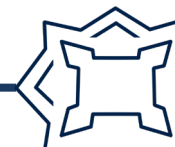


WOMEN AND THE FRENCH ARMY AT CARILLON



As with any aspect of the French Army at Carillon, the roles and relationships with women are not simply a translation of Anglo-American military culture. The French Army had its own unique relationship with civilian women. These practices and regulations within the French Army, as with clothing and material culture, adapted to service in Canada as the French & Indian War continued.

Women and the French Army

Unlike the British Army, whose tiny size and Parliamentary control meant a close connection with civilian society, the massive size of the French Royal army—250,000 to 500,000—made it a society in its own right. Every aspect of a soldier's life was accounted for with the members of his *tente* in the field or *chambree* in the barracks, effectively surrounding him in a family who collectively cared for his needs. Officially, regulations discouraging marriage began in 1686. Soldiers were required to get the permission of their commanding officer to marry. Likewise, regulations for the use of barracks prohibited women from residing in them. A study of the La Couronne Regiment from 1769 to 1772, found only 1% of soldiers were married during this period.¹ The 1753 Royal Ordonnances for the Regulation of Encampment specifically mention women only once, among the regulations for a peacetime camp.



Figure 1: Detail: *Soldat du Régiment du Roi*, Ca. 1740. Musée de l'Armée. Anglo-American employment for women with the army does not appear to have parallels within the French Army. Women had a small but frequent presence in contemporary art, indicating a reality different than regulations would indicate.

"OF PEACETIME Camps & of Exercises...

DCCLXII

We will not suffer within camp nor elsewhere in the guard's enclosure, no bad & public women nor girls ie: all those who will be recognized as such, will be arrested & punished with the whip, & then taken to the prisons of the nearest towns of the camp, to remain there at least until the troops of the camp are all gone & away from several days marching."



Figure 2: Detail: *Camp of the Royal Roussillon Regiment, 1748*. Museum Collections of Fort Ticonderoga. Following a French regiment frequently meant selling food and beverages to soldiers.

As direct as this regulation was, it still left discretion to the provost of the camp. In practice, there were women following the French Army, albeit outside the margins of official recognition. Six battalions of French Army soldiers embarked for North America from the Port of Brest on May 4, 1755, including the second battalions of Languedoc, La Reine, Bearn, and Guyenne, who served at Carillon. Orders for embarkation from April 3 to 4, 1755 notified the Aide-Major of each of the battalions, "We will embark three women." This is reflected in the return of the French force departing Brest: 3,597 soldiers, 21 soldiers' wives and children. With three women for each of the six battalions, it is likely that the roster reflects 18 women and 3 children. Though not officially recognized by the army, there were small numbers of women and children leaving France for Canada. In comparison, there were 217 officers' servants or valets for an officer corps of similar number.

Vivianders, or sutlers, were officially attached to French Army regiments in Europe, and given an allotment of cart or wagon space for their tent and wares. The hours of sales and location within a camp were regulated. By Article Thirty-four of the 1753 Royal Ordonnances for the Regulation of Encampment, *Vivianders* were to be set ten paces behind the camp kitchens, in line with drummers' tents. By custom,

Vivianders hung a green wreath from the ridgepole of their tents as a sign for soldiers. Officially, *Vivianders* were male, in fact the 1753 Royal Ordonnances for the Regulation of Encampment prohibited them from drawing their sword in and around camp. In practice, *Vivianders* were often married teams, with *Viviandieres*, working alongside their husbands as part of the sutleries or mobile taverns. Contrary to regulations, the 1757 French Army watercolors show *Viviandieres* associating with soldiers in many regiments' images. French images of *Viviand-*



Figure 3: Detail: *Viviander & Vивиандиере*. *Treatise on Cavalry Training*, Nicholas von Blarenburgh, Ca. 1768, Museum Collections of Fort Ticonderoga. *Viviander* were roughly equivalent to Sutlers in the Anglo-American military. The wreath atop the ridge pole was their common symbol.



Figure 4: Detail: *Regiment Royal Escossais, Troupes du Roi, Infanterie française et étrangère, année 1757, tome I.* Musée de l'Armée. Whether *Viviandieres* were present at Carillon is obscured by the presence of the canteen of Captain Michel Chartier de Lotbiniere operated near the Fort.

ieres were as diverse as cavalry training treatises to panoramic paintings commemorating formal sieges. Later during the French Revolution, *Viviandieres* transformed into *Cantinières*, a celebrated symbol of the national mobilization in defense of France and the Revolution.

With the size of the French Army, it is not surprising that there were many examples of women disguised as soldiers taking up arms alongside husbands or in lieu of them. Women like Madame de la Guette, were celebrated as warriors, defenders of their station and property during the chaos of the *Fronde* in the mid-seventeenth century. As a poet, she wrote a celebrated self-portrait:

*"I know very well that my approach
Holds a little too much of the masculine;
But I say that the feminine
Never was that which binds me.
If I followed my fancy,
I would go into the fighting,
With a big big cutlass,
Make a strange butchery."*

Women disguised as soldiers continued, even as the French army became more professionalized with regulations discouraging marriage. In dire circumstances, Geneviere Gondond enlisted in 1710. In a letter to the *Commissaire des Guerres*, she requested a pension for her good service, explaining her circumstance for enlisting.

*"...by a grief that she had because her husband and her children could no longer subsist at the Meudon because of the high price of bread, to enlist in the troops. And some time afterwards she committed herself to despair ...as a dragon, dressed in a man's dress, having thrown her woman's clothes into the Seine, which makes one think she was drowned..."*²

Beyond the isolated, but accepted practice of French women disguising themselves as soldiers, national variations also opened the door to women in the French Army. Swiss regiments had their own establishment, customs, and regulations that made allowances of provisions for a small number of women and children following a regiment. German regiments, which retained their national character like Swiss regiments, also allotted more provisions for following women and children, whether by order or practice. By the end of the century, *enfants de troupe* or soldiers' children were actively enlisted into regiments, as Revolutionary France mobilized the nation in arms.

Canada and Marriage

"The women are beautiful and spiritual. They wear skirts that scarcely go down to the calves. The girls are pretty well kept, but once they marry, they neglect their grooming."

Canadian women caught the eyes of French soldiers, like Languedoc Lieutenant Jean-Baptiste D'Aleynac, who noted this in his descriptions of the peoples of Canada, in his published memoirs. In this tough militaristic colony, D'Aleynac noted the Canadian penchant for brandy and tobacco, which was enjoyed by both genders. Unlike in France, livestock in Canada were plentiful relative to the number of habitants. Even as famine set in across Canada in 1757, citizens of Quebec were still rationed one-half pound of beef daily. This far exceeded normal meat and beef consumption in France. As a result, Canadians, women included, were healthier than their French counterparts, a fact reflected in a much higher birth rate in Canada in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Differences between colonial regulars or, *Troupes de la Marine*, and French Army regulars or, *Troupes de Terre*, were noted frequently by officers in both corps. These differences devolved into discord as the French & Indian War continued. Among these differences were their rates of marriage. Enlisted soldiers among the independent companies of the *Troupes de la Marine* were recruited in France, but commanded by Canadian born officers. Serving in close proximity to the civilian population, *Troupes de la Marine* married Canadian women in much higher rates than French soldiers in France. Among 3,238 soldiers and NCOs identified between 1750 and 1760, there were 593 marriages, equating approximately one-fifth of soldiers being married. Demographic research confirms this general pattern all the way back to 1683.³ This was not true across all the *Troupes de la Marine*; those stationed on *Ile Royal* (Cape Breton Island) married at a rate of 2%. This is not surpris-

ing, given their relative isolation and number of proper barracks at Fortress Louisbourg. Large detachments of the *Troupes de la Marine* served at Carillon during the campaign seasons and in winter guards. Serving as provisional battalions at Carillon in 1757 and 1758, the higher proportion of married *Troupes de la Marine* could have correlated with larger numbers of their wives coming with them.

Arriving in Canada with only 21 women and children in 1755, French Army soldiers married Canadian women in greater numbers through the French & Indian War. In contrast to service in Europe, the marriage of French Army soldiers to Canadian women was not only permitted, it was officially encouraged. In an April 24, 1757 letter to the *Ministre de Guerre*, Comte de Argenson, the Marquis de Montcalm wrote from Montreal about marriages within the colony.

"If I have opposed, in any way, the marriages of officers, I believed I could do nothing better for the interest of the Colony and kingdom, than to encourage those



Figure 5: Detail: *Französische Marquetenerin*, Deutsche Reichs-Armee nebst einigen verbündeten oesterreichischen und französischen Truppen, 1757, 1759, 1762. Bibliothèque Nationale de France. German 1760s. In this German image of a Vivandiere, she carries a French mess's Gran Bidon in addition to a wine bottle and glass.

of the soldiers. Accordingly, in the winter of 1755, 1756, there had been only seven marriages of soldiers, and this year, eighty."

Excellent records of French Army soldiers serving in Canada corroborate the Marquis de Montcalm's statement to the Comte de Argenson. Charts of each of the French Army units that served at Carillon are included in Appendix I, broken down by year and the parish in which the marriages occurred. The year 1757 saw a jump in marriages, beginning a trend that continued through capitulation in 1760. The Marquis de Montcalm specifically stated, "in the winter," as during the campaign season most French Army soldiers encamped at sparsely settled locations, like Carillon. It was only during the winter, when a majority of French soldiers were quartered in Canadian homes, the parishes of Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal. Broadly, the locations for peaks in the number of marriages correlate with the winter quarters of a regiment. Canadians themselves were frequently called upon to feed the soldiers quartered with them. Aide Major of the Guyenne Regiment, Chevalier de la Pause, noted quartering arrangements in his accounts for the winter of 1755-56, including, "The 21 of January I determined that the inhabitants of this parish feed the soldiers for price of 6 livres 90 [sols] the ration." As foodstuffs became dearer, the Colony of Canada began rationing for Canadian citizens, issuing French soldiers rations at the homes they quartered in. With soldiers living in the homes of habitants in Canadian cities, maintaining the stricter discipline of the French Army was difficult. Aide du Camp Antoine de Bougainville, noted in his summary of December 12, 1757 to March 1, 1758 a riot over rations, indicating the cohabitation of soldiers with women and anxieties over discipline.

"On the ninth they started to issue horse meat to the troops. The women of Montreal went and threw it at M. de Vaudreuil's feet. He yielded and consequently, the soldiers at La Marine regiment the next day at pay assembly refused to take any. It was necessary to have recourse to the Chevalier de Levis, whose voice quieted the unrest. They will not boast of his having this duty, the more so since all unrest is contagious in a country where one breathes independence."

When soldiers received horse meat as part of their rations while quartered in Montreal, it was women who protested, boldly throwing the meat at Governor-General Vaudreuil. The Anglo-American cultural memory of quartering was negative enough to prompt the Third Amendment of the United States constitution, which curtailed the forcible quartering of soldiers in homes. Yet the cooperation of Canadian women with French soldiers in protesting rations of horse meat in 1758 indicates affinity, which translated into a growing number of marriages in 1758 and 1759. By 1759, among the three regular battalions with the French Army soldier at Carillon, the two battalions of Berry (760 soldiers) had twenty-seven married soldiers and the single battalion of La Reyne (400 soldiers) thirty-three married soldiers.



Figure 6: Detail: *Camp of the Royal Roussillon Regiment, 1748*. Museum Collections of Fort Ticonderoga. Though marriages were infrequent and discouraged among soldiers in France, they were encouraged in Canada.

How many Canadian women followed French army soldiers to Carillon during the campaign season is unknown, yet the presence of women is inevitable. Connecticut Provincial soldier, Abel Spicer noted shortly after he landed at the north end of Lake George on July 6, 1758, that, "just as we landed here was 3 Frenchmen and a woman taken by our regulars..." Whether this woman was associated with Captain Trepezec's ill-fated scouts or was somehow left behind at the abandoned French camp at Lake George is unclear. Nonetheless, she was present, though her employment with the army remains open to interpretation. Captain of the *Troupes de la Marine* and chief engineer of Fort Carillon, Michel Chartier de Lotbiniere, held a monopoly to run his own canteen just outside of the fort walls. This canteen sold wine and other beverages to French soldiers using paper currency, which Lotbiniere issued for work on the fort. This personal profit by Lotbiniere was cited by French officers, like Antoine de Bougainville, as an example of corruption among Canadian officers and officials. The monopoly for this canteen may have precluded *vivanders* with French Army battalions. However, women, including officers' and soldiers' wives, ended up close to the front lines at Carillon and at other sieges. In the 1781 published Volume II of *Memoires On The Late War in North America, Between France and England*, Bearn Captain Pierre Pouchot included women in his detailed account of the 1759 Siege of Niagara. Of his command he wrote:

"This number was increased by M. Pouchot to 100, drawn from picked troops and militiamen, in all 486 men & 39 employees, five of them women or children. The women acted as nurses together with two ladies called Douville & also sewed cartridge bags & made sac a terre."

The two ladies were the wife and family of Captain Alexander Dagneu Douville, a Canadian-born officer of the *Troupes de la Marine*. His wife was Canadian Marie Coulon de Villiers. These women were captured along with the rest of the French defenders of Fort Niagara. The July 25, 1759 Articles of Capitulation for Fort Niagara, specifically included the women. Article III stated:

"The French ladies & other women who are here will be sent back as well as the chaplain. The general of H[is] B[ritanic] M[ajesty] will provide them with the necessary means of transport & subsistence. Within the shortest possible time they will be taken to the nearest French post. Those who wish to follow their husband will be free to do so."

In the aftermath of Fort William Henry, proper British guards for all those captured were included in the articles. It appears that at least some of the captured women followed the French Guard on their march to captivity on Long Island. Within the papers of General Jeffrey Amherst, there were 12 women and children among the "List of the French Officers Prisoners of War" from August 1759. In the prisoner exchange negotiated with General Amherst, "a woman and her daughter" were among the December 14, 1759 "List of the French Prisoners Sent to Canada." Along with 226 French officers, soldiers, *milice*, & others, this exchanged woman and her daughter sailed up the Hudson River to Saratoga, where they briefly resided before continuing their march north. They camped at the sawmill on the LeChute River for nearly a week in November 1759, awaiting permission from the commander of Fort Crown Point to pass through this British post. Lieutenant Colonel William DeHaviland relented, allowing the exchange French prisoners to pass through Crown Point and draw bateaux for the last leg of their trip back to Canada. With the guard of Fort Carillon evacuating rather than surrendering, a return of captured women at Carillon in 1759 does not exist, but the experience of women at Niagara was not unique. Another nine women were among those captured in the 1760 Siege of Fort Levis, in the last days before capitulation at Montreal.



Figure 7: *Canadienne, Canadien*, ca 1750-1780 Archives de la Ville de Montréal. Canadian women had an important niche with making or trimming shirts for Canadians and for trade with Native Americans.

Trade Goods and Plain Sewing

Working in the long houses of Native American towns in the Saint-Lawrence Valley, Native American women finger wove tumplines out of hemp and bast, snowshoes out of babiche or deer rawhide, and colorful garters, bags, and sashes out of worsted wool. They also sewed moccasins and executed elaborate porcupine quill embroidery on all sorts of clothing and personal items. The works of Canadian women are less well-known, but some examples of their military production have been found. Included among Montreal merchant records is an entry in the 1757-1760 account book of the firm of Moniere & Brouillard:

"Credit May 9, 1758

Mrs. Pierre Lemarche made 45 dozens of cotton shirts for Moniere."

Listed by her husband's household, Mrs. Pierre Lemarche must have had a large operation in her own right, perhaps outworking two fellow women around Montreal to produce 540 shirts rapidly in a time of war. Cotton trade shirts, like those produced by Mrs. Lemarche, appear to be issued to French Army soldiers as early as 1755. Production of shirts for the native trade was part of massive industry that extended across France. Royal licenses granted merchants the right to deal in this potentially lucrative trade.

"Statement of the goods Messrs Bottereau and Lemyone, wholesalers of Rouen, are commissioned to draw from Touraine and Brittany, as well as from Holland, and to forward to the port of Rochefort...to stock the King's stores in Canada and Louisiana this present year of 1750.

4600 Trade shirts for men - white linen

3000 Idem -for women..."

Plain, coarse, 'Morlaix,' linen shirts were made in France by the thousands. Once in Canada, they were often trimmed with finer linen, muslin, or lace to make them meet the demands of native tribes. During peacetime, most trade shirts were made in France, but some were produced (especially cotton shirts) in the colony itself.

"1742 March 14

Credit: Mrs. Denis to making

2 dos. Trade shirts for men

4 " ditto in 2/3

4 " ditto for first age"

Shirt production by women, like Mrs. Denis and Mrs. Lemarche, was vital to the colony of Canada's trade network, underpinning Native American alliances. Negotiations with Native American nations and French officials included trade goods, like shirts. Native American had discerning taste regarding the finish of these shirts with frills and lace. British merchants and Indian Agents eagerly took advantage of French supply shortages to woo Native American allies with trade goods like shirts. As the British blockade cut off supplies from France, domestic shirt production became increasingly important and accordingly the labor of Canadian women.

Appendix I: Official Marriages to Canadians by Regiments at Carillon

Bearn: 667 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal	5	3	19	12	11	10	27	87
Quebec						1	4	5
3 Rivers					1	1	1	3
Ailleurs							1	1
Total	5	3	18	12	12	12	33	96

Berry: 1169 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal						8	21	29
Quebec			4	14	8	7	20	53
3 Rivers						1	1	2
Ailleurs					1			1
Total			4	14	9	16	42	85

Guyenne: 672 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal		3	4	8	4	18	48	85
Quebec		1	17	1		8	5	32
3 Rivers	1						5	6
Ailleurs								
Total	1	4	21	9	4	26	58	123

Languedoc: 553 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal		4	21	4	2	5	10	46
Quebec				4	5	5	3	17
3 Rivers					4	8	20	32

Women and the French Army at Carillon

Ailleurs							1	1
Total		4	21	8	11	18	34	96

La Reyne: 558 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal	1		5	3	1	5	12	27
Quebec			3	12	8	10	33	66
3 Rivers								
Ailleurs						1		1
Total	1		8	15	9	16	45	94

La Sarre: 613 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal		1	8	14	17	23	35	98
Quebec			1			1	3	5
3 Rivers								
Ailleurs								
Total		1	9	14	17	24	38	103

Royal-Artillerie: 52 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal						3		3
Quebec			1	1		1		3
3 Rivers						1		1
Ailleurs					1			
Total			1	1	1	5		8

Royal-Roussillon: 631 officers and men

	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	Total
Montreal			8	11	10	18	44	91
Quebec					1	2	2	5
3 Rivers								
Ailleurs					1			1
Total			8	11	12	20	46	97

Appendix II: Shirts Montreal Merchant Records

1696 Imported From France

Merchandise sent from Rochefort to Canada
100 Merlaix linen shirts for Indians.

May 25, 1725 Mr Lamadeleine Demaroux... for his equipment

18 livre 6" 8" in money to buy some Linen color blue, to make shirts...

1736 June 20

20 Fancy Shirts of Morlaix linen, trimmed with lace 5l 10s 110l 0" 0"

1746, Oct. 19- Debtors, Messrs Leduc & Croisille, associates

15 ells of Morlaix linen in 2/3 for 6 shirts, 4 of which are trimmed.

1/3 ell of Baptiste to trim 2 of the shirts

4 ells of lace " " "

Shirts sold to Mr. Lamarque in 1747 were made of Naval linen, Morlaix linen, Cotton and Singa.
[Leaving for Michilimackinac]

June 20 1745, (Shirts for Michilimackinac)

24 Shirts of cotton 5/4

12 " " Morlaix in 1/2

1 piece of lace-used- to trim them

1 ell of Baptist used for ditto.

Invoice: 1743, June 26.

{Many ells of fabric for capots & leggings}

32 ells of Cotton in 5/4 employed to make:

24 shirts

Employed for 24 Men's semi-fancy shirts, and 12 middle-size Trade shirts:

60 ells of Morlaix linen in 2/3

24 1/6 " " " in 1/2

Employed to make the 24 men's shirts and trim them:

1/2 bundle of Epine thread

1 piece of No. 5 lace

1 " " " 7 lace

1 " " " 5 lace

1 " " " 20 lace

170-3/4 ells of trade linen in 2/3 and 92 ells of Trade linen in 1/2 employed to make:

1 dz. Men's shirts

3 dz. Women's shirts- linen in 2/3

2 dz. Middle-sized - linen in 1/2

3 dz in 2/3 [size, not width of linen]

3 dz. in 1/2

3 dz. in 1/3

SEWING COSTS

Trade Capote 10 s ea.
Large sleeves 30 s/dz.
Medium " 30 s/ dz.
Small " 30 s/dz.
Leggings 2s 6d /pr
Fancy capots 3l/ea.
Cotton shirts 7s 6d ea.
Semi-fancy shirts 10s
Trade Shirts- men's 30s dz.
" " women's 30s dz.
" " med. size 20s dz.
" " 2/3 size 20s dz.
" " 1/2 size 15s dz.
" " 1st age 15s dz.
Short capes 16s 8d ea.
4 hats brims edged 2s ea.
1 sail 2l 10s
6 sacs for the biscuit 4s ea.

Endnotes

- 1 Women in the 18th Century French Army Rene Chartrand et Andre Gousse
- 2 Dominique Godineau, « De la guerrière à la citoyenne. Porter les armes pendant l’Ancien Régime et la Révolution française », *Clio. Histoire, femmes et sociétés* [En ligne], 20 | 2004, mis en ligne le 23 août 2013, consulté le 04 mai 2017. URL : <http://clio.revues.org/1418> ; DOI : 10.4000/clio.1418
- 3 Marriage and Establishment, Ronald Lesard.