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. 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. Yeo 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 –

ordered, and occasioned the order for discontinuing 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." 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,

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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 online *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 autre 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."

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

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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 payis") 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 tolerée" 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 maximes 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-decamp 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." 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." 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,

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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 Neighour, 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

"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.

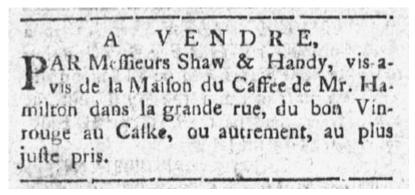
When strictly observed, the rules of bundling permit innocent caresses, all the affection proper to brother and sister; anything more is rigorously forbidden. ... In this case, to the shame of a young man of the neighborhood, there was a rumor in the inn and among the confidences of the girls, confirmed 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 emigré; ou cahier d'un etudiant 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-

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 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." 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." Before departure from Dobbs Ferry, Wadsworth had asked for 400,000 livres cash to pay for the expenses of the march.

^{1783&}quot; 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-Americaines* 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 supplyed 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/ = £58/" 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

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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." 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." 1780

Was there never any trouble? Of course, but surprisingly little, and the bestknown 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 lisle 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 crewmember was concerned, Destouches at last agreed to preside over the court-martial with Navy Lieutenant the *chevalier* de Fondelin of the 64-gun l'*Eveillé* as prosecutor. Boncichon was found guilty and executed by firing squad on board the 180-ton transport vessel Françoise on 31 August 1780. Boncichon had been sentenced "a être 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 assassiné un chirurgien d'un vaisseau du convoy sur l'isle de Conanicut - having murdered a medical doctor of a vessel of the convoy on Conanicut Island." 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.

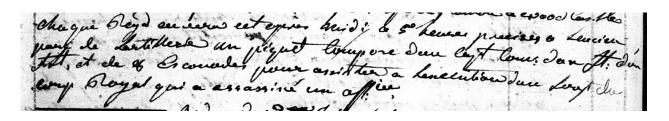
⁵⁰³ Wadsworth Papers, CTHS, Box 132.

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. 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



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.

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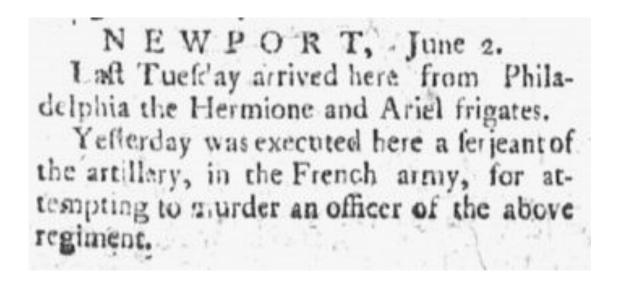
Detail from the *contrôle* of the Auxonne artillery showing the entry for Cournevin.

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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

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.

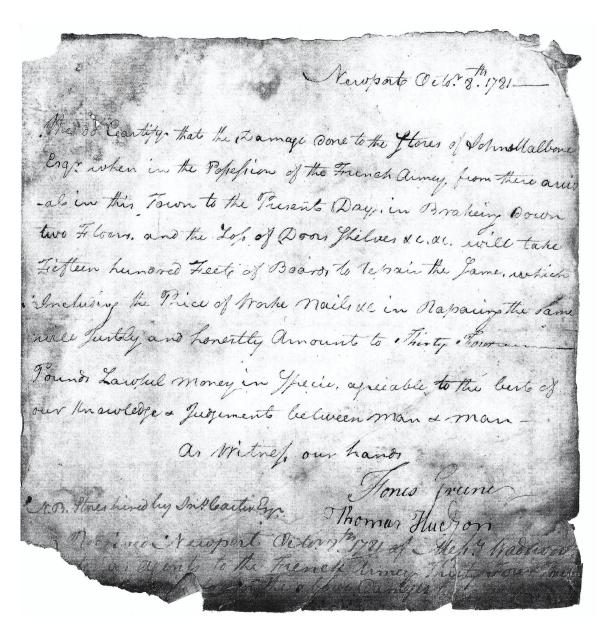


Newport Mercury 2 June 1781

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 Distroyed 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

adiquate to the Damages sustaind" 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



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 Malbone 1 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 signd 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'Eveillé]. 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 easier to create a record for posterity for having broken the law or done an evil deed than for having been good.

Two soldiers 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.

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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 Béville 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 Béville, 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.

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". 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."

GABLUS DETERICH, servant to an officer of the Royal Deuxpont's regiment, deserted with three others, all Germans, speaking very lucle English, on the 14th of March, inst. the ab vementioned servant is 22 years of age, 5 feet 5 inches high, round face, small note, and short brown hair; had on a grey surrout coat and jacket, with hours 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

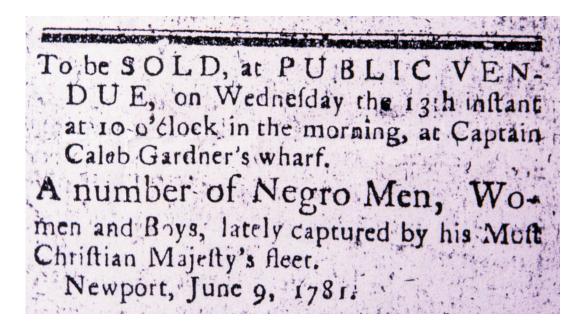
Deterich does not appear in the contrôles of the regiment. The logistical burden of this multitude of servants on Rochambeau's forces should not be underestimated: if every officer had two servants and four or five horses, they added close to 1,000 men, the equivalent of an additional regiment of mouths 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

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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 then 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'*Eveillé* accompanied by the frigates *La Gentille* and *La Surveillante* plus the cutter *La Guêpe*. 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

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Musée de Rennes, *Les Français dans la Guerre d'Indépendance Américaine* (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. 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. 324

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 "LEveillé et Deux frégate avec Lesquels je me Suis Rendüe Maitre Du vaisseau Le Romulusse, Le Duc De york, La Goilétte 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 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.

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. 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. 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

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.

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).

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 Francis⁵³⁷

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. 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 porteétendard 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

unknown why these hussars had to march on foot to Lebanon.

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

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.

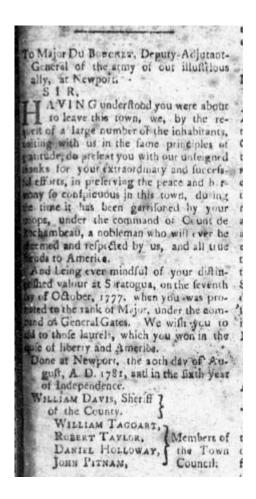
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⁵⁴¹ Connecticut State Library, Lauzun to Wadsworth, 29 May 1781. Call no. 973.3 D 49L.

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 3^{rd} , the 50 hussars from Lauzun's legion, who had remained in Newport, and on the 6^{th} , all the Legion's infantry, left for Lebanon."

the Sheriff and Town Council, Representatives of the inhabitants of the town of Newport. GENTLEMEN. ITH the mast exalted fentime of gratitude, I received the k trefs you have been pleafest to prefent behalf of the inhabitants of this town th with peculiar pleasure I take this pubtopportunity of acknowledging the goodra of the inhabitants to our troops, and the dom of their magistrates have made my liness easy-Being sensible by this mark their faturactions of having complied with torders and inclination of General Rounbeau (whose efteem for the Americans of true attachment to their cause is so well newn) I think my felf happy. By your mentioning my foldierly translinns, in your army at Saratogua, you put in mind of the most glorious event to American arms, and imprefs my heart th the defire to fight again is the lame nocause. I ardently wish to be re-united the field to my old brave fellow foldiers, od to deferve once more their applaufe. Do Boucher, Deputy Adjutant-General of the French srmy. Newport, 26th August, 1781.



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 *affair 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."

How can I survive the Lofs of such a friend oh how have I been flattering myself with your Company this winter I now all my hopes are you again but I will and I reever expect to See you again but I will my memory I will set it down as my Decrest und best friend don't what you promesed me I am June you can find a Limn in Boston jury 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

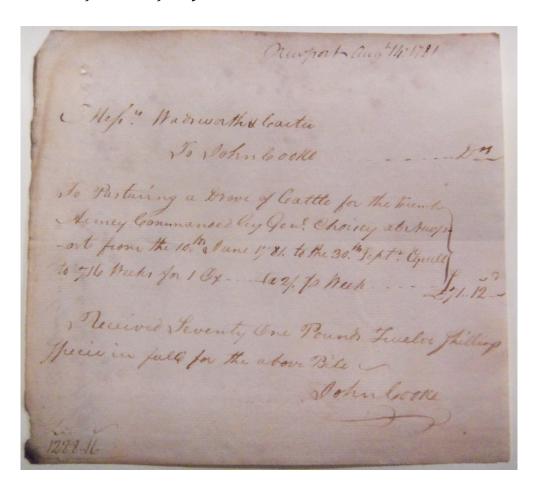
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Randolph informed Count Christian de Deux-Ponts, that Rachel had been safely delivered of "a son, whom she named Louis after his father Monsieur Lobidier." Little Louis was never acknowledged by his father. Louis/Lewis Warrington graduated from William 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

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.

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 391of the 500 men from Rhode Island, Choisy wrote on 3 August to Stephen Kimball:

[&]quot;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." 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. 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 "I'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."

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 small to lodge these men, he had temporarily quartered him with Mr. William

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.

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." 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



Receipt for "ten Fat Sheep" purchased for the garrison at Providence on 3 September 1780. Jeremiah Wadsworth Papers, CTHS.

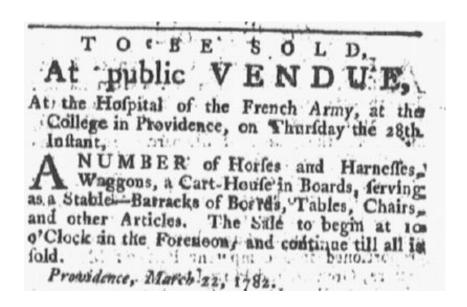
That lack of preparation is the more surprising since the General Assembly had pondered the relocation of parts of the French artillery to Providence as early as 21 March 1781, when it requested Perkins to deliver a total of 15 cannon of 24 and 18 pounds (plus carriages) belonging to the State of Rhode 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 Providence, and the Store upon Knight Dexter's farm in Such a manner that they will

 $^{^{560}}$ Greene Letterbooks vol. 17, 1 August 1781 to 25 July 1782, RISA.

⁵⁶¹ Stone, French Allies, p. 604.

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 Iumecourt 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.

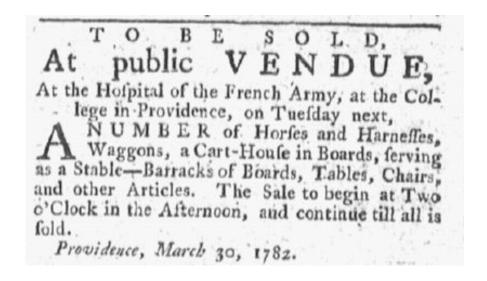
The noisy preparations for the sale caused alarm among the governing body of the college. On Wednesday, President Manning wrote an anxious letter to Joseph and Nicholas Brown:

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".

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*:



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,

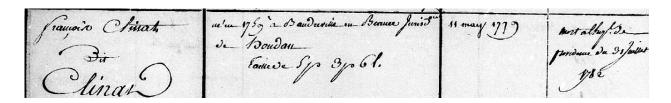
the Authority of this State granted it to the French Army as an Hospital who continued to hold & to use it for Y^d Purpose until the last Week, when the Commissary at War of the French Army, delivered it up, with the Keys, to his Honor the Deputy Gov^r, they having previously permitted the Officers of 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

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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.

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 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". 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." 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. 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

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.

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.

HE Members of the Corporation of the COLLEGE in this Town are defired to take Notice, that their Anniverfary Meeting is on Wednesday the Hall. The present deplorable Situation of the College loudly calls for every poffible Affiftance 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 earnefly requested to be in Town the Evening before, as the Hour of meeting is appointed at 9 o'Clock in the Morning of faid Day. The young Gentlemen who propofe to take their fecond Degree, are defired to apply without Delay to the Prefident; JAMES MANNING, Prefident. Providence, August 16, 1782.

The Petition of the Members of the Exporation of More Mand Elegandone · Vames are homes to arriged humble Thursday our Direction the Prefident assumed the Course of Smeation it well the Sutherity of this State, quanted it to the mouth. Low ful it for for Eurpose until the East Week, when the Commissory at. War of the Friends Army delicited it up with the They, to his Monor the Deputy Goo?, they laving previously formitted the Officer of the French Ships, in this State, to place their fick in it, who still continue there; the Building was in good Repair, and occupied by april Jane taken out of the Hands of the Corporation litate the Papage of the Invalid from the Polifice into the Soft As your Honours Jenfeble that the Interests of Literature, in this Tale, must qually Juffe well as the Building eneted for its Francistion; and conceiving that, convert be the Studow of a Rudon, for detaining any longer the College Boyle from thenly found in who now want it to apply it indimediately to the yes Expense; of to faf, an From that it Thall not again to appropriated as an Hospital or Barracks - And your Pet konors, of an in Duty bound, 1 the Petito

10.3 Rules and Regulations for a French Army Encampment

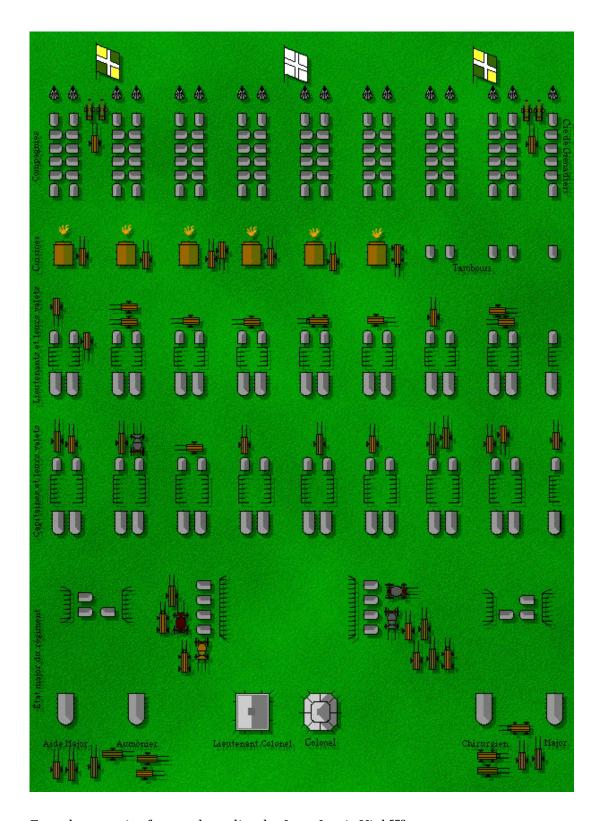
The French army had precise regulations concerning lay-out and organization, in particular the *Ordonnance portant règlement sur le service de l'infanterie en campagne* of 17 February 1753, and the *Ordonnance sur l'exercice de l'infanterie* of 5 June 1755. ⁵⁶⁹ Concerning the basic camp-lay-out, the 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.

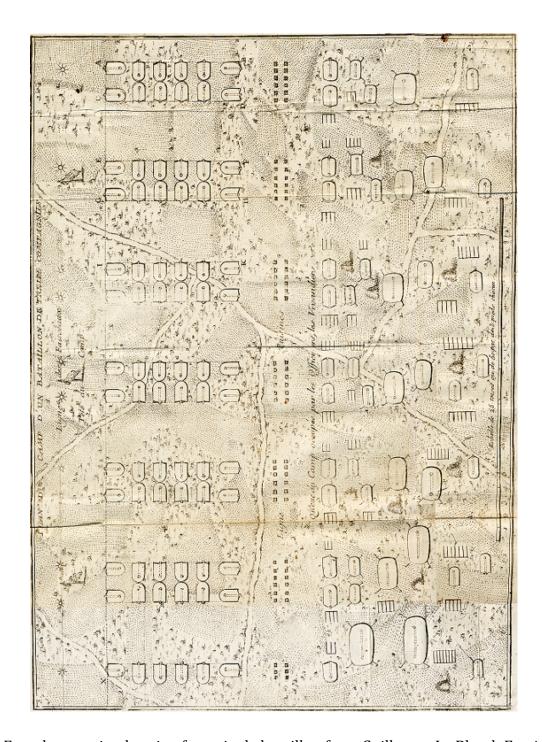
⁵⁷⁰ The *ordonnances* creating the two-battalion regiments do not address the camp lay-out it is assumed that the French army continued to pair its fusilier companies during the 1780s.

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

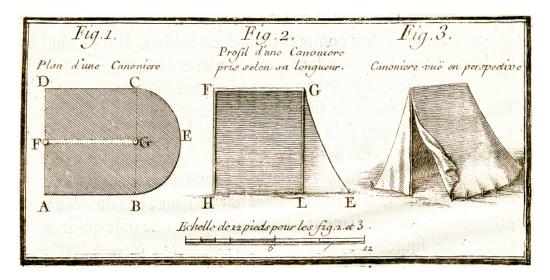


French campsite drawing for a single bataillon from Guillaume Le Blond, *Essai sur la castrametation, ou, Sur la mesure et le tracé des camps: contenant les premiers principes pour l'arrangement des troupes: la formation de l'ordre de bataille & la distribution ou construction du camp: avec un précis 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



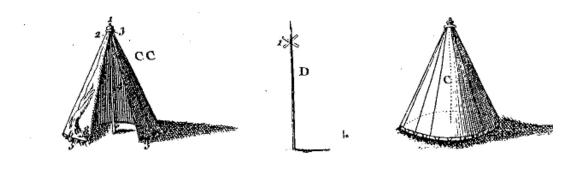
In his Art *de la Guerre*" of 1748, Puységur shows this engraving with nine soldiers in a tent of 8 *pieds* square excl. the apse and 7 feet (2 m 27 cm) high.⁵⁷⁴

 $^{^{574}}$ 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 1e.

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.

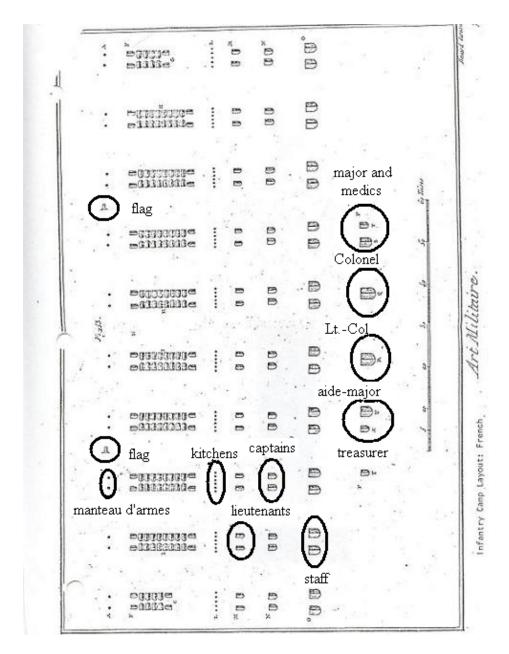
Finally in the rear of the camp, was the regimental headquarters at fifty *pas* back from the captains. The colonel and colonel lieutenant in the center, the first at right and the second at left of the interval of the middle of the battalion. In the two-battalion regiments of the *comte* de Rochambeau's 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

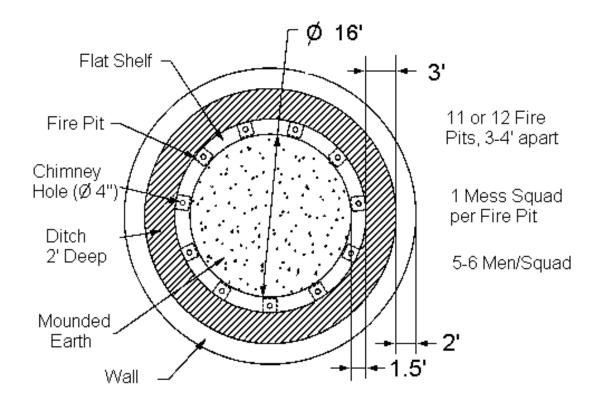
⁵⁷⁸ Barneville, "Journal", p. 254.

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.

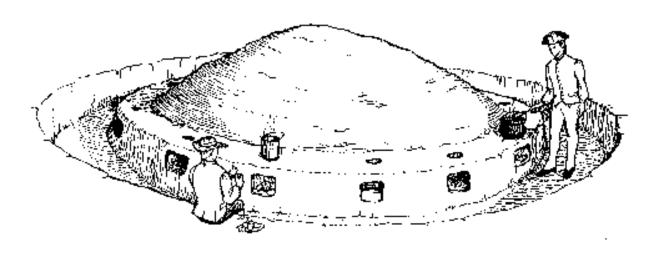


This 180-tent lay-out of a regimental camp is about 140 toises (840 feet) wide and 80 toises (513 feet) deep plus latrines, butcheries and pasture for horses further off in the distance. The ordonnance of 1776 changed the size of a regiment but the drawing provides a rather accurate idea of the camp 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 (Spring1998), 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.