumors and conjectures circulating in British-occupied New York. For rumors among the French see Robin's letter of August 15 in Abbé Robin, *New Travels through North America* (Philadelphia, 1783), p. 39.

⁶⁵² Wurmb's letter is in the Jungkenn Papers in the Clements Library, Ann Arbor.

⁶⁵³ Deux-Ponts, *Campaigns*, p. 125.

⁶⁵⁴ Cromot du Bourg, "Diary", p. 377.

surveying the battlefield at Princeton and to take notes on the course of the battle. He did the same upon arrival in Trenton, which he found "not so pretty" as Princeton. By 3:00 p.m. on 31 August he had arrived in Philadelphia and delivered his letter.

Generals Washington and Rochambeau and their staffs themselves had arrived in Philadelphia around 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, 30 August, and proceeded to the home of French Ambassador de la Luzerne, where they lodged.⁶⁵⁵ That night they had dinner with Robert Morris, the new Superintendent of Finance.⁶⁵⁶ Following sight-seeing excursions through America's capital, the illustrious guests, so Baron Closen, one of Rochambeau's aides, were entertained at the home of Joseph Reed, president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, in the evening of 1 September. The following day, 2 September, "I went with the generals to see the battlefield of Germantown," after which the group went "to dine at the home of M. [John] Holker, the French consul, who entertained us magnificently in his charming country house [i.e., Cliveden] 3 miles from Philadelphia."⁶⁵⁷

As Washington was making the rounds in Philadelphia, his army, a little over 3,000 officers and men by now, crossed the Delaware on 31 August/1 September and marched seventeen miles to a camp at Lower Dublin, some twelve miles from Philadelphia. The next day, 2 September, they "Marched throw^d Philadelphia about five miles, encamped near the Schoelkill."⁶⁵⁸ The main body of the Continental Army left its camp on the Schuylkill on 3 September again for a ten-mile march to its next camp, which Lieutenant Sanderson in Scammel's Light Infantry recorded to have been about "three miles from Chester."⁶⁵⁹ On 4 September, the army "Marched through Chester, through Brandywine, through Wilmington -- encampd one mile from Wilmington."⁶⁶⁰

Coming on the Delaware from Trenton, Van Cortlandt reached Philadelphia on 1 September where he "halted one day to accommodate my officers" and wait for the arrival of the Continental Army. Following this brief stop-over on 1/2 September,

⁶⁵⁵ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 116.

⁶⁵⁶ Baker, *Itinerary*, pp. 235/36.

⁶⁵⁷ Acomb, *Closen*, pp. 119/120.

⁶⁵⁸ Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign*, p. 170. The Continental Army campsite is most likely identical with that occupied by the French, which arrived there in the evening of 3 September. Stevens, "Route," p. 18. Thacher, *Eyewitness*, p. 273, has the light infantry encamped on 3 September, continuing its march through Wilmington on 4 September.

⁶⁵⁹ This would place it near the Morton Homestead southwest of Prospect Park, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁶⁰ Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign*, p. 170. See also Stevens, "Route," p. 18.

Van Cortlandt's Second New York Regiment continued to use the Delaware River as a conduit and sailed on "to markees Hook where I remained a few days for the Army to pass and my men to wash their clothes" on 2 September.⁶⁶¹ In the morning of 3 September, Hawkin's regiment and the Corps of Sappers and Miners set sail again on their boats and floated down the Delaware and cast anchor in Wilmington in the mouth of the Christiana River in the evening. Taking advantage of the rising tide the following morning, 4 September, the units followed the winding course of the Christina River to Christiana or Christiana Bridge, where they landed and began unloading their supplies.⁶⁶²

Water transportation, especially of heavy or bulky goods, was faster than transporting them on land and cheaper as well: freight charges on land were ten times the freight charges for water transport.⁶⁶³ In a military context this meant primarily artillery and foodstuffs, and wherever possible Washington used the waterways along the route in 1781 to his advantage. From Trenton onwards, except for the short, 10-mile portage from Christiana to Elkton, Colonel Lamb's Second Continental Artillery, the Sappers and Miners, and Hazen's Canadian Regiment traveled to Virginia on water. By 29 August 1781, Deputy Quartermaster Samuel Miles had 31 craft capable of carrying more than 3,200 men waiting for the armies at Philadelphia.⁶⁶⁴ That same day, Washington informed General Lincoln that Rochambeau was "inclined to have the French Troops march by Land from Trenton to Head of Elk, which will give a larger proportion of Craft for the American Baggage and Troops. ... after a lot[tin]g a Sufficiency for the French Baggage &c ... first put on Board such heavy Stores and Baggage, Cloathg Tools Garrison Carriages &c,&, as Colo Lamb and you shall think proper, and then Embark the Troops on Board the Water Craft and let them fall down the River to Christiana Bridge as soon as possible."⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶¹ Judd, *Revolutionary War Memoir*, p. 60. Marcus Hook lies on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware about a mile from the Delaware State line. James Thacher uses an almost identical line: "3d. We crossed the river Schuylkill, over a floating bridge, and encamped four miles from Philadelphia where we continued through the day, to give the men time to rest and wash their clothes." Thacher, *Eyewitness*, p. 273.

⁶⁶² *Private Yankee Doodle* p. 223. Sanderson recorded that on 5 September, the army marched "through Christeen where the Park of Artillery landed the day before". Johnston, *Yorktown Campaign* p. 170.

⁶⁶³ Buel, *In Irons*, p. 325 note 23.

⁶⁶⁴ Miles to GW, 29-30 August 1781. George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General Correspondence. 1697-1799, at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem>

⁶⁶⁵ GW to Lincoln, Washington, *Writings* vol. 23, p. 71.

At Trenton on 31 August, Washington's diary recorded that "Count de Rochambeau and myself concluded it would be best to let the Troops march by land to the Head of Elk, and gave directions accordingly to all but the 2d. York Regiment which was ordered (with its baggage) to come down in the Batteaux they had in charge to Christiana bridge."⁶⁶⁶ The execution of this order can be followed in the journal of Samuel Tallmadge of the 2nd New York. At 8 a.m. on the morning of 3 September, the 2nd New York arrived in Trenton where "(we) put our boates in the delaware river put the baggage on board, and Imbarked about one Oclock." Some of the carriages were to be taken apart and put on board the batteaux for future use as Timothy Pickering told Henry Dearborn on 31 August. "As soon as the boats arrive, please to direct all the carpenters to repair any damage they may have sustained ... if 15 of the best boat Carriages are selected, they may be taken to pieces, put on board the boats, & with so many troops as they will carry, go to Christiana Bridge, from whence at two trips they may take all the boats over to the Head of Elk; or if inconvenient to take down more than ten carriages, they will of course take the boats over in three trips." The teams and the remainder of the carriages were to go to Christiana by land.⁶⁶⁷ As the Continental Army crossed the Delaware that same 31 August, Thacher wrote in his diary: "Our situation reminds me of some theatrical exhibition, where the interest and expectations of the spectators are continually increasing, and where curiosity is wrought to the highest, point. Our destination has been for some time matter of perplexing doubt and uncertainty; bets have run high on one side that we were to occupy the ground marked out on the Jersey shore, to aid in the siege of New York, and on the other, that we are stealing a march on the enemy, and are actually destined to Virginia."

Just as the main body of the Continental Army left its camp on the Schuylkill in the morning of 3 September 1781, the First French Brigade got ready to march into Philadelphia and to parade before Congress. As Thomas McKean, president of the Continental Congress, the members of Congress, Washington, Rochambeau, and other dignitaries greeted them from the balcony and steps of the building, the troops paraded past the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall), seat of the Continental Congress, and the home of the French Ambassador de la Luzerne. About two miles outside the city on the road to Chester the troops entered their camp along the eastern banks of the Schuylkill. The following day, 4 September 1781, the Second Brigade joined the First Brigade for a day of rest.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁶ Washington, *Diaries*, vol. 2, p. 258.

⁶⁶⁷ NARA, RG 93, Numbered Record Book, vol. 82, Target 3, microfilm reel 26, pp. 175-178.

⁶⁶⁸ The French campsite is most likely identical with that occupied by the Continental Army, which had left for Chester in the morning of 3 September 1781. Acomb, *Closen*, p. 117

That afternoon, Whiting wrote to Jeffery from Philadelphia that "after a March of almost 3 Weeks we arrived at this place yesterday and to morrow leave it for the Head of Elk which place we expect to embark and go to Virginia, the French Army are in fine health & Spiritts and like Philad^e very well. Yesterday they March'd into town and made a fine appearance as they were dress'd in their best Claoths & they are admired by the people of this City and every Mark of Respect is shown them which they truly deserve.'⁶⁶⁹ And James Mitchell Varnum, one of Rhode Island's delegates to Congress, wrote to Governor Greene from Philadelphia: "Yesterday the American troops detached from the main Army, marched from hence on their Way to Virginia. The French army is now here & will move tomorrow. The Objects of their movements are immense and should Circumstances prove as favorable as we have reason to expect, the Event will be glorious."⁶⁷⁰

Glorious they were indeed. Having quickly crossed the state of Delaware, Washington and the first units of the Continental Army reached Head of Elk in Maryland on Thursday, 6 September, followed by French forces on 7 and 8 September. Once the American rear-guard arrived from Christiana on 9 September, the two armies were ready for the last leg of their journey to Yorktown. In exactly three weeks since departing from Philipsburg, New York, they had reached the banks of the Chesapeake. But speed was still of the essence: Sir Henry might still launch a rescue operation, Cornwallis might still break out of Yorktown, and de Grasse would only stay until 15 October. But Washington had more immediate concerns to deal with. On 17 August, he had already written Robert Morris from Dobbs Ferry that he would have to pay the army at least one month's salary in specie in order to induce it to march into Virginia. Morris was aware of Washington's needs, too, and recorded in his diary that "great S[y]mptoms of discontent had Appeared on their passing through this City" of Philadelphia.⁶⁷¹ The discontent was real enough: in the six days between its departure from Trenton and arrival at Head of Elk on 6 September, eleven men, almost 10 per cent of its *de facto* strength, deserted from Lamb's Artillery regiment alone. On 6 September the situation had become critical and Washington repeated the request to Morris from Head of Elk, "intreating you in the warmest Terms to send on a Month's Pay at least, with all the Expedition possible." But Morris did not have the funds to pay the army and on 7 September asked Rochambeau for a loan of to \$26,600 Spanish dollars in specie to pay the troops, with the promise that he would return the money. But 26,600 Spanish Milled dollars, the famous Pieces of Eight or 143,640 livres, almost

⁶⁶⁹ Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Box 132.

⁶⁷⁰ RISA, Governor Greene Letterbooks vol. 17, 1 August 1781 to 25 July 1782.

⁶⁷¹ Diary: September 1-5, 1781. *The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784*. E. James Ferguson, ed., vol. 2: August - September 1781 (Pittsburg, 1975), p. 173.

half of the 300,000 livres left in his treasury, was all Rochambeau could lend Morris to satisfy the demands of the American troops. The effect of the French silver resonated for decades in the minds of the recipients.⁶⁷²

"This day," 8 September 1781, wrote Major William Popham, "will be famous in the annals of History for being the first in which the Troops of the United States received one month's Pay in Specie -- all the civil and military staff are excluded. ... I cannot even obtain my pay as Captain in the Line."⁶⁷³ For many a Continental soldier this was indeed the first and only time he ever received "real" money during his years of service. Private Joseph Plum Martin remembered, "we each of us received a MONTH'S PAY (sic), in specie, borrowed, as I was informed, by our French (sic) officers from the officers in the French army. This was the first that could be called money, which we had received as wages since the year '76, or that we ever did receive till the close of the war, or indeed, ever after, as wages."⁶⁷⁴ Private John Hudson of the First New York Regiment who had celebrated only his 13th birthday on 12 June 1781, recalled that it was at Elkton that "I received the only pay that I ever drew for my services during the war, being six French crowns, which were a part of what Robert Morris borrowed on his own credit from the French commander to supply the most urgent necessities of the soldiers. My comrades received the same amount."⁶⁷⁵

On 8 September orders went out that "The Commander in Cheafe guards, Light Troops, Genl Heasons Regt artillery Sappers & Miners & the artificiers Will imbark as the first divison of American troops, care will be taken to keep as much as poseble Corps together."⁶⁷⁶ This first Division numbered around 1,450 officers and men. The combined New Jersey regiments of about 330 officers and men, formed the Second American Division. There was no shipping space available for the Rhode Island and the two New York regiments, which were ordered to accompany the French forces to Baltimore.

With most of the shipping space taken by the Continental Army, the total number of French troops embarked at Head of Elk, four companies of Grenadiers, four companies of chasseurs, and about 300 men of Lauzun's infantry and artillery, numbered around 1,200 officers and men. Around 4:00 a.m. on 11 September, the

⁶⁷² Morris to Lincoln, 8 September 1781. *Papers of Robert Morris*, vol. 2, p. 220.

⁶⁷³ Major William Popham, ADC, to Gov. Clinton of New York, 8 September 1781, quoted in Johnston, *Yorktown*, p. 173.

⁶⁷⁴ Martin, *Private Yankee Doodle*, pp. 222-23.

⁶⁷⁵ Hudson, "Reminiscences," *Cist's Advertiser*, 28 January 1846.

⁶⁷⁶ NARA, Record Group M 853 reel 8, vol. 52, p. 124.

small flotilla set sail for the Chesapeake. Annapolis was reached on 12 September, where unsettling news was awaiting them. De Grasse had sailed from Lynnhaven Bay on 5 September to meet a British fleet. The outcome of that naval engagement, which would also decide the fate of the land campaign, was anxiously awaited along the shores of the Chesapeake. News of de Grasse's victory reached Baltimore in the evening of 14 September and in the morning of 15 September, the Continentals and the French grenadiers and chasseurs were on their way again. Around 8:00 p.m. on 19 September, 36 days after the decision to attack Cornwallis had been made, the first elements of the American Army anchored in the York River upstream from Pappahanuck. As it trickled in over the next few days, the Continental Army debarked at Archer's Hope upstream from the mouth of College Creek and marched into Williamsburg and its camp behind the College of William and Mary. The French grenadiers and chasseurs disembarked on 23 September at Burwell's Ferry a mile below the mouth of College Creek and encamped behind the Capitol.

On 9 September, even before the Head of Elk contingent was fully embarked, the remainder of the troops, between 3,800 and 4,000 Frenchmen, or still about 75% of the troops of the *expédition particulière*, including the artillery and 800 to 1,000 Americans, had begun their march to Baltimore. Rochambeau had hoped to find enough shipping for his regiments in Baltimore but, taken aback by the questionable sea-worthiness of the craft assembled, the *baron* de Vioménil, Rochambeau's second in command, refused to embark his troops and decided to march overland to Virginia. The Americans had no such qualms and embarked at Fell's Point for Williamsburg on 16 and 17 September. Concurrently Vioménil decided to send Lauzun's close to 300 hussars ahead of the main army to Gloucester opposite Yorktown. At 5:00 a.m. on 14 September, Colonel d'Arrot and his men crossed the Patapsco River at Ferry Bar and headed for Virginia. On the evening of 15 September they crossed the Potomac at Georgetown. Dumfries, Fredericksburg and King and Queen Court House were stations on the road to Gloucester Court House, which was reached on 24 September.

In the evening of 17 September, a courier reached Vioménil with the news that transports from de Grasse had reached Annapolis. He immediately changed course and by 7:00 a.m. on 19 September, French troops marched into Annapolis where they set up camp on the grounds of St. John's College and (today's) US Naval Academy. Over the next few days the infantry, their baggage, as well as the field artillery embarked on the 15 vessels sent by de Grasse. As the now empty wagon train, estimated at 1,500 horses, 800 oxen, and 220 wagons by Louis Alexandre Berthier, set off for Virginia, the *Romulus* of 74 guns, the frigates *Gentile*, *Diligente*, *l'Aigrette*, the captured British frigates *Iris* and *Richmond*, and nine transports, sailed

for the York River in the afternoon of 21 September where they arrived only 24 hours later. By 26 September, the transports were unloaded and the troops were encamped at Williamsburg. Two days later, the combined armies of Washington, Rochambeau and Lafayette set out for Yorktown.

10.7 Siege and Victory at Yorktown

Washington and Rochambeau were waiting for them. As soon as the troops had been paid, Washington on 8 September had departed from Head of Elk to Baltimore. Anxious to reach Mount Vernon after a six-year absence, Washington left Baltimore early on the 9th and reached his estate after a sixty mile ride late that same evening. Rochambeau and his staff arrived the following day. On 13 September, the two generals continued their journey, reaching Williamsburg on 15 September. A visit to Admiral De Grasse on his flagship the *Ville de Paris* followed on 18 September. Even though de Grasse had agreed to extend his stay until the end of October, the generals were eager for the siege to begin.

In the early morning hours of 28 September, the allied armies began their march on Yorktown. The siege had begun. On 30 September, Cornwallis withdrew from his outer works, three days later, on 3 October, Allied forces repulsed British attempts to break out at Gloucester. The First Parallel was dug on 6 October at a distance of 500 to 600 yards from the enemy's works, and on 9 October, American and French siege guns opened up on the British defenders. The completion of the Second Parallel 300 yards from the British lines, begun on 12 October, was blocked by a portion of the British outer works -- two detached earthen forts called Redoubts 9 and 10, located 400 yards in advance of the British inner defense line on the extreme right of the siege line. On 14 October, Allied artillery bombarded Redoubts 9 and 10 most of the day, preparing them for the American and French assaults. That evening, American troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton took Redoubt No. 10 while the French carried No. 9. The capture of these redoubts enabled the besiegers to finish the Second Parallel and to construct the Grand American Battery within point blank range of the British inner defense line. On 16 October Cornwallis launched a morning attack, and temporarily seized two French batteries. In the Evening, he attempted to ferry his troops across the York River to Gloucester Point, but a storm disrupted the operation. The following day, 17 October, a British drummer beat for a parley. On 18 October, two British officers, one American and French officer each met at the home of Augustine Moore to negotiate surrender terms. Around 2:00 p.m. on 19 October 1781, the British troops with their American and German allies marched out of Yorktown to lay down their arms.

Allied Troop Strengths at the Siege of Yorktown

American Army

Continentals: 350 officers and 5,500 men (return of 9/26/1781; incl. 411 sick)

Militia: 3,300 officers and men

→ 9,150 Americans

French Army

Rochambeau's Forces: 425 officers and 4,500 men (return of 11/11/81; incl. 423 sick)

St. Simon's Forces: 225 officers and 3,300 men

→ 9,250 French (incl. 800 Marines)⁶⁷⁷

French Navy

French Marines: 5,200 officers and men (minus about 800 Marines at Gloucester)

Ship crews: 24,000 officers and men (18,000 de Grasse, 6,000 Barras)

British Forces (plus German Auxiliaries and American Loyalists)

8,885 effectives plus 840 naval personnel = about 9,700 rank and file on 9/15/81

7,247 rank and file (4,750 fit for duty) plus 840 men naval personnel surrender

Total: 8,100 rank and file. Most of the missing 1,600 men are casualties.

It did not take long for news of the victory to reach Rhode Island. New Jersey. Everyone celebrated according to his, or her, own style. On Monday, 1 October, William Rogers, a just retired chaplain in a Pennsylvania regiment who was in Newport at the time, recorded that on "Thursday last," i.e., 27 September, an express in Philadelphia had already announced the surrender of Cornwallis. His comment: "yt it may be true is my sincere Wish."⁶⁷⁸ It was true, for on 27 October "Nailer Tom" wrote in his journal "Fird Guns at Little Rest for the Taking Corn Wallis and army in Virginna – he was taken 17th of the month. the Guns ware fird yeasterday at Little Rest."⁶⁷⁹ And as if he had read Varnum's plea of 4 September from Philadelphia, William Vernon rejoiced with his brother Samuel from Boston as late as 10 December that "The Campaign has ended gloriously."⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁷ These 800 "marines" were line infantry drawn from the line regiments Colonel-Général, Picardie, Brie, Bresse, Maine, La Sarre, Bourbon, Monsieur, d'Angoumois, and Rohan for service as marines on board de Grasse's fleet rather than from regular naval infantry.

⁶⁷⁸ RIHS, Mss 9001-R.

⁶⁷⁹ *Nailer Tom's Diary Otherwise the Journal of Thomas B. Hazard of Kingstown Rhode Island 1778 to 1840*. Caroline Hazard, ed., (Boston, 1930), search under the date.

⁶⁸⁰ William to Samuel Vernon from Boston, 10 December 1781. NHS Vernon Papers, Box 49, folder 5.

On 27 October, St. Simon's troops began to re-embark, and on 4 November de Grasse' fleet sailed out of Lynnhaven Bay for Fort Royal on Martinique, where it arrived on 26 November 1781. The Continental Army too left for the north almost immediately after the siege was over. The Delaware detachment of about 85 men received orders to join General Greene in North Carolina. General Washington, who had received word of the death of his step-son, set off on his own route which took him to Philadelphia. The New York and New Jersey Lines together with Moses Hazen's and the Rhode Island Regiment began to prepare for the march north and to their winter quarters in Pennsylvania, New Jersey or the Hudson Highlands.

As they were about to enter winter quarters in early November 1781, French forces in Virginia had the following strength.⁶⁸¹

| Regiment | Commanding Officer | NCOs and Enlisted Men |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Bourbonnois | <i>marquis</i> de Montmorency-Laval | ca. 70 officers and 1,025 men, incl. 221 detached and 105 sick |
| Soissonnois | <i>comte</i> de Saint Maisme | ca. 70 officers and 1,044 men, incl. 28 detached and 68 sick |
| Saintonge | <i>comte</i> de Custine | ca. 70 officers and 1,030 men, incl. 47 detached and 69 sick |
| Royal Deux-Ponts | Christian <i>comte</i> de Deux-Ponts | ca. 70 officers and 1,029 men, incl. 218 detached and 129 sick |
| Auxonne Artillery | de la Tour | ca. 50 officers and 497 men, incl. 210 detached and 48 sick |
| Mineurs | Captain de Chazelles | 1 officer and 22 men |
| Workers | de la Chaisse | 1 officer and 26 men, incl. 17 detached |
| Lauzun's Legion | <i>duc</i> de Lauzun | Ca. 45 officers and 550 men, incl. 8 sick |
| Total: | | Ca. 375 officers and 5,293 men, incl. 741 detached and 427 sick ⁶⁸² |

⁶⁸¹ The total strength of Rochambeau's forces at the beginning of the siege in September 1781, was somewhat larger once losses incurred during the siege, ca. 75 officers and men, and about 75 staff officers, aides-de-camp, officers serving *à la suite*, and support personnel are added to the total presented here.

Inspection reports for 9-12 November 1781, in Fonds Vioménil. Académie François Bourdon, Le Creusot, France. The strength for Lauzun's Legion, stationed in Gloucester, is taken from a review of 1 October 1781 in Colonies D2c32, Archives Nationales, Paris, France.

⁶⁸² It is unknown where the 741 detached men were stationed or what duties they performed.

The French forces spent the winter of 1781/82 in and around Williamsburg, which became the site of the Rochambeau's headquarters and his staff; Rochambeau moved into the Wythe House once Washington had departed from Williamsburg. It also provided quarters for the Bourbonnois regiment, seven companies of the Royal Deux-Ponts, and part of Auxonne artillery. Jamestown hosted the remaining three companies of the Royal Deux-Ponts. Yorktown was the site for the Soissonnois regiment, and the grenadiers and chasseurs of the Saintonge regiment; the remainder of the Saintonge was quartered at Halfway House (on the road from Yorktown to Hampton and Back River). This regiment relocated to Hampton in February 1782, when the Lauzun's Legion vacated Hampton for Charlotte Court House. Hampton had been the camp of Lauzun's Legion until at the request of General Greene, the Legion relocated to the North Carolina border. At the time the Legion was commanded by Choisy, since the *duc* de Lauzun had departed for France with news of the victory at Yorktown. The Legion remained in the vicinity of Charlotte Courthouse, Virginia, until June 1782, when it returned north, staying briefly at Petersburg before marching with the French Army back to New York and Boston.⁶⁸³ Gloucester was the site for a detachment of 50 men and an artillery company and there were several other scattered camps for outposts and to establish courier services. There were several scattered, isolated camps for outposts and to establish courier services, e.g., between New Kent Court House, New Castle [near present Old Church], and Lynch's Tavern.

⁶⁸³ On the stay at Charlotte Court House see Timothy S. Ailsworth et al., *Charlotte County. Rich Indeed* (Charlotte County, 1979), pp. 118-122.

THE RETURN MARCH TO RHODE ISLAND

Ten months after their arrival, on 1 July 1782, Rochambeau's forces broke camp and began their return march. Organization, schedule, and campsites were almost identical to that of the previous year though this time the troops marched the whole distance rather than cover parts of the route by boat.⁶⁸⁴ This time, however, the wagon train consisted exclusively of horses. A return of waggons compiled in Williamsburg on 26 November 1781, shows 54 wagons fit for duty and 20 unfit for a total of 74 wagons; another 36 wagons and teams were on duty outside the immediate Williamsburg/Yorktown area for a total of 110. Eighty-nine of the 110 teams were now four-horse-teams, seven were three-horse-teams and two were drawn by two horses for a total of 381 horses. This profound change was caused by a cattle plague devastating livestock in and around Yorktown.

On 8 November, Conductor William Finley presented Wadsworth with this "Return of My Compy of teams that Left Annaplais

Cattel Daid 90
Cattel Living 04

===

total 94 Carts Presant 16 Carts and Teams"

Josiah Cleaveland reported that of the 109 oxen in his 20 teams that had left "Anapelus", 106 had died and only 3 were still alive. Samuel Northum reported 61 of his 66 oxen that had left Annapolis were dead while Oliver Olmstead reported that of the 14 teams and 84 cattle that left Annapolis with him, 79 had died since the arrival in Williamsburg. Another conductor reported that of 21 teams of 115 oxen that had left Annapolis with him, 110 had died. This means that in the five weeks following their arrival in Williamsburg, the 78 teams with 468 head of draft oxen reporting on 8 November had lost a combined total of 446 of their valuable draft animals while fewer than two dozen were still alive.

Until Fredericksburg was reached, the infantry marched again in four divisions a day apart; thereafter they marched in brigades:

- 1) The Bourbonnois under the command of the *chevalier* de Chastellux
- 2) The Royal Deux-Ponts under the command of *comte* Christian de Deux-Ponts
- 3) The Soissonnois under the command of *vicomte* de Vioménil
- 4) The Saintonge under the command of *comte* de Custine

⁶⁸⁴ Unlike for the march to Virginia no route descriptions exist for the march north in 1782.

The siege artillery and 150 men of the Auxonne artillery remained at West Point, Virginia, as did 400 men, 100 each from each regiment, as a garrison at Yorktown and the sick. Because of the excessive July heat, the troops began their march at 1:00 a.m., marching through the night. Alexandria, 17-20 July 1781, was the final camp of the march north in Virginia.⁶⁸⁵ Following a one-month stay, the First Division, i.e., the Bourbonnois regiment, departed Baltimore for White Marsh Forge on 24 August, then came the camp at Lower Ferry and camp at Head of Elk. Coming from Head of Elk, the First Brigade of the French forces camped on 29 August near Newport and was followed by the Second Brigade on 30 August. Without stopping again in Delaware, the French forces crossed over into Pennsylvania on 30 and 31 August 1781. On the 31st, the Bourbonnois approached Philadelphia, followed by the Royal Deux-Ponts on 1 September. Once again, French forces marched through the city in their full splendor on 2 and 3 September. Almost exactly a year to the day that they had left New Jersey, French forces reached Bristol for the night of 4/5 September and rested at Trenton on 5 and 6 September. The New York State Line was reached on 13 September, and the First Brigade of the French forces camped in Suffern. With that, the French forces were back at the New York State line from where they had begun their march to victory almost exactly 11 months earlier. As Rochambeau's forces crossed the Hudson, a review on 17 September 1782 showed this strength:⁶⁸⁶

| REGIMENT | PRESENT OFFICERS AND MEN | ABSENTEES | TOTAL |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|
| ----- | | | |
| Bourbonnois | 758 | 214 | 972 |
| Soissonnois | 768 | 228 | 996 |
| Saintonge | 799 | 195 | 994 |
| Royal Deux-Ponts | 798 | 172 | 970 |
| Auxonne Artillery | 312 | 190 | 502 |
| Mineurs | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| Ouvriers | 476 | 80 | 556 |
| ----- | | | |
| | 3,911 | 1,101 | 5,012 |

⁶⁸⁵ Maps of the campsites, where they vary from the 1781 march, can be found in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 2. The route of the return march from Williamsburg to Elkton in Maryland was identical with the route taken by the wagon train and parts of the infantry until their final embarkation at Annapolis in September 1781.

⁶⁸⁶ These data are based on Keim, *Commemoration*. Of the absentees, 477 were on special assignments and 631 were in the hospital. Rochambeau's troop contingent is about 1,000 men larger than on the march south, when the army had stood at about 3,400 officers and men. Since neither the siege artillery, the sick nor Lauzun's Legion made the march to Boston, Rochambeau left Crompond with about 3,700 men.

On the 20th the French army passed in review before General Washington, and then, on the 22nd, Clermont-Crèveœur and his fellow officers "went to watch the maneuvers of the American army and were truly impressed. This proves what money and good officers can do to make good soldiers."⁶⁸⁷ Dr. Thatcher described the scene thus: "The whole army was paraded under arms this morning in order to honor his Excellency Count Rochambeau on his arrival from the southward. The troops were all formed in two lines, extending from the ferry, where the count crossed, to head-quarters. A troop of horses met and received him at King's ferry, and conducted him through the line to General Washington's quarters, where, sitting on his horse by the side of his excellency, the whole army marched before him, and paid the usual salute and honors. Our troops were now in complete uniform, and exhibited every mark of soldierly discipline. Count Rochambeau was most highly gratified to perceive the very great improvement, which our army had made in appearance since he last reviewed them, and expressed his astonishment at their rapid progress in military skill and discipline. He said to General Washington, "You have formed an alliance with the King of Prussia. These troops are Prussians. Several of the principal officers of the French army, who have seen troops of different European nations, have bestowed the highest encomiums and applause on our army, and declared that they had seen none superior to the Americans."⁶⁸⁸

On 22 September, the day of the review, the *duc* de Lauzun, the *comte* de Ségur, son of the war minister, together with a large group of French officers returned from France with orders from court. Before the two armies parted, Washington had the opportunity to decorate a number of French officers. Ségur had brought a number of crosses of the Order of St. Louis. Rochambeau asked Washington to do the honors and the American gladly attached the insignia of the military order to chests of the French officers.⁶⁸⁹

Once the allies had completed their farewells, the French troops departed on 24 September "in a single column" for an eight-mile march to Crompond/Yorktown where they entered their 38th camp of the march from Virginia around Hunt's Tavern, where they would remain until 22 October. On 22 October, the First Brigade, consisting of the Bourbonnois and Royal Deux-Ponts, broke camp and

⁶⁸⁷ Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 78. These reviews took place on Washington Hill on land behind St. Mary's Cemetery.

⁶⁸⁸ Thatcher, *Journal*, p. 322. See also Verger's description in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 2, p. 166, and note 154. The Continental Army was between 5,500 and 6,000 men strong at the time.

⁶⁸⁹ Lauberdière, *Journal*, fol. 194.

began the march through Connecticut to Boston. On 29th, the First Brigade arrived in East Hartford and was joined by the Second Brigade the next day.

In East Hartford, Rochambeau announced to the troops that they were to march to Boston and embark for the West Indies while he would return to France. To accelerate the march "the artillery obtained permission to march, from now on, one day in advance of the 1st Brigade, for convenience, and set out early on its way" on 30 October. The First Brigade, now commanded by *baron* de Vioménil, broke camp in Windham, and marched to its next camp, in Canterbury. By now it was early November, and winter was upon New England. Clermont-Crèvecœur could not "express how uncomfortable we were while camping in a country where the cold was already very intense. We were frozen in our tents. And the tents were frozen so stiff that, after the pegs and poles were removed to take them down, they stood alone. So you can judge how cold it was."

On November 4, 1782, Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale University, recorded in his diary: "Lodged at Bolton, where we saw the first Division of the French Army march for Providence. There were counted 170 Waggons of Artillery, filling the Rode fr. The Meeting house to & which is one Mile, besides those we passed yesterday: there were as supposed above 100, so that the Baggage Waggons & Artillery judged 300. Gen. Rochambeau visited us in Eveng at Rev. Mr. Coltons." The next day Stiles "Met & passed the 2d Div. of French Army, probably 1500 men. The whole sd. to be 4000, I judge 3000. We stopt our chaise near half an hour in passing the Troops, & afterwards above half an hour in passing 2 Divisions of Wagons, I judge 200. Some of them sd. they had 500 Waggons for whole Army." On 8/9 November 1782, the First Brigade of Rochambeau's infantry pitched their tents in the fields east of Dorrance Tavern on the north side of the road that would lead them back to Rhode Island from where their march to victory had begun 17 months earlier.

THE RETURN MARCH THROUGH RHODE ISLAND

The artillery which had preceded the infantry, spent the night of 8/9 November at Waterman's Tavern and reached Providence on 9 November. Over the next two days, the infantry brigades followed the artillery into Rhode Island. Following a camp on 9/10 November at Waterman's Tavern, the First French Brigade reached Providence on 10 November and encamped on the same site it had camped 15 months earlier. The Second Brigade joined the First Brigade on the 11th. They did not stay long. Verger recorded that he only "remained two days in camp near the city, and on the third we left town to move into barracks in a wood. A heavy snowfall made us appreciate the barracks, especially since most of our tents were worn out." The "barracks in a wood" were the new campsite on the property of Jeremiah Dexter off of North Main Street. One company of fusiliers from each of the four regiments, which were to embark on the *Fantasque*, were sent to quarters in Pawtucket on 13 November.⁶⁹⁰ The *Fantasque* was in such bad repair, however, that it did not join the marquis de Vaudreuil's fleet when it departed from Boston on 25 December 1782, but remained in Pawtucket until 6 February 1783, when she sailed directly to France. They were the last French soldiers to leave Rhode Island.

The relocation of the French camp onto the property of Jeremiah Dexter on 13 November was necessitated according to Baron Closen because the owner of the land they had encamped refused to let the French cut wood on his property.⁶⁹¹ The amount of wood needed for both the barracks as well as for cooking and warmth was enormous: during their brief stay in Providence, French forces cut a total of 1,681 cords of wood from almost 60 acres of land.⁶⁹² With that wood they built 325 barracks and huts, 266 of which were sold on 31 December 1782, barely a month after the departure of French forces.⁶⁹³

Closen liked Providence because "the army is being very hospitably received here. The residents form a kind, good-natured and gay society, and all who want to cultivate their acquaintances or to make new ones, can only praise the way in which they are treated everywhere." He was fortunate that in preparation for departure he could sell his horses to a fellow officer who would remain in America "at cost"; others were not so fortunate. Verger and many of his fellow officers "disposed of our horses at a very low price. I sold mine, which had cost me 16 *louis*, for 25 piasters."

⁶⁹⁰ Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1 p. 170, fn. 163, and Bouvet, *Santé*, p. 104, and Acomb, *Closen*, p. 267.

⁶⁹¹ Acomb, *Closen*, p. 267.

⁶⁹² *Colonial Records* vol. 9, p. 656.

⁶⁹³ Preston, "Rochambeau and the French troops," p. 22.

Sixteen gold *louis d'or* are the equivalent of 384 livres, 25 piasters are less than 150 livres. A loss of some 240 livres on a horse in 1 1/2 years was steep indeed: Verger, like Schwerin, was only a lieutenant, for him 240 livres were almost 1/4 of an annual income.— Since virtually all of the oxen had all died in Virginia the wagon train on the way north in 1782, militarily organized under Captain Daniel Olcott of Hartford, the "Father of the Turnpike", consisted almost exclusively horses. Drivers were discharged along the road as they were no longer need; the single largest number at Crompond, modern-day Yorktown Heights, in Westchester County, New York. The Pension Application of John Johnson (R 5634) of Clarke County, Kentucky even includes his discharge dated 21 October 1781.

John Johnson a Driver With Wadsworth
& Carter agents to the French army
is hereby Discharged from said service
on acct of sickness and have
liberty to return to Home
one from Daniel Olcott
Crompond October 21 1781

Upon arrival in Boston most of the horses were purchased by the Continental Army and driven via East Sudbury, Shrewsbury, Brookfield, Hadley, Chesterfield and Pittsfield to Continental Army depots along the Hudson.⁶⁹⁴ In his pension application Charles Atwell of Prince William County in Virginia wrote:

We left Williamsburg I think 1 July following, and proceeded under the Command of Col. Wadsworth with the artillery to Boston, where we arrived about 5th Dec'r. following. On our arrival there, we were sent with the horses of the Artillery to a village near a hundred miles above Boston called Hatfield or Hatley or some such name [probably Hadley

⁶⁹⁴ Pension application, S10064 for Charles Atwell of Prince William County in Virginia. There are about two dozen pension applications by wagon drivers for the year 1782.

MA, 75 mi W of Boston], for the purpose of wintering the horses. A short time after we reached there, we were discharged, received our pay, and returned home." In a second affidavit he elaborated: In the month of February 1782 another call of men taking place to move the artillery from York to the North he again tendered his service, and being appointed Captain, and [one or two illegible words] from a place called Bradley in Prince William County, and marching through Dumfries and Fredericksburg, proceeded with the Troops upon this expedition into Williamsburg to which place the artillery had been removed. they were placed under the command of Wadsworth, and proceeded to Baltimore, where they were some time detained, and moving on, they arrived at Boston in the month of December, where the artillery was deposited. From this place he was sent in charge of the horses up the Country, to the amount of 4 or 500 to winter. They were carried to the neighbourhood of Hatchfield or Hartley (he does not recollect which) where he left them, after eating his Christmas Dinner, and returned home, after a service of at least ten months from the time he left home.

Darius O'Neill of Cocke County, Tennessee deposed (Application W5448) that

At Williamsburg we remained until June [1782]. While at Williamsburg we were regularly paraded, mustered and drilled we were encamped in I fell within sight of Williamsburg. From Williamsburg we were marched under Colonel Olcutt I Hanover Court House, by Fredericksburg, to Falmouth, and by Dumfries on to Baltimore. We stopped two days at Falmouth. We arrived at Baltimore in July where we remained for six weeks encamped in a field adjoining the Town. From Baltimore, we marched in September to Philadelphia by Chester. We remained 2 days at Philadelphia, when we were marched from that city through New Jersey to Trenton, Princeton and Morris town on to King's Ferry on the Hudson River in the State of New York. At King's Ferry we crossed the River and encamped on the other side on the top of the Hill, where we remained three weeks. Thence we were marched to Providence Rhode Island, where we remained for several days. Thence, we were marched to the City of Boston, where we remained 2 days. From Boston we were marched to Chesterfield in the State of Massachusetts, 45 miles from the City of Boston. At Chesterfield we were discharged, having rested there one day.

As during the previous year, supplies came mostly from Connecticut.

Wadsworth & Carter
To Tho: Water
To Transporting 80 B^{ls} Corn from
Coventry 15 Miles
Received the above contents in full Nov^r 13 1782
J. Wadsworth

Receipt for Thomas Waterman for having transported 80 barrels corn from Coventry to Providence on 13 November 1782. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

1782 Nov. 13
Wadsworth & Carter
To Samuel Cleaveland
To Transporting 1 Load Oats from Canterbury
to Providence 34 miles @ 2/-
The above sum being in full for my
freight mentioned
J. Wadsworth

On 13 November 1782, Samuel Cleaveland was paid for having brought oats from Canterbury to Providence. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

Mr. Nehemiah Rhodes of Cranston Nov 25 1782
 and Delivered to M^r Jallets 3/4
 24 Bushels of Corn at 6/ per bushel 74/4
 10 feet of wood at 10/ per cord is 100/0
 To 10 days. Now home and 1/2 day all
 Please Right Honourable 17/8 £ 84/7 1/2
 being in full for the above Bill
 Nehemiah Rhodes

Nehemiah Rhodes of Cranston provided corn and wood from his lot along the Pawtuxet River for French forces while in Rhode Island.⁶⁹⁵

During their time in the barracks on Dexter's property, Thomas Lloyd Halsey of Boston appears to have been the chief supplier of Rochambeau's troops. A file in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society in Providence entitled "My Account against the French Army" gives a good insight into the needs of these forces while quartered in Providence.⁶⁹⁶ It lists thousands of feet of boards for barracks and bunks - Boston, 30th Nov 1782 Thomas L Halsey bot of Jon Davis 3909 feet of boards @ 78/ £ 15 4/ 10d" and "1322 feet @ 78/ £ 5 3/ d2 - as well as firewood, oats, hay and straw for November 1782, viz. "

| | |
|--|------------|
| 26 cwt Hay @ 6/ & weigh @ 1/8 | £ 7 17/d8 |
| 100 Bushels of Oats @ 4/6 | £ 22 10/ |
| 29 Cords Wood @ 36/ | £ 50 4/ |
| | ===== |
| as p. Mons Jallets Receipts to Decr 1 1782 | £ 82 11/ 8 |
| plus 100 Bushels Oats @ 4/6 | £ 22 10/ |
| | ===== |
| | £ 105 1/ 8 |

⁶⁹⁵ Nehemiah's slave Richard, "born in Africa" ca. 1760, enlisted in the Rhode Island Regiment sometime in the spring of 1778 "to gain his freedom". He received a musket ball in his right arm at Monmouth on 28 June 1778, served with his regiment at Yorktown and was furloughed on 15 June 1783. See his Pension application W 22060.

⁶⁹⁶ Manuscripts XIV, 1,2. RIHS.

On 30 November, Halsey charged Wadsworth and Carter for

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 129 ¼ Cords Wood @ 36/ | £ 232 13/ |
| 420 Bushels of Oats @ 4/6 | £ 94 10/ |
| 103 Quintals Hay @ 6/ | £ 31 6/ 6 |
| 4 tons Straw & weighing @ 7/4 | £ 9 19/ 4 |
| ===== | |
| | £ 368 8/ 10 ⁶⁹⁷ |

"Because of the large amount of matériel to be embarked," the artillery departed from Providence on 16 November, barely a week after arrival, and reached Boston three later, where "the troops were lodged in vacant houses, the officers also."

Before leaving Rhode Island and the United States for good, many of the officers were determined made one last visit to Newport. Writing from Asa Barnes' Tavern near Farmington in Connecticut in the evening of 27 October 1782, Fersen told Wadsworth that he wanted to ride to Newport from Hartford via Lebanon and needed a good horse and a guide. Since Fersen feared that Rochambeau might not give him permission for this excursion he warned Wadsworth not to "mention any thing of this to the General or anybody else."⁶⁹⁸ But he was not the officer determined to get to Newport. Traveling via Hartford, Lebanon, New London, Fort Griswold and Westerly, Lauberdière reached Newport on 7 November and before long was joined by Broglie, Ségur, Chabannes, Fersen, Deux-Ponts and Vauban, among others. Determined to have one last big event, they pooled their resources for a ball on 12 November 1782. Clermont-Crèvecœur left Rhode Island, especially Newport, which he visited during his stay in Providence, with fond memories. "It is perhaps the town in all America where the French received the greatest tokens of friendship from the Americans. I confess that I left Newport with regret."⁶⁹⁹

In anticipation of his departure Rochambeau made his farewell visit to Newport on 22 November. By the evening of 23 November he was back in Providence and ready to hand command of his forces over to the *baron* de Vioménil. Anticipating his departure, the General Assembly of Rhode Island on 27 November 1782, expressed its thanks to Rochambeau for his contributions to the American cause:

Nothing can equal our admiration at the manner in which you have participated with the Army of the United States in the fatigues, the toils,

⁶⁹⁷ This listing is not complete but only meant to provide a sample of the goods provided.

⁶⁹⁸ Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, Box 134, Folder 21-31 October 1782, CTHS.

⁶⁹⁹ Clermont-Crèvecœur in Rice and Brown, *American Campaigns*, vol. 1, p. 81.

and the glory that have attended the allied Arms, but the magnanimity of the Father of his People, and the Protector of the rights of mankind.

Our inquietude at the prospect of your removal would be inexpressible, but from the fullest conviction of the wisdom that directs the Councils of his most Christian Majesty. May Heaven reward your exertions in the cause of humanity, and the particular regard you have paid to the rights of the Citizens. – May your Laurels be crowned by the tinsels of the best of Kings, and the grateful feelings of the most generous People.

In his reply the following day, Rochambeau expressed his "inexpressible pleasure" with which he

and the Troops under my Command have received the marks of Esteem and of acknowledgement which you are so good as to give to the services we have been happy enough to render to the United States, jointly with the American Army, under the orders of General Washington.

This State is the first we have been acquainted with: The friendly behaviour of its inhabitants, now and at our arrival here will give them always a right to our Gratitude. the confidence you have in the Wisdom of the views of our Sovereign, as to the disposition and the march of his troops, must likewise assure you that in no occasion whatever, he will separate his interests from those of his faithfull allies.⁷⁰⁰

While French forces were stationed in Providence, Joseph Brown and James Manning contacted the *baron de Viomenil* on 12 December, asking for his assistance to procure a library of 2000 volumes which Manning had learned had been offered by Louis XVI to Yale but which the college had inexplicably declined. The French king had also offered to establish a professorship in French to be filled "by a Protestant Professor from Geneva" so that Yale would not have to worry about Catholic influences or proselytizing.⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰⁰ RISA Letterbooks Governor Greene, vol. 4, Letters from the Governor, 19 January 1780 to February 1807.

⁷⁰¹ <http://library.brown.edu/cds/catalog/catalog.php?verb=render&id=1107184662850977&colid=> Neither the library nor the professorship seem to have been established; as late as 7 January 1784 Samuel Stillman and Benjamin Waterhouse were working on a petition to Louis XVI regarding the professorship which Benjamin Franklin was supposed to deliver to the king.

Providence December 12th 1782

Sir

Since your Departure from this Town, I have received Information, stamped with the strongest Marks of Authenticity, that our magnanimous Ally, the King of France, from the Representations of M^r Silas Deane, ^{who is} ~~resident at the Court of France~~ ^{late American Minister}, conceived such a favourable Idea of Yale College, in the State of Connecticut, as to make the following generous Offer to the Governors of ^{S^t} College, viz,

"To present them a Library of two Thousand Volumes of the ^{at his own Expence} best Authors in his Kingdom, and to establish a ^{Professor} Professorship, ~~at his own Expence~~, in the French Language; & to obviate, doubtless, every Ground of Suspicion of any religious Influence, proposed to send them a Protestant, from Geneva to fill the Chair." Which Proposition, for Reasons best known to themselves, they did not think proper to accept; and, ordered their President, The Rev^d Doct^r Slater, in a Letter to M^r Deane, to announce their Refusal.

On 1 December 1782, Rochambeau, accompanied by his son, by the *comte de Vauban* and the *comte de Lauberdière*, said farewell to his troops in Providence and in a heavy snowfall set out for Newburgh to say his farewell to Washington. Traveling this time via Angel's Tavern the group spent the first night at Dorrance' Tavern just across the state line in Connecticut.⁷⁰² Canterbury, Windham, Bolton, Hartford, Farmington, Litchfield, a community of 70 or 80 homes, were the next stops along the route until Moorhouse Tavern in Dutchess County in New York was reached on 6 December. From there it was but a day's journey to Newburgh and Washington' headquarters. Rochambeau was pleased to renew his acquaintance

⁷⁰² The site of Jeremiah Angell's tavern and parts of the old Plainfield Pike (RISR 14) taken by Rochambeau were inundated when the Scituate Reservoir was built in the 1920s; see the photograph in Appendix 3.

with Mrs. Washington, while some of his officers had the honor to meet her for the first time.⁷⁰³ After a seven-day stay, Rochambeau pressed on to Philadelphia on the 14th, where he received the thanks of Congress. On 8 January 1783, the frigate *Emeraude*, with Rochambeau on board and British frigates in hot pursuit, sailed out of Annapolis harbor for France.⁷⁰⁴



Angell's Tavern in Scituate (Route 14).

Courtesy of Donald Carpenter

The service the Marquis De Chastelux received here in 1780 made him suggest to Rochambeau to take this road (Route 12) to Waterman's Tavern in Coventry but Rochambeau chose a route through Knightsville/Crnaston instead. It is now under the Scituate Reservoir.

By that time his infantry had left the American continent as well. Verger had left Providence with his regiment on 4 December and marched into Boston two days later. They left behind the need to settle claims, which in Providence too like wherever else the French had been, resulted in exorbitant demands of over 4,600 silver dollars, "which Sum the Intendant of the said Army and the Commissary of

⁷⁰³ This brief description of the journey is based on Lauberdière's *Journal*, fols. 209-214. Lauberdière is not clear where the group stayed the first night. For more details, and rather unflattering description of Mrs. Washington by the young *comte*, see my "America the Ungrateful." *American Heritage* vol. 48, no. 1, (February/March 1997), pp. 101-106.

⁷⁰⁴ The vessel arrived at Saint-Nazaire on 10 February 1783.

War conceived to be enormous and extravagant." The General Assembly found it therefore necessary to appoint a special committee to look into these claims. The committee returned with justified claims totaling 3,627 1/2 dollars for damages, mostly for wood. The claimants, particularly Jeremiah Dexter, Joseph Dexter and Thomas Arnold were furious when they were forced to return the overpay.⁷⁰⁵ In its February 1783 session, the General Assembly found it necessary to offer legal protection to Jabez Bowen, who had been in charge of the re-estimate. Bowen was "threatened with a prosecution at law, for the part he hath taken in procuring a reconsideration of the damages allowed to the proprietors of the woodland in North Providence, for the wood cut by the army of His Most Christian Majesty." In case such a prosecution was to take place, the "Assembly will, at the expense of the state, defend in such action, and will indemnify him from all costs and damages that shall accrue thereon."⁷⁰⁶

By then Rochambeau's infantry was thousands of miles away in the Caribbean. In the morning of the 25th, Christmas Day, the French fleet had raised anchor in Boston harbor to sail to the West Indies.⁷⁰⁷ Though neither Rochambeau nor his troops knew it, Preliminaries of Peace had been signed in Paris on 30 November 1782, in which "His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States ... to be free Sovereign and independent States." News of the signing of the Preliminaries of Peace reached the troops in mid-February 1783. In mid-April the troops sailed back to France, where they arrived in late June. At just about the same time, Providence witnessed the greatest celebration in years. On 23 April, 1783, the entire town turned out to hear "the Proclamation of Congress for a Cessation of Arms." The firing of cannon, the tolling of bells, church services, a fireworks display, a procession, and a state dinner marked the occasion

Lauzun's Legion had turned south again in October 1782 to Delaware, where it spent the winter of 1782/83. After six months in Wilmington, Lauzun, the 528 men left of his *légion*, and most of the remnants of the *expédition particulière* sailed from Philadelphia for Europe on 11 May 1783. The five frigates that took the remnants of Rochambeau's forces to Europe -- *la Gloire*, *la Danaë*, *l'Astrée*, *l'Active*, *Le St. James* --

⁷⁰⁵ The proceedings can be followed in Preston, "Rochambeau and the French troops," pp. 20-23.

⁷⁰⁶ *Colonial Records* vol. 9, p. 656.

⁷⁰⁷ An appendix in Noailles, *Marins et Soldats*, p. 408, gives the composition of the troops that depart from Boston as

763 NCOs and rank and file from the Bourbonnois

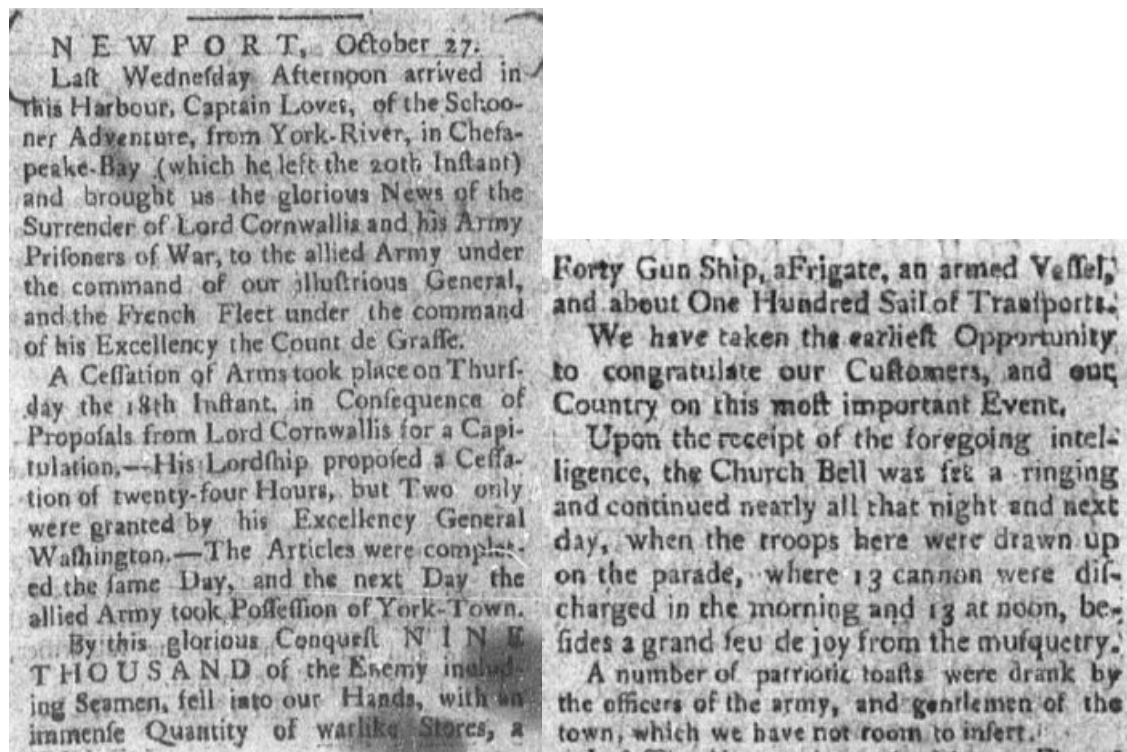
798 from the Soissonnois

772 from the Saintonge

755 from the Royal Deux-Ponts

carried 62 officers, 636 enlisted men, five "femmes de soldats" and 51 domestics to Brest, where they docked around 11 June 1783.⁷⁰⁸

The *expédition particulière* had achieved its goal: with the crucial assistance of French land forces under the *comte* de Rochambeau and a French fleet under the *comte* de Grasse, the capture of Lord Cornwallis on 19 October 1781 had ensured that the United States of America would become a free and independent nation.



The 27 October 1781 issue of the *Newport Mercury* announced the victory at Yorktown

⁷⁰⁸ The embarkation list is in Archives Nationales, Paris, Marine B/4/185. A final transport of 85 soldiers under Captain François Xavier Christophe *baron* de Hell of Lauzun's Legion sailed from Baltimore on the *Pintade* 5 October 1783, and entered Brest on 10 November 1783.

CONCLUSION

In an interview with *American Heritage* historian David McCullough declared: "We wouldn't have a country if it weren't for [the French]," And though historians should not speculate about "what if's," the facts show that French support was indeed vital to the success of the Revolutionary War.

The shots fired at Lexington and Concord had hardly been heard in Paris when French financial and military aid began flowing to the rebellious colonies. Almost 100 volunteers provided crucial expertise for American artillery, engineering, and map-making. In February 1778, France became the first foreign country to recognize the United States as an independent nation. In July 1780, Rochambeau arrived in Newport with over 5,000 officers and men. He and his forces entered into an unknown environment, steeped, for all they knew, in decades of anti-French, anti-Catholic history. Yet as the two cultures got to know each other over the next weeks and months, initial apprehension and fear turned to friendship on all levels, friendship that in some cases survived to be renewed decades later.

Fifteen months after their arrival, Rochambeau's men in cooperation with Continental Army forces and a French navy under Admiral de Grasse decided the outcome of the war at Yorktown. During the 30 months that the 492 officers and 6,038 men of the *expédition particulière* had been in, or on their way to and from America, about 600 men (including 70 in the six months following the return in 1783) died, though only about 75 of them from battle or battle-related wounds. Seven were executed, 316 men, of whom only 26 were native, French-speaking, soldiers, deserted. So did 80 men recruited in America. 140, including 30 "American" recruits, were discharged. Thirty-one officers and 14 enlisted men retired with military pensions in the New World. To put these figures into perspective: within six months of returning to France, Rochambeau's units discharged 832 men whose enlistment had expired!

Rochambeau's troops were not the only French forces to fight in America before, or after, Yorktown. In fact, they represent only a fraction of the total number of Frenchmen fighting for American Independence, which historians have estimated at 18,000 soldiers and 31,000 sailors. In 1776, France had stationed 19 battalions of infantry in her Caribbean possessions; in the course of the war she sent another 29 battalions there for a total of 48 battalions. Rochambeau brought all of 8 infantry battalions with him in 1780. At Yorktown, Rochambeau suffered not even 200 casualties in dead and wounded. Between March and December 1781, the French navy operating in the Caribbean suffered over 5,000 casualties, the equivalent of

almost the entire force under Rochambeau's command. In the defeat in the Battle of the Saints in April 1782, de Grasse suffered over 3,000 casualties, more than fifteen times those of Yorktown.

The French contribution to American victory becomes even more obvious when we look at the role of the French navy. It was Admiral de Grasse' fleet which kept the Royal Navy from making contact with Cornwallis when it sailed out to meet the challenge in the Battle of the Capes in early September 1781. Without the French fleet, British Admiral Graves might just have succeeded in rescuing Cornwallis from Yorktown. The Continental Navy would have been unable to stop him: in 1781, the Royal Navy had about 140 ships of the line of 74 guns or more, the French had 67 capital ships, Spain had 58, the Dutch 19, and the United States had none.

French expenditures for the war were enormous: Robert D. Harris sets the cost of the war for the years 1776-1782 at 928.9 million livres (as opposed to 2,270.5 million livres for the British), with another 125.2 million to be added for the year 1783. At the same time, the total ordinary income of the French crown stood at 377.5 million livres for the year 1776. 91 per cent of the cost of the war was funded by loans, and by the end of 1782, the total constituted debt of the French monarchy had reached 4,538 million livres. Even if the outlays for the war were not the primary cause of the French Revolution, there can be no doubt that an extra billion livres in debt and annual expenditures of some 207 million livres just to service the debt, did nothing to enhance the financial situation of the monarchy between 1783 and the outbreak of the revolution in 1789.⁷⁰⁹

But within the overall French war effort expenditures on the American war were minimal. According to Claude C. Sturgill, "all of the monies directly appropriated for the entire cost" of Rochambeau's forces amounted to exactly 12,730,760 livres or a little over 1 per cent of the total cost of the war.⁷¹⁰ In addition the American rebels received 18 million in loans, to be repaid after the war, as well as outright subsidies of about 9 million from the foreign affairs department and other aid for a total of about 48 million livres spent in support of the American Revolution.

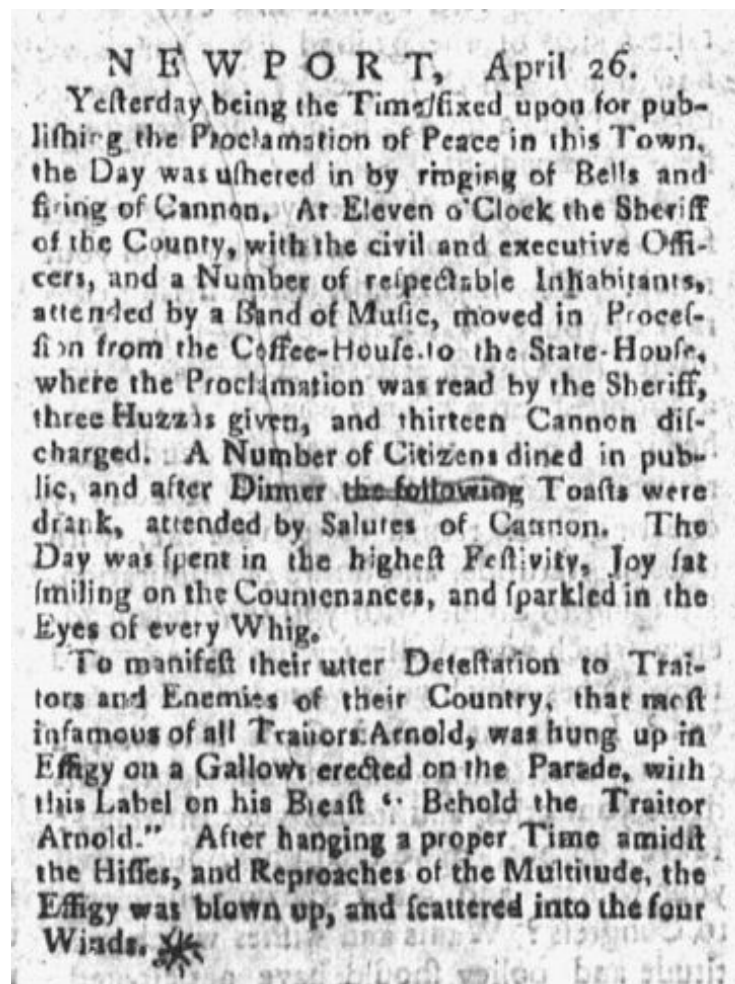
But whatever Royalist France did to support the America's struggle for Independence, nothing can alter the fact that it was American colonists who first challenged British authority. It was American colonists who first proclaimed that "All men are created equal." It was American colonists who risked their lives and

⁷⁰⁹ All figures from Harris, "French Finances," pp. 233-258.

⁷¹⁰ Sturgill, "Observations," p. 183.

their properties to fight for the "truths" which they, and after them the whole world, considered "to be self-evident." It was on their soil that the war was waged. It was they who suffered the devastation and hardships of the war. That no matter where their ancestors had come from in their search for freedom, they would stand together under the leadership of General George Washington and in the crucible of war create their own nation.

Every colony, large or small, from Massachusetts to Virginia, contributed to the success of this struggle. Rhode Island was the first to renounce allegiance to the King and to call for independence, and paid a heavy price for it. The smallest among the colonies embracing the cause of independence, it suffered through long months of deprivation while the town of Newport felt the consequence of British occupation and the war well into the twentieth century. All of that was forgotten, however, when Ephraim Bowen, Sheriff of Newport County, proclaimed peace from the State House shortly before noon on 25 April 1783.



Newport Mercury, 26 April 1783

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