

Camp followers [edit]

Whilst on campaign, the army would gather a large group of followers ranging from sutlers, who would sell commodities to the soldiers, to the wives and women who chose to follow their men into war.^[39]

Only 6 women per 100 men on service were allowed to follow a regiment, but they were expected to work and carry out any of the services required by the soldiers: cooking and washing were common domestic duties but these women often doubled up as nurses and carers.^[40] Receiving a wage from the army meant that they could earn a decent living as a camp follower. The sutlers could also make a profit by selling their wares – coffee, liquor, beer etc. – to those they followed.

The camp followers were usually subject to the same military law as the men themselves: a sutler could be flogged or even killed if found to be trading without a licence, and common offences included stealing and disobeying of direct orders.^[41]

There were many complaints about the presence of women and children in camp who distracted the men from their duties or made a general nuisance of themselves with one such protest made to [Whitehall](#) on 23 January 1720: "Complaint having been made, that you permit women and children to lye in the barracks ... take care that the Master Gunner meets with no discouragement or interruptions in the execution of his duty".^[42]



Camp followers were an ubiquitous part of British military life during the 18th century (historical reenactment). ✎