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HERMIONE

LAFAYETTE'S FRIGATE

at the service of the American independence

A study accompanied by historical documents from 1764 to 1793

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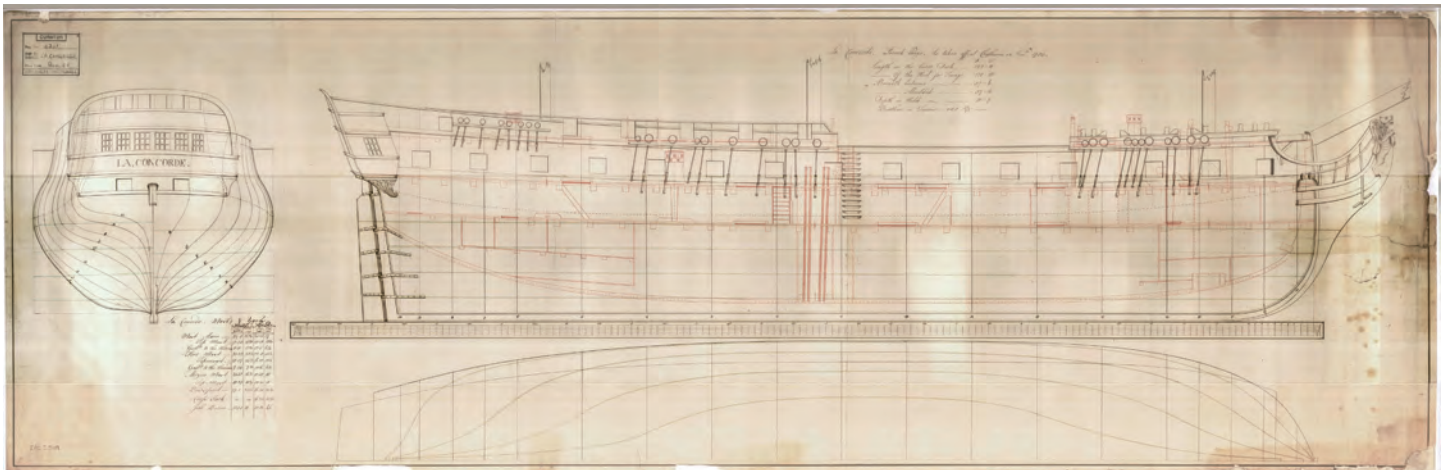
Hermione, Gilbert de Lafayette financed his own ship *Victoire* in 1777, with the assistance of Louis XVI's secret service. The sale of its cargo of weaponry financed his glorious 1777 to 1778 campaign that owed him the rank of an American general, and allowed him to become the friend of Washington and other main insurgent generals. The crossing of the Atlantic by Lafayette and *Hermione* symbolizes four years of indefectible support of the American cause by France. Here Patrick Villiers and Jean-Claude Lemineur offer us the opportunity to join the destinies of two heroes of the American War of Independence with a beautiful frigate, representative of the victorious struggle for control of the Atlantic Ocean indispensable for the independence of the United States. From the names of the crew members to the commissioning of *Hermione* through the cargo of weaponry of *Victoire*, many documents had been lost in archives up to now, or were only known by a few specialists.

BOOK MAKEUP

A book in the 23x31 cm format that includes

- I. Lafayette, the legends and realities of the first engagement in the service of the patriots. Lafayette, a minor under the control of his in-laws, the *Victoire's* cargo, what value and for what profit? Lafayette in the face of his destiny.
 - II. 1775-1778, first the warships, the frigates from 1764 to 1767, Choiseul's plan, the threat to Rochefort and the renewal.
 - III. The importance of maritime trade and its protection by both sides, the rôle of corvettes while waiting for frigates, the beginning of war in Europe, the victory of Ushant and the necessity for an alliance with Spain.
 - IV. The conflict in the United States. Lafayette from Brandywine to Valley Forge, Lafayette becomes a soldier and Washington's adopted son.
 - V. 1778, the French Navy on the American coasts, Lafayette and Admiral d'Estaing, from Newport to Boston.
 - VI. Return to France, Comte de Broglie's plan and the 1779 landing attempt. Lafayette at Le Havre.
 - VII. A new start for America, Ternay and the expedition's preparations, Lafayette and Rochambeau.
 - VIII. *Hermione*, from the decision to build it to the choice of the engineer Henri Chevillard, so-called *The Elder*.
 - IX. A frigate that was built in six months, a model construction.
 - X. Latouche-Treville, from the *Rossignol* to *Hermione*.
 - XI. *Hermione's* crew in 1780.
 - XII. *Hermione* and Lafayette, the voyage to Boston
 - XIII. *Hermione* and Latouche-Treville in the service of the insurgents, 1780 – 1781: the combat against IRIS, in patrol along the East coast, In the service of Ternay, the first battle of the Chesapeake.
 - XIV. Lafayette and Yorktown, *Hermione's* contribution to the conflict: the Louisburg combat.
 - XV. From the American missions to the service of comte de Grasse and the return to France.
 - XVI. From Peru, a new captain and missions in the South Atlantic and in the Indian Ocean in Suffren's service 1782 – 1784.
 - XVII. *Hermione* from the end of Louis XVI's reign to the Revolution and the wreck.
- Annexes**
- The *Hermione's* muster book.
 - *Hermione's* guns
 - The frigates' figureheads and decorations
 - Plot of Lafayette's 1780 voyage from the ship's logbook.
 - Extract from the *Hermione's* and *Rossignol's* logbooks.

Extracts from the plans





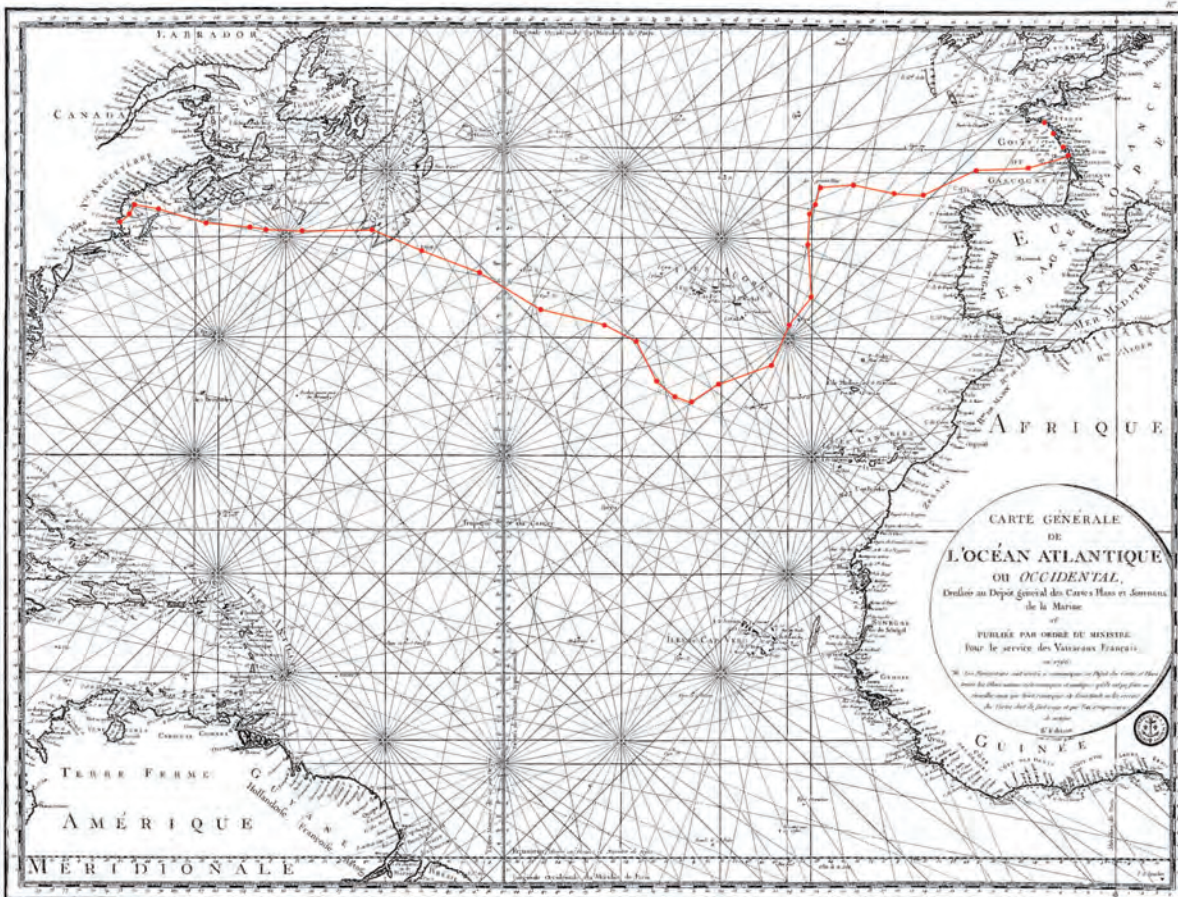
▲ *Combat between Belle-Poule and Arethusa by Rossel de Cery. This first engagement heralded the start of a long series of victories by French frigates. The drafts of Belle-Poule, built a Bordeaux in 1766 were a considerable inspiration for the construction of the Rochefort frigates, and in particular Hermione. Commissioned by Louis XVI to produce representations of the combats of the War of Independence, Rossel de Cery is a precious and particularly reliable reference.*



▲ *Lafayette and Washington at Brandywine in 1779: under Washington's eyes, Lafayette asserted himself in the eyes of Americans by his bravery as well as his tactical ability. He earned his stars as an American general in combat.*

Lafayette and his servant Jams Armistead at Yorktown in 1781. Landing at South Inlet on 12 une 1777, the first American Lafayette met was a black slave of insurgent colonel Benjamin Huger. As soon as he arrived in America, Lafayette fought slavery. At Yorktown his servant, the slave James Armistead, provided important information to attack the British. In 1786, Lafayette requested and obtained that he be freed by the Virginia Assembly, a first victory in his fight for the emancipation of black people in the United States.

► *A portrait of Latouche-Tréville by George Rouget in 1841, from the Musée de l'Histoire de France at Versailles. According to Napoléon the 1st, who made him an admiral in 1803, Latouche-Tréville was the best French admiral of the Revolution and Empire eras. He showed himself to be one of the best frigate commanders of the War of Independence, not only by transporting Lafayette, but also in the service of the American cause from Louisburg to Yorktown.*



◀ *A sidescript on Lafayette's voyage from Latouche-Tréville's logbook that enabled us to recreate precisely Lafayette's trip aboard Hermione, the speeds that were attained and the struggle against bad weather.*