

General Rochambeau's French Army 1780-1783

René Chartrand

The French Navy Reborn

- In the 1760s and 1770s, France rebuilt its navy; by 1778, it was the 2nd strongest in the world.



Rebirth of the French Army

- Army is totally reorganized in 1760s-1770s.
- Strict discipline; education of officers; new tactics, weapons systems, uniforms
- About 200,000 regulars plus about 60,000 trained militia

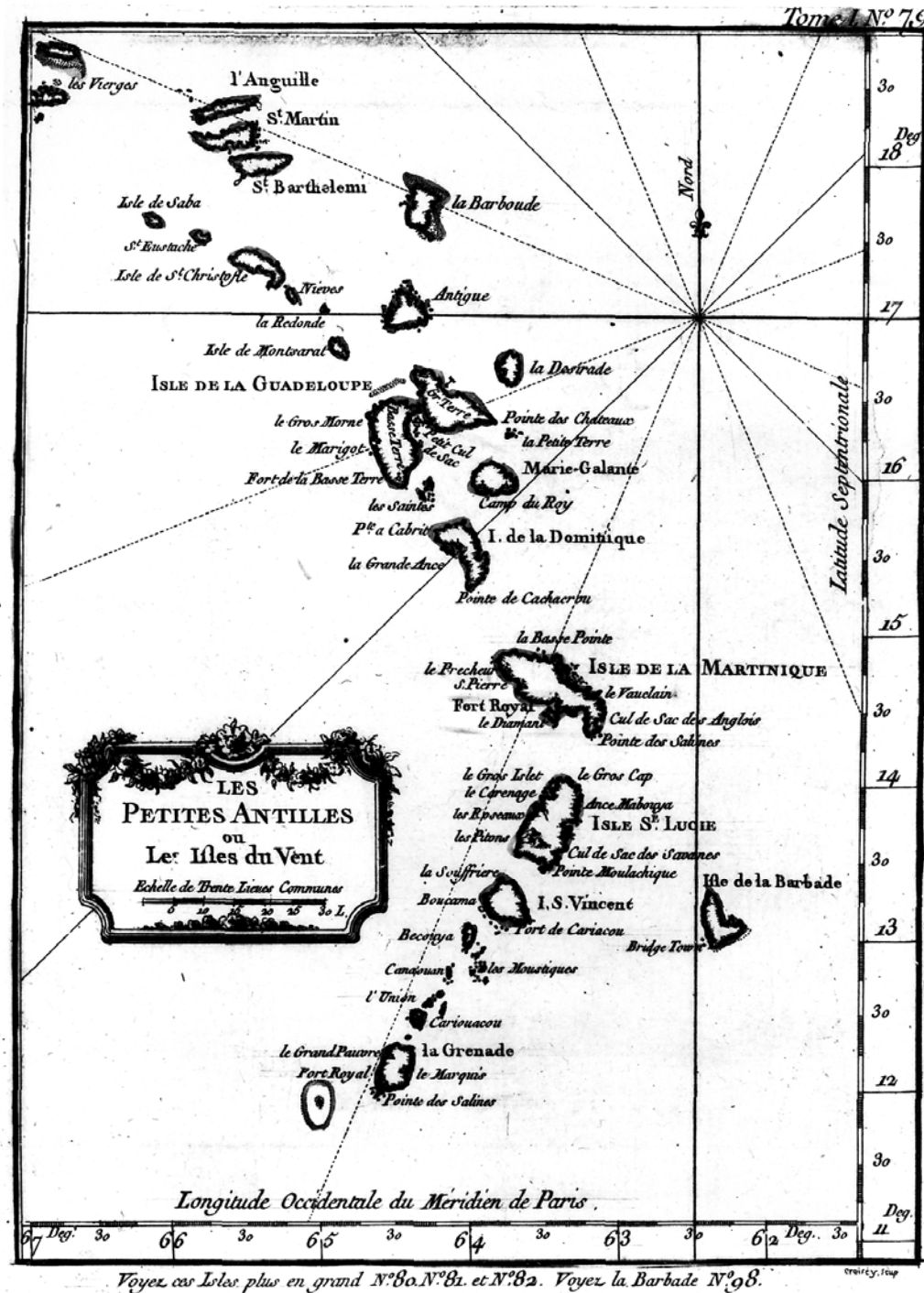


Combat de Ouessant 23 juillet 1778



West Indies

- Primary French objective
- Strong fleets and nearly 30 battalions deployed there.
- From 1778, British loose Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat. By 1783, only Barbados, Antigua and Jamaica remain



Grenada 1779



Dessiné par le Peintre de S. M. S.
M. le Prince de Condé.

PRISE DE L'ISLE DE LA GRENADÉ.

Gravé par Godefroy de l'Académie
Impériale et Royale de France.

L'Armée du Roi, partie de la Martinique le 30 juin 1779, mouilla dans l'anse Molinier le 2 juillet au soir; mit à terre 1500 hommes. Le 3 on reconnut le morne de l'hôpital gardé par 780 Anglais. Le 4 à 2 heures du matin on attaqua ce poste, et rien ne put arrêter l'ardeur des troupes excitées par l'exemple du Général, qui sauta dans les retranchements avec les premiers grenadiers: malgré le feu très vif des ennemis, on les chassa successivement des trois retranchemens et l'on eut maître du morne au point du jour. Le Fort Royal, domine par ce poste, arbora un Pavillon blanc au premier coup de canon, et l'on vit arriver un Officier de la part du Gouverneur, demandant à capituler. Le Général ayant sa montre accordée une heure et demie au Lord Macartney pour envoyer ses propositions, lesquelles n'ayant pas été acceptées, il se rendit à discrétion. Le 5 on prit possession du Port: on trouva 108 pièces d'artillerie, et l'on fit 700 prisonniers. Le 6 à midi l'Amiral anglais Biron avec 21 vaisseaux de ligne était battu et dispersé par 15 vaisseaux français; et M. le Comte d'Estaing, Vice-Amiral de France, triompha sur terre et sur mer en moins de 60 heures.

Officiers tués à l'attaque du morne; M. de la Bretonnière, du Bourg, Muschachi: blessés; de la Pélon, Duquoin, Morgan, Deloy, Ch. de Kergou, Gautier.

À Paris chez M. Godefroy, rue des Francs-Bourgeois, Porte S. Michel, et chez M. Ponce, rue S. Hyacinthe, maison de M. Delure.

Combat Naval: Capitaines de Vaisseaux tués; M. de Champorcin, Perron du Quengo, de Montaut, blessés; de Castellet, de Dampierre, de Cillard de Surville, et le Ch. de Relz. Lieutenant de Vaisseaux tués; M. de Gouho, Ch. de Gouho, de Marguerie, Jaguelot, de Compradon, blessés; de Vietot, de Massilian, de Oleraux, de Vassal, et de Cornet, Edouard Dillon, Ch. de la Vallée du Morne, les 1500 hommes en 4 divisions étaient commandés par M. le Vicomte de Noailles, le Comte Edouard Dillon, Arthur Dillon, et de Pont-de-Vinay, ayant sous leurs ordres M. d'Orme, de Mondion, de Macdonal, le Ch. Dupuy, de Steding Omoran, de Breuille, le Comte de Durat, de Vence, de S. Ciran, Musrenot, de la Bretonnière, et de Kerangues. M. de Romain, de Haras, de Breuer, et de Combaud, Officiers de la Marine, obtinrent la permission de se trouver à cette attaque. Après la prise du Morne un Officier ditta son Epaullette et l'attacha au Vaisseau au Vaisseau Mouradon, sergent des Grenadiers du Régiment d'Haynault, que Monsieur le Comte d'Estaing voulait embrasser et faire Officier pour le récompenser de l'impétuosité qu'il avait montrée pendant toute l'action, et pour avoir sauvé la vie à Monsieur de Vence tandis qu'il abaisait le pavillon Anglais.

A. P. D. R.

Savannah September 1779



Chasseur, Armagnac

Grenadier, Hainault

Fusilier, Champagne

Drummer, du Cap

Officer, du Cap

Officer, Walsh

Sergeant, Guadeloupe

Some French Regiments at Savannah, 1779

Plat. N° 249

Louis XVI of France

- King from
1774 to 1792

Musée
Carnavalet
Paris



General de Rochambeau

- Chosen in early March 1780 for his diplomatic as well as his military skills
- Engraving after a 1780s sketch by the American artist Trumbull



Commander-in-Chief

- Rochambeau's instructions include:
 - Gen. Washington as C-in-C
 - Joint Staff work
 - Diplomacy, discipline and open approach by all ranks
 - Smooth out language and technical issues with Americans (fortunately, a number of them understood French)



Lieutenant -général

Dress uniform



General commanding a corps

- Uniform of Rochambeau's senior officers



Commissaire des guerres

- The Army's administration branch in charge of supplies and finances.
- This image is of the senior officer.



Logistics

- Complete camp and clothing supplies for two campaigns (about two years)
- Food, drink, etc., for six months
- Complete supplies to set up hospitals
- 350 horses for light cavalry (hussars of Lauzun's Legion) to be bought in America
- Saddles, bridles etc. brought to America

Rochambeau and Staff

- 1st row: Berthier (future marshal), artillery, Royal D-Ponts, Rochambeau, Engineers.
- 2nd row: Commissaire, navy, hussard, staff, engineer-geographer.
- (by Eugène Lelièvre - Military Uniforms in America plate, Company of Military Historians)



Expeditionary Force 12 March 1780

- 6 line infantry regiments (2 battalions each)
- 1500 men per regiment: 9000 infantry
- 1 artillery battalion - 600 men
- Lauzun's Legion - 900 men
- Total: 10,500 plus various support detachments.

Régiment Bourbonnais

- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Engraving by
Hoffman



Régiment Soissonnais

- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Engraving by
Hoffman



Régiment Saintonae

21 February
1779 Dress
Regulations
(by Eugène
Lelièvre -
Military
Uniforms in
America plate,
Company of
Military
Historians)



Régiment Royal Deux-Ponts

- A German regiment in the French Army.
- Portrait miniature of a second lieutenant



Officer, Neustrie Regiment

- French infantry officers in Rochambeau's army would have looked much the same as this original uniform as per the French 1786 Dress Regulations. Almost similar to 1779 except for three instead of four cuff buttons. (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



Régiment Anhalt

- A German regiment in the French Army.
- 21 February 1779
Dress
Regulations
Engraving by
Isnard



Légion de Lauzun

- Corps of 300 hussars and 300 infantry, made up mostly of Germans.
- Acted as light cavalry to Rochambeau's army.



French mortar battery

- The French artillery corps was probably the most advanced technically in Europe. (Uniforms are pre-1776. Print after Moltzheim)



Royal-Artillerie

- Régiment Auxonne
(one battalion)
- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Engraving by Isnard



Royal-Artillerie Ouvrier

- Artisans and pioneers attached to the artillery.

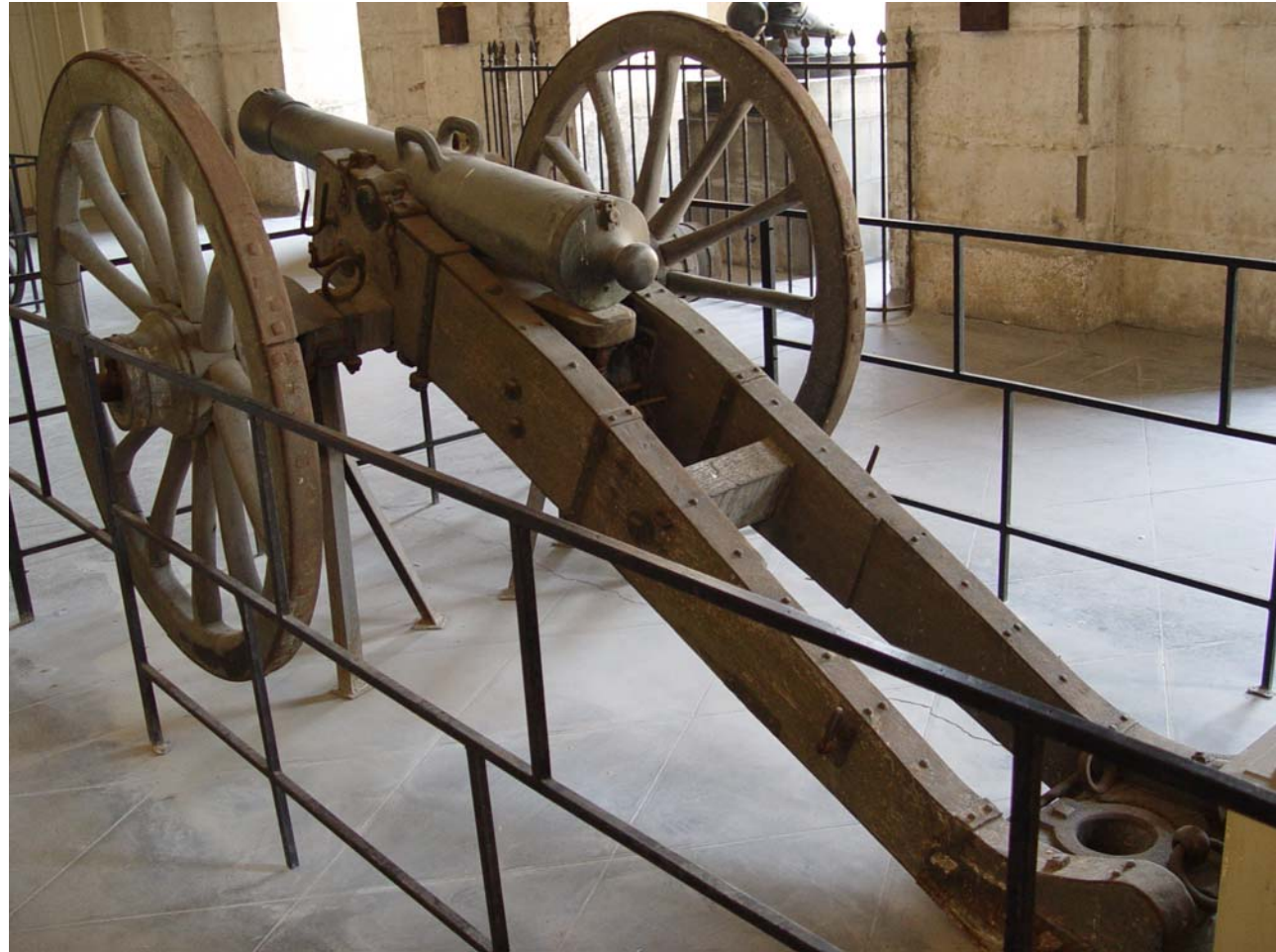


Ordnance 1780

- Field Artillery
 - Eight 12-pdrs
 - Sixteen 4-pdrs
 - Six 6-inch howitzers
- Siege Artillery
 - Twelve 24-pdrs
 - Eight 16-pdrs
 - Two 8-inch howitzers
 - Twelve 8 and 12-inch mortars

French Gribeauval Artillery

- Field Artillery 4 lbs cannon (original at the Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



French Gribeauval Artillery

- Field Artillery cannon (original at the Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



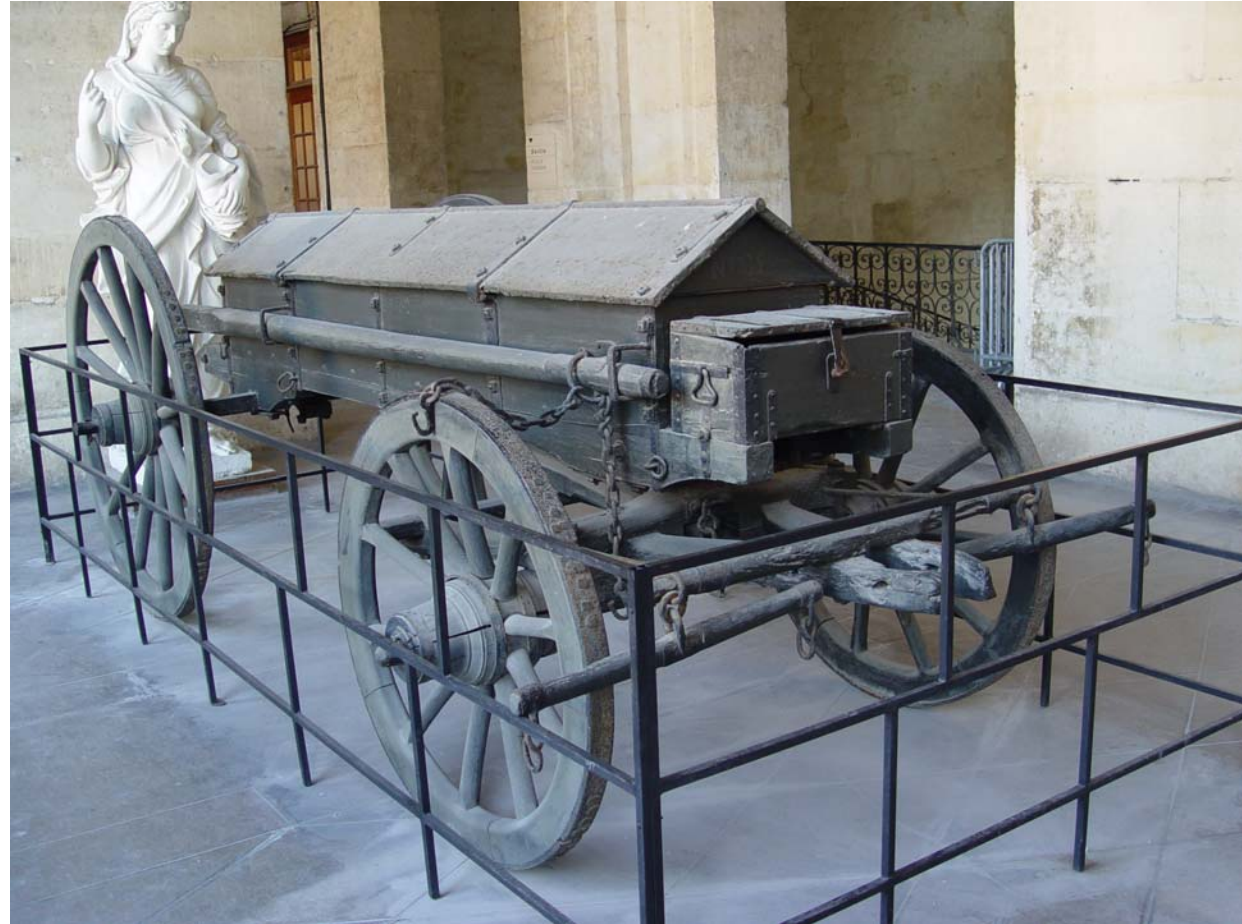
French Gribeauval Artillery

- Howitzer (original at the Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



French Gribeauval Artillery

- Ammunition caisson (original at the Musée de l'Armée, Paris)



Royal-Artillerie driver

- Teamster in charge of conducting the ordnance and supply wagons.



Care of casualties

- Medical services at the time were still mostly for officers, but there was progress to extend specialized access to all ranks. The level of care, no matter the rank, was relatively crude. (Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University)



Medical Corps

- Medical officer
- The necessary, if not often mentioned corps.



Medical Corps

- Surgeon's assistant



Expeditionary Force 27 March 1780

- 4 line infantry regiments (2 battalions each)
- 1000 men per regiment: 4000 infantry
- 1 artillery battalion - 400 men
- Lauzun's Legion - 600 men
- Total: 5000 plus various support detachments.

Rochambeau in America

- Rochambeau's HQ in Newport Rhode Island, 1780-1781.
- Instead of the automobile, there would be a few hussars and ADCs as dispatch riders.



New York City



[illegible]

Marching south to Yorktown - the Royal Deux-Pont Regiment in Philadelphia 1781

- The march of the French Army from Rhode Island to Virginia had a remarkable effect on the Americans.



Battle of the Virginia Capes 5 September 1781



Washington greets De Grasse 1781

- Rochambeau is at right
- Soldiers of Soissonnais at left



Reinforcements from West Indies

September 1781

- 3 line infantry regiments (2 battalions each)
- 1000 men per regiment: 3000 men
- 100 gunners (Metz Regt, Royal Artillerie) with some support corps
- 100 hussars of Volontaires Étrangers de la Marine
- 800 Marines from French warships landed
- Total: 4000

Régiment Agenais

- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Engraving by
Hoffman



Régiment Tournaine

- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Engraving by Isnard



Régiment Gâtinais

- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Engraving after
Lefferts



Régiment Gatinais

- 21 February 1779
Dress Regulations
Print after Edmond
Lajoux



Royal-Artillerie

- Régiment Metz
(one company)
- Print after
Hoffman



Le Régiment du Corps Royal d'Artillerie.

Marine infantry & marine artillery 1774-1782



- 100 companies of infantry
- 3 companies of bombardiers
- About 1/12th of corps deployed in Grasse's fleet.
- Shortage of marines; detachments of army troops in France and colonial troops also put on ships.

Drummer's livery lace

- The livery lace of the Bourbon royal family, rulers of France, Spain and Naples. Worn by most drummers in the armies of these nations.



Ordnance from West Indies 1781

- Ten field guns
- A few siege guns

Batteries at Yorktown



- Gen. Washington firing a siege gun
- Gen. Rochambeau in the background
- Plate after Jacques Onfroy de Bréville (JOB)

Assault on Yorktown 1781

- Royal Deux-Ponts and Gâtinais overcome the British Redoubt at Yorktown



Royal-Auvergne 1782

- Gâtinais was given this title following its distinguished role in the siege of Yorktown.
- Title wished by the men. Rochambeau obtained approval of Louis XVI.



Le Régiment de Royal Auvergne.

Royal Auvergne

Duc de Lauzun

- In command of the French troops remaining remaining in the US after Rochambeau's departure with most of his army for West Indies, December 1782.
- French troops remaining mainly in Philadelphia: Lauzun's Legion, Royal-Artillerie, Medical Corps and support staff. Leave in 1783.



Epilogue: Cincinnati after the war

- American and French officers who had served in the war could wear the medal of the Order of Cincinnati. (Medals of French officers, Musée de la Légion d'Honneur, Paris)



French
officer
wearing
the
Cincinnati
medal

- 1780s
portrait
(Musée de
la Légion
d'Honneur,
Paris)



After 1783

- Basis for the Army of the French Revolution and Empire
- Lafayette with friends, 1790 (Musée Carnavalet, Paris)

